

Tadysheva N.

Candidate of Historical Sciences, Altai, Gorno-Altai,sk,
e-mail: tadisheva@mail.ru

**SACRED TRIAD OF FIRE-MILK-TREE:
RELIGIOUS AND MYTHOLOGICAL REPRESENTATIONS
OF THE ALTAI-SAYAN TURKS**

In modern conditions of globalization, the processes of transformation of traditional culture constitute the main content of ethno-cultural changes, which represent, on the one hand, the unification of ethnic cultures, and on the other, the preservation of traditional values. The consequence becomes the strengthening of ethnic identity and the actualization of traditional culture. The interest here is the stability of the religious-mythological picture of the world of the Altaians, Tuvans and Khakas under the conditions of transformation of traditional culture. Consideration of the religious and ritual culture of the Altai-Sayan Turks, which is a reflection of the traditional worldview, reveals a complex of ritual, everyday life, behavioral, ethical, ideological aspects. Sacralization of fire, milk and dairy products, ritual «feeding», worship and presentation of them as a talisman shows the ethno-cultural community of the Sayan-Altai Turks, which is a synthesis of archaic beliefs and shamanism. The cult of the trees is also based on archaic animistic representations. Along with the usual simple trees, there were special, sacred ancestral trees, shamanic and burkhanistic. Apparently, the cult of trees took place in the era of the tribal system. Totemic vision, developing, transforming under the influence of changes in the religious beliefs of the population, have been preserved in modern times as sacred trees.

Key words: sacredness, Turks, traditional picture of the world, stability, variability.

Тадышева Н.О.

тарих ғылымдарының кандидаты, Алтай, Горно-Алтайск қ.,
e-mail: tadisheva@mail.ru

**Сакралды триада – от-сүт-ағаш:
Саян-Алтай түріктерінің діни-мифологиялық түсініктері**

Қазіргі жаһандану жағдайында дәстүрлі мәдениетті трансформациялау процестері этномәдени өзгерістердің негізгі мазмұнын құрайды, бұл бір жағынан этникалық мәдениеттерді біріктіруді, ал екінші жағынан дәстүрлі құндылықтарды сақтауды білдіреді. Соның нәтижесі ретінде этникалық сәйкестікті нығайту мен дәстүрлі мәдениетті жаңғырту белгіленеді. Негізгі қызығушылықты дәстүрлі мәдениетті трансформациялау жағдайындағы алтайлықтар, тувандар және хакас әлемінің діни-мифологиялық бейнесінің тұрақтылығы тудырады. Дәстүрлі дүниетанымның көрінісі болып саналатын Саян-Алтай түріктерінің діни-рәсімдік мәдениетін қарастыру, салттық, тұрмыстық, өзін-өзі ұстау, этикалық және дүниетанымдық қырларының жиынтығын анықтауға мүмкіндік береді. Оттың, сүттің және сүт өнімдерінің сакралдылығы, әдеттік «азықтандыру», оларды қастерлеу мен тұмар ретінде ұсынылуы, архаикалық нанымдардың және шаманизмнің синтезі болып табылатын, Саян-Алтай түріктерінің этномәдени ұқсастығын көрсетеді. Ағашқа табынушылықтың негізінде де архаикалық анимистік көріністер сақталған. Әдеттегі қарапайым ағаштармен қатар ерекше, сакралды рулық, шамандық және бурханистік ағаштар болған. Шамасы, ағашқа табынушылық рулық одақтың дәуірінде орын алған болу керек. Халықтың діни көзқарастарындағы өзгерістердің әсерінен дамып, өзгеріп жатқан тотемистикалық түсініктер қазіргі уақытта қасиетті ағаштар ретінде сақталды.

Түйін сөздер: сакралдылық, түркілер, әлемнің дәстүрлі бейнесі, тұрақтылық, өзгермелілік.

Тадышева Н.О.

кандидат исторических наук, Алтай, г. Горно-Алтайск,
e-mail: tadisheva@mail.ru**Сакральная триада – огонь-молоко-дерево:
религиозно-мифологические представления тюрков Саяно-Алтая**

В современных условиях глобализации процессы трансформации традиционной культуры составляют основное содержание этнокультурных изменений, которые представляют собой, с одной стороны, унификацию этнических культур, а с другой – сохранение традиционных ценностей, следствием которого являются усиление этнической идентификации и актуализация традиционной культуры. Интерес представляет устойчивость религиозно-мифологической картины мира алтайцев, тувинцев и хакасов в условиях трансформации традиционной культуры. Рассмотрение религиозно-обрядовой культуры саяно-алтайских тюрков, которая является отражением традиционного мировоззрения, позволяет выявить комплекс ритуальных, бытовых, поведенческих, этических, мировоззренческих аспектов. Сакрализация огня, молока и молочных продуктов, ритуальное «кормление», почитание и представление о них, как об обереге, показывает этнокультурную общность саяно-алтайских тюрков, представляющую собой синтез архаических верований и шаманизма. В основе культа деревьев также сохраняются архаические анимистические представления. Наряду с обычными простыми деревьями существовали особые, сакральные родовые деревья, шаманские и бурханистские. Видимо, культ деревьев имел место еще в эпоху родового строя. Тотемистические представления, развиваясь, трансформируясь под влиянием изменений в религиозных воззрениях населения, сохранились в современное время как представления о священных деревьях.

Ключевые слова: сакральность, тюрки, традиционная картина мира, устойчивость, изменчивость.

According to the researchers, the hearth is an extremely capacious mythopoetic symbol. Being the permanent center of the dwelling, it determined the status of the developed space, it was the organizing principle around which the cultural environment was grouped (Traditional worldview of the Turks of Southern Siberia 1988: 136-137).

In the heroic epic, the destruction of the hearth, the extinct fire means unhappiness in the family and heir:

The fire in his hearth was blown,
The bed of his was destroyed.
Everything there by ash was covered
His iron palace for emptiness now known
Now it's Er-Samyr (Er-Samyr 2018: 32-33).
Or:
Then, Yoskus-Oyul
Everything in detail told:
The one with non-faded fire, faded away
Suddenly Jelen-Magai old man passed away
Becoming the orphan son (Öskÿs-Oyul, 2018: 774-775).

During the expedition, the informant shared with us: «Бис, слерден життерден көпти сурабай жадыс. Ланысла оттыла сÿтти байлазын деп». «We, do not ask much from you, young people. Only in a special way you relate to fire and milk. «The informant, realizing that times have changed there are other interests for the younger generation,

still focuses on the special norms of behavior in relation to fire *om* and milk (*cÿm*). Apparently, it is the belief that sacralization of the «байлар *om*» (*Bailar Ot*) and «*cÿm*» (*Sut*) will not disturb the peace and calmness and will bring luck.

During the study of the cult of fire in modern times can be traced to its significant place in the Altai culture. It is believed that the soul of the child gives «*Kudai*». Therefore, at first, the baby's soul (*суузы*) «falls mean. in the fire-hearth, the ashes» (*от-очокко, кÿлге тÿжсер*) – here it means that the soul comes passes through the fire. In this regard, the fire is considered sacred, it is kept clean, the garbage is not put (ON NIIA. MSE, case No. 119, diary entry 2017. Maykhieva L.M.). And in the wishes of the alkyts we meet the function of fire as the creator:

In a bronze cauldron (food) brewed,
Humming *От-Эне (Ot-Ene)* is mine!
In the set pot (food) cooked,
With a clean flame *От-Эне* mine!
My red soul created,
My head with my hair created,
От-Эне head I bow!

(ON NIIA. MSE, case No. 127, diary entry 2012, Toedov Echish Nokorovich, och, born in 1933, place of birth and residence with. Kalei of Ust-Kansky District, note by Tadysheva N.O., intpr. Konunova A.A.).

The wedding ritual also reflects a significant place of the cult of fire. According to the explanation of one of the informants, the *кудалаш* (*kudalash*) was a sweep from «кутал» (*kut al*), this means that, together with the girl, her soul «кут» enters into the family of the bridegroom «от-очогына кийдирилет» «fire in the hearth gives birth» (MSE, case No. 119, diary entry 2017 Maiheva L.M.). The head of the procession says: «Ак жайыгардав, от-очоктов, ада-энезине, уур эткен улус эдис, кудалап келгенис» «From family deities, from home, from parents who committed theft, came to matchmaker.»

At the Altai wedding, during the ceremony of braiding the braids of the *таайы* uncle on the maternal line of the groom begins to conduct the rush of the *баунаады* (*bashpaad*) («head has gone»). During the wedding ceremony, the right is given to speak to the *алкыш* (*alkish*) – the wishes of the new family. *Баунаады* – алкыши— wishes to a new family, greetings, wishes of happiness, health, many children, abundance of livestock. It is believed that the *баунаады* bears a sacred significance, therefore, for the sake of a joke, fun, the bad *баунаады* cannot be said. At first *таайы* (*taij*) ties to *кыйра* (*kijhra*) tripod (sacrificial ribbons) and *казы* (*kazi*) or *карын жу* (*karin ju*) (internal fat of a horse or lamb), sets fire, puts firewood *арчын* in the fire. When relatives say good wishes, blessing the young, the bridegroom and *таайы* walk around the hearth, and the bridegroom pours the melted butter into the fire. After each *алкыш* the relatives utter «айтканар жетсин, айтканар болзын» («let him say what he says, let the said to be done»). It is believed that when the flame from the oil reaches the chimney *түнүке* (*tunuke*), then in the future the young family will live happily. If the *кирелү* (*kirelu*) fire (lit. mediocre, weak) burns, then the young will also live. If the fire starts to sparkle, it means that the family will scatter (ON NIIA. MSE, case No. 119, audio recording 2017. Galina Tipyrovna Kokshinova, born in 1947, place of birth and residence with Verkh-Anuy of the Ust-Kansky District of the Altai Republic, entry N.N. Tadyshva; ON NIIA.MSE, case No. 117, audio recording of 2018. Chibakova, Evgenia Emelyanovna, Köböк, born in 1964, deposits, Pasparta Ulaganskogo district, place of residence with Besh-Ozok of the Shebalinsky District of the Altai Republic, entry Tadyshva N.O.).

Words to fire:

With a salting horse, pure lightning,

With a golden coat of *От-Эне!*

Frozen thawing

Raw cooking.

On its stone hearth,

Талкан -ashes covered under her,

Its hot rays spread.

Three legs (its) firmly let them stand!

Three bases (its) firmly let them stand!

(ON NIIA.MSE, case No. 127, diary entry 2012. Sorosheva Unchukpas Baraevna, born in 1930, Kubka, place of birth, the tract of Marchata (Verkh-Muta) of the Ust-Kansky District, entry Tadyshva N.O., inprt. Konunova A.A.)

In relation to fire, they adhere to special norms of behavior – you can't stir the fire, send sharp objects into it, do not touch the fire, do not sprinkle the fire with alcohol (vodka, red wine, you can only use *аракы* (*araki*) of milk wine), you can't put garbage in the fire, you can't walk between the hearth and «чакы» (*chaki*) are the pillar installed behind the hearth, in a small distance, where, according to the ideas of the Altai people, the head of fire *оттын баажы* (*otting bazhi*) is located. On the new moon, and when the guests came with the gifts, the fire was treated to the «амзадар» (*amzadar*), pinch off small pieces of food and put it into the fire.

The following prohibitions are fixed at the Khakas: you cannot agitate the fire with anything sharp you can hurt it, gouge out his eyes. This presentation is well illustrated by the recorded myth: «Two old women are talking to each other. One of them has no eyes, and the second tooth. The one-eyed old woman says: «My host opened the door of the stove and stabbed my eye with a knife.» And the second says: «And me, the hostess pierced with scissors and knocked out my tooth.» Therefore, the Khakas are not taken sharp objects to touch the fire. In general, the fire must be treated very carefully and with respect» (Burnakov).

For Tuvans, it was impossible to throw garbage into the fire, because this could anger the home owner, and the place around him was also removed (Dongak, 2017).

The fire testified about the life and independence of the family. He is also called the protector of the people. The fire is perceived as a gift from the sky, inextricably linked with the earth, through the umbilical cord of the hearth, to which the «т» also seems to be his home. The fire, the hearth of the Altai people always respects not only their own fire, but also the fire of their neighbors, both familiar and unfamiliar people. The spirit of fire (a young girl) is considered to be the master of fire (*eezi*) (Enchinov, 2013: 55).

In the traditional understanding of the Khakas, the goddess of fire, *От-уне*, gave warmth and light, constantly guarding the home and family from evil forces, cleared the space, brought good luck and

wealth to the owner, silt with the cares of the head of the house. Therefore, they called her the *чурттын-ээзи* -owner of the dwelling', the *чурттын-хадарчизы* -the preserver of the dwelling', the *кизинин-хулгы* -saver of the person', the *хадарганын-халхазы* (grazing)', etc.

Among the Khakas, the spirit of fire (*Отин ези* – *mother of fire*) had an anthropomorphic appearance. More often it was a woman. Older Khakas say about her: «*Отине* is a white, beautiful, naked woman. She talks, gives sounds.» According to other sources, the hostess of the fire appeared in the image of a plump woman in a colorful dress and scarf, although sometimes she is seen dressed in black. Often, the Khakas say about her: «The mistress of the fire is a gray-haired old woman» (Burnakov).

For the Tuvans, fire and Fire for the Tuvans was also briefly defined as: From the *От-чаякчы* (От-chayakni) – fire creator. The attitude to the hearth depended on this capacious definition. It was believed that the home hearth had a host who had to be treated, what each mistress of the yurt did – with each cooking, she first put the first pieces into the fire, while sentencing like: Odumga kagdym 'putting into the fire'. In reverence of fire there was also an awesome, but at the same time, fair share: *Өлденартар, өрттенарт* pas «You can (save) from water, not from fire» (Dongak, 2017).

Researchers explain the anthropomorphic image of fire in the form of a girl by analogy with ritual pure and integrity. The image of a woman most likely stems from the fact that for the long history of mankind, a woman for the most part has been at the hearth, performing a vital function of saving fire. The image of the owner of the hearth can be found in almost all the peoples of Siberia and the Far East (Yenchinov, 2013: 55-56). The female image personifying the spirit of fire, in the traditional understanding of the Altaians, was not strengthened by chance, since it is the woman who gives birth to children, takes care of her home, etc., that is, she continues and preserves both the life of the family, the clan, and the life of the entire ethnic group. According to the ideas of the Altaians, the hostess of fire *От-Эне* is about the same role. It gives warmth and light, constantly protects the home and the family from evil forces, cleans the space, brings good luck and wealth to the owners, lives by the care of all family members (Poskonnaya, 2016: 49).

The special role of milk and dairy products can be traced in the traditional Altai culture; in this connection, the Khakas and Tuvians have an interesting idea about milk, its place in ritual practice

and in the traditional worldview of the indigenous peoples of Sayano-Altai.

Archaic signs of magical properties, animistic representations are observed in the Altai enigmas, which use the comparison of milk and dairy products with gold, wealth in all respects or with a deity:

Went, walked, scallop found

Scallop in the lake lowered,

I got foam from the lake

I got gold from the foam (Milk, cream, butter)

(Altai Mysteries, 1981: 9).

The golden staff shines,

The white deity rumbles (Agitation of a chegen in a tub) stirring (Altai puzzles, 1981: 97).

The association of luminaries with milk is also interesting: «Айылдын үстине ак куруттын жарымын кыстап койдым» / «Above the ail stuck half of white cheese» – the moon.

And in the Altai heroic tale «Altai-Buachay» milk is presented as having life-giving power:

All Erkemel Bone Joints

She put herself in her place

She waved a handkerchief

I sprinkled white milk.

The boy Erkemel

Body blood came to life

Broken bones have grown together (Altai-Buachai, 2013: 76-77).

For ritual sprinkling, the *мөсмер* (*touster*) (family-clan fetishes) of the Khakas were used by un-tasted «Arak» milk vodka or milk of a white cow, fed by the immaculate girl, and were fed in spring and autumn. During the sacrifice to the fire *от майуу*, the leader of the prayer sprinkled milk on the white cow of *чалбах-мөс* (*chalbakh-tous*) (fetish, dedicated to the spirit of the host fire), praised it with godlike grass and read prayers. Also,

*Чалбах-мөс*ю ritual every morning and on the ninth day of the new moon, splashing boiled milk (Butanaev, 2005: 61, 71, 87).

Чажыг is held among Tuvans – a rite of sacrifice sometimes in the form of splashing milk or tea to the sun, moon, mountain tops, forest, around the yurt. Also, for *чажыг* fire they use *аржаан* – holy water from juniper, water and milk. To prepare *аржаан*, boil the juniper in hot water and dilute with milk. If the tops of the mountains make a noise or on a typical day there was a tambourine ringing (there is a popular opinion that when sounds like a shout are suddenly made, a tap on a tambourine is unfortunately) they spray milk, thus bringing a sacrifice (Kenin-Lopsan, 2002: 37, 174, 329, 335).

The sacralization of milk occupies a large place in the traditional rituals of the Altaians. During

the rites of worship of *Алтайдынээзи* (the Altai Master), fire, the family deity *жайыку* is obligatory to «*сүм үрүсмен жам*» (they are sprinkled with milk).

In the modern Altai wedding rituals, the ritual braiding ceremony is held. For the *көжөгдө* (wedding curtain) to the right of the bride becomes the daughter-in-law from the side of the groom, to the left – from the side of the bride. They divide the girl's hair clearly in the middle of the head into two braids. They are braided, smearing with milk and melted butter (Tadysheva, 2011: 119). Bride after they opened *көжөгдө* give milk to drink. In case of matchmaking, the bride's parents must come with milk and milk wine *аракы*. Having negotiated the Altai bride, she was brought to the groom's aul. Mother groom treated her milk. According to researchers, the mother-in-law expressed her recognition of the future daughter-in-law (Tadina, 1995: 85). After the bride crosses the threshold of the yurt of her husband or her husband's parents, the Tuvans also gave her milk. Apparently, there is not just a gesture of approval – in this ritual the sacrality of milk, the idea of it as a talisman, comes to the fore.

Initially, the bride *келин* appears as a «stranger.» The word *келин* (*kelin*) came from the word *kel* – to come (OTD 1969: 295), i.e. the bride is the «comer.» Its «dangerous» influence is strong in relation to new relatives and measures of magical-religious protection are being taken against it. As a result of performing the rituals, it is «separated» from the family of the parents, from the old home cult and is gradually incorporated into the new environment. The fact that the ritual action takes place at the entrance to the yurt, where the threshold is the boundary between the world of «their» and «alien», is important. Entering the aul, the bride begins to join the new house, family, family and milk can symbolize the rite of purification, which is carried out in order to neutralize the danger, which, together with the bride, can come from someone else's space.

Protective and magical properties are attributed to milk – Khakasses and Tuvans consider hoopoes to be a misfortune, since they are servants of the cuckoo. In cases when hoopodes were sitting on a fence of a fence or flying into a house, yard, the house is sprinkled with airan (Butanaev, 2005: 70).

In the Altai and Tuvinians, when the snake crawls into the house, *айыл* (*ahjil*), it is carried out of the yurt, and then the milk is sprayed. It is believed that donating milk, thereby eliminating the misfortune (Kenin-Lopsan, 2002: 496; 6).

There are also forbidden norms of behavior, so, the Altaians, until the umbilical cord of a newborn

child heals, nothing is given from the house, especially milk. When the old moon, at night, from the house where the man died, could not take out the milk. Without necessity, it is prohibited to carry this product over long distances. Tuvans have an idea about the connection of milk with the soul; if someone deliberately spills the milk, it is considered that the *күт* (soul) leaves it. All the best and best are compared with milk (Kenin-Lopsan, 2002: 412). The Khakas, when boiling milk, were also wary of shedding it in the fire. In this case, the cow will soar the udder and the milk will disappear (Butanaev, 2005: 84).

Distinctive from Altai is the use of milk in Khakas and Tuvinians in funeral and memorial rites. During the funeral, they performed a magical detour around the deceased with protective purposes to protect the living from the deceased. A widowed woman poured milk or tea with milk into a wooden cup, covered it with white cloth, held it in her hand, walked around the cart three times, saying: ««*Хурай, хурай!*» (Take trouble away from us!) Don't look back! Let your happiness stay at home! May your children stay healthy!» Sometimes they did not bypass the coffin, and three times counterclockwise circled with a cup of milk over the dead, then the milk was given a sip to the family of the deceased or, covered with cloth, put on the table.

There she stood for three days, then the milk was given to the dog to drink or poured into the hearth (Butanaev, 2005: 169–170).

In the Tuva funeral rite, immediately after the deceased was carried out, a relative raised a plate with milk food and made three circles around the yurt and said «*хурай*» three times (Ibid.). Also, when returning from the cemetery, all the participants in the funeral were cleared – fumigated themselves with juniper and committed washing of hands and face with water mixed with milk and crumbled dry juniper. The traditional memorial meal consists of salted milk tea, milk, boiled lamb, cheese, ghee (Kissel, 2009: 90-91).

In the Altai funeral commemoration rite, which apparently was influenced by бурханизм, which arose and spread in Gorny Altai at the beginning of the twentieth century the use of milk and dairy products is prohibited. It is believed that their use during the rites of passage of the deceased to the «ancestral world» defiles milk, i.e. contact of sacred milk with the world of the dead is not allowed. Such a pronounced access to the forefront of Altai milk and dairy products is probably due to the influence of бурханизм, which arose and spread in the Altai Mountains in the early twentieth century. It should

be noted that the Altai, the adherents of бурханизм, called their faith «ак жан, сүм жан» – «white faith, milky faith», in which they refused blood sacrifices, replacing them with archaic libations and sprinkling with milk, аракы and butter. And in the cult practice of the бурхнисты, the special sacralization of milk turns it into a kind of «symbol of faith» (Sherstova, 2010: 208, 215).

As the researchers note, in the traditional culture of the turks of Southern Siberia a special place is occupied by the genus marker – tree (Sagalaev, 1990: 43).

Field materials, ethnographic records, folklore texts of researchers indicate that at present, knowledge of the generic nature of honoring trees remains fairly complete, which is a reminiscence of ideas about totems trees transformed into revered sacred trees. According to the reports of the informants, each Altai genus (сөдк) Considered a certain tree species to be sacred, and the genus had a totem tree. Back in the XIX century researchers from Gorny Altai have recorded that each of the Altai clans conducts its own genealogy from certain tree species: «Irkит comes from the tree «прай – ыр-рай» (honeysuckle). Others say: for the ирkitов, the father is «прай», the mother is birch ... Irkit and Sojon have two brothers (the father is «rgai», mother is birch)» (Potanin, 1883: 7).

The Altai tradition says «People lived in Altai for a long time. They left the mounds. They were called «torgouts».

But once a new tree appeared – larch, and the torgouts decided that everything was changing, that a new time was coming. And then they disappeared, giving way to another nation» (Sherstova, 2010: 41-42). On the one hand, the emergence of a new tree here is the «end» to the torgouts people, and on the other hand, the appearance of another people totem tree, which is larch. Knowledge is preserved in ethnogenetic legends, which narrate that under difficult circumstances this or that tree species helped to save the life of a person of a certain kind. So, they say about the genus очы (ochi): «Found under a birch, let it be birch очы» (Altaians, 2005: 87) or «When there was a war, one young woman put her child in the cradle, making sure that the birch sap dripped directly into his mouth, she ran away. One person found it. «Let him be from the clan of «кайын-очы» (kaijing-ochi), he said (Altai's fabulous prose 2011: 259).

Another legend says: «In our Altai, there was once a very fierce war, they say. When the enemy had already overtaken the fleeing people, one woman put her child down, tilting the bush of the

Filipendulato it, so that its juice dripped to the child's mouth. In Altai, the only surviving modor was this boy. Previously, the daughters of this genus did not pronounce the name of this tree, did not cut it» (Altai's fabulous prose 2011: p. 269).

The macaw genus is believed to be descended from a pine tree (Altaians, 2005: 141). The venerable tree of көбөк – арчын (juniper) (Altaians 2005: 121). The first representative of theкыпчак genus was found under the wilderness (Altaians 2005: 96).

In the oral folklore of the Altaians, the salvation of the protagonist is illustrated in the same way. In the heroic tale

«Maadai-Kara» during the invasion of the evil, hostile Kara-Kula kaana Maadai-Kara rescues his son Kogudei Mergen:

Famous Maadai-Kara
To the top of the nine-stage
Black Mountain has risen,
On a high rock now climbed,
Under four birches
Cradle hung with his son-hero.
«Black is this mountain
May you be a father, my dear,» said,
Four birch trees
May you be a mother, my child,» he said.
To four birch sap
In the mouth of a baby warrior
On a day, one drop of drops,
Arched tube attached;
To maternal colostrum
From the sixty-ursine intestine
In son's mouth
On the day of one drop flowed,
Guts on birch branches
He hung it down and tied it down (Maadai-Kara, 1973: 87; 272).

Khakas also have attitudes to trees as generic totems. In the work of N.F. Katanova «Samples of folk literature of the Turkic tribes» is the story «The old woman says to the bride,» Do not call this sky after the name! Do not call this land, for heaven and earth are your father-in-law! The sheep is your mother-in-law too! The wolf is also your father-in-law! Growing willow is your father-in-law too! You do not call them by name!» (Samples, 1907: 303).

The mother-in-law explains to the daughter-in-law the norms of behavior in relation to the tribal deities of her husband's family. «Кайындау» (kahjndash) – the custom of avoiding it is directed to protecting the parents of the husband, the husband's relatives from the bride, who, first of all, is a representative of another kind and, even after marriage, does not lose this «alien» affiliation.

The idea of the magical meaning of the word is preserved, which, when pronounced «alien», in this case, alien *келин* can be dangerous for the husband and his relatives and can cause them harm. Hence the prohibition of direct access to them.

Trees of the Khakass culture were the guardians of tribal souls: «The tree is the home of the human soul,» says a belief. Each genus had its own tree species, which were called «*сѣѣк чулазы*» (souk chulazi), ancestral soul, or «*агас сѣѣги*» (aga sougi) woody species. According to the researchers, the сеока сайын and black бельтыров (beltirz) gave birth to the larch tree, the сеока хобый cedar, the сеока туран and the white бельтыров the birch, and the сарыгларов (sariglar) had the yellow head (Butanaev, 2014: 112).

Altai informants emphasized that a person should not cut down a tree of his own kind, but other tree species were used for all economic needs. In case of emergency, I asked a representative of another kind to cut down the tree that was worshiped by his kind. As a rule, the cabin was accompanied by apologetic and propitiatory speeches. They cut down only the required number of trees, and it was forbidden to cut down young trees. Older people said that they, like children of people, should grow and mature. They must live. There were a variety of prohibitions and omens, demanding from a person decent behavior in the forest or the taiga (Курчакова, 2006: 134-135).

According to Tuvian beliefs, it was forbidden to cut down sacred trees: cedar, spruce, fir and pine, as well as sacred shrubs – juniper and heather. It was impossible to cut down a sacred tree, so as not to remain without a soul (Kenin-Lopsan, 2002: 417). The Tuvian myth «Living Water and Evergreen Trees» tells us that the Deity Creator Бурган-башкы (Burgan-bashki), with his sacred wand, chopped Ara-Hoo, an evil spirit that swallows the Moon and the Sun in the lower back. The lower part of the loin fell to the ground and the living water flowing out of the body of Ara-Hoo touched cedar, spruce, Turkestan juniper, Siberian juniper, fir, pine (Myths, 2010: 49).

Alive, the water that fell on the trees thanks to the deity and its sacred staff made them sacred.

Altaians have a belief that there is an invisible vital connection between a tree and a genus that worships it. So, if the revered tree died, then a man of this kind died. The fall of the old tree foreshadowed the death of the old man, and the death of the young tree was associated with the death of young people.

In Tuvian culture there is also an opinion that «one cannot cut down the old larch in the parking

lot, because the elder of that tribe can die» (Kenin-Lopsan 2002: 418) or «When an old tree breaks, an old man dies. If a young tree breaks down, the infant dies» (Kenin-Lopsan, 2002: 421).

Khakas have an idea that the soul of the old person is preserved in the old tree, and the young is preserved in the young tree. If you dump a thin tree with leaves, then the child will lose its soul. To see a falling tree in a dream meant the death of one of the members of a certain genus: if the tree was young, then the young man would die, if the old one was old, if it was branchy, it was large (Butanaev, 2014: 113).

The connection of a tree with life, the fate of a person is also traced in the oral folklore of the Altaians. Thus, the heroic tale «Maaidai-Kara» through the image of the patrimonial sacred tree «Eternal Poplar» reveals the greatness and wealth of the country of Altai – the birthplace of the hero (bahatir):

Where seventy rivers merge,

In the valley between the seven large mountains-fortresses

One hundred trunks eternal poplar,

Under the rays of the moon and the sun,

Like gold glittering, it stands (Maadai-Kara, 1973: 252).

The sacralized image of a tree has a fitomorphic appearance and, according to animistic ideas, the life of a tree is identified with a human one.

Archaic traditions are also reflected in the world perception of the magical power of the sacred tree. Ethnographic materials indicate that in Minusinsk Tatars in the upper reaches of rivers a beater for a shaman's tambourine is made from a tavern, from Minusinsk Tatars in the steppe region from solid birch. In the western regions of Tuva, a clapper was made from pine root or juniper, sometimes from cedar root (Kenin-Lopsan 1993: 30-31).

Both Altaians and Tuvans have an opinion about scaring off evil spirits with a whip, consisting of a wooden handle made of a tavolozhnik, a *табылгы* (*tabilgi*) and a belt part. The Altaians, in order to secure the two parts of the whip, the tree is not burned, since by burning it is possible to kill the living force of *камчы* and it will no longer be able to protect it from evil spirits (ON SRI. MSE, case No. 127, diary entry 2012, Toedov Echish Nokorovich, очы, born in 1933, place of birth and residence with. Keley Ust-Kansky district, entry Tadysheva N.O.). Tuvans believe that at night a «dark, heavy» place can be passed only by a rider, who has a red snowball whip in his hand, because only such a rider is terribly afraid of devils (Kenin-Lopsan, 2002: 331).

Thorny bushes and sharp wooden objects also served as a kind of amulet. Among Altai people, it is believed that evil spirits are powerless in their actions against thorny bushes – dog rose, camel thorn. Sprigs of thorns strengthened the front door on both sides so that the house was protected from evil spirits. Most used this protection after the funeral, when the household is not calm.

After the death of a person, the Khakassians placed bird cherry branches under the threshold on the outside of the yurt, and on the inside, an ax or a blade. This protected from evil spirits. In the *аале* (*Haale*) where a man died, up to 40 days, the doors of all the yurts were propped up with a birch stick (Butanaev, 1988: 111).

Apparently, due to the external characteristics – the sharp and prickly became a talisman-defense, and its location threshold is the boundary between «his» and «alien».

The idea of birch as a world or shaman tree is found in many nations. The image of a birch tree as a sacred tree was depicted on shamanic tambourines, mentioned in the shamanic mysteries (Anokhin, 1994: 56). With a birch branch in their hands, the shamans (sometimes just old men) turned to gods and spirits during sacrifices. In the system of Altai religious beliefs, there was an idea of the heavenly *Бай-кайын* (Sacred Birch). From her, as suggested by the shamanists, people receive «sus» embryos on children, cattle and animals. For this, a special rite was arranged with the aim of asking for *сус* (*sus*). During the ceremony, when people asked for «сус» on children, a small birch cradle was hung from the birch trees (Dyrenkova, 1928: 136).

A sacrificial animal was slaughtered under a birch tree, in this case it was called «чаалкайын» (*chaalkajin*), it should not have been damaged, necessarily with whole branches (Verbitsky 1884: 420). Various altars were made of birch, and handles were cut out for shamanic tambourines, idols, etc.

In Burkhanism, the value of birch as a symbol of the new belief intensified. Freshly cut birch branches were considered a necessary attribute of wedding ceremonies, and together with *арчын* and *кыйр* (*kajir*) (sacrificial ribbons) were part of the Burkhan *жайык* (*jahik*), they were endowed with cleaning and protective properties (Sherstova, 2010: 208-211).

The Burkhanists emphasized the choosiness of their religion – the bright, pure, created by the Upper deities – this all entered into their cult practice. And everything connected with bloody sacrifices, shamans, was rejected by the Lower Deity. It touched the trees. Revered trees, based on external signs, can be divided into two main categories: «light» forest

– birch, larch, poplar, aspen; «Dark» forest – cedar, pine, spruce, fir. «Dark» trees – cedar, pine, spruce, fir cannot be planted near the house, it is believed that they are harbingers of misfortunes, as they are associated with the Lower World.

Such elements as milk, *арчын*, white color, birch, etc. played a significant role in the culture of the peoples of South Siberia and Central Asia, known to many Turkic, Mongolian peoples. But it was in the cult practice of the Altai population that they became clearly pronounced, which can be explained by the influence of Burkhanism.

Religious views have influenced the family rituals of the Altai population of the Altai Republic. On the morning of the wedding day, the uncle of the maternal lines of *таайы* of the groom went to chop two young birch trees, he took milk with him (not tried by anyone), white *кыйра*, *курут*, flat cakes. Birches had to be taken from the east side. Here they tie *кыйра* and *таайы*, speaking *алкыш*, sprinkling milk in the direction of sunrise and leaving the brought products, cut down two birch trees. Birches should be two or three meters with an undivided crown. The wedding curtain was tied to them *көжөгө* (Tadysheva, 2011: 117). The branches of a birch tree, which were brought along with two birch trees for *көжөгө*, tied together with a ribbon of white matter, were placed outside, at the top, near the smoke hole in the aule, the branches were never removed. They were there until they completely fell into disrepair.

So *арчын* became a kind of «password», a symbol of belonging to the «white faith.» *Арчын* is attributed protective and cleansing properties. Special norms of behavior are adhered to *арчын*. First of all, not everyone could, if they wished, collect *арчын* branches. A man, a young man must be pure before the spirit – the master of Altai, the master of the locality: there were no dead among the members of his family and relatives for a year. At first, they tied a shrub on the east side of the *кыйр*, sprinkled it with milk, asked for permission from the landlord, and only after this ceremony they collected *арчын*. You cannot tear *арчын* in the evening or take more than 12 branches at once (Sherstova, 2010: 120).

Арчын is a necessary component in any and all Altai rituals (except for funeral and memorial).

During the matchmaking, the bride's parents arrive with *арчын*, during the «*баишаады*» ceremony, they put the *арчын* in the fire, *таайы* can open *көжөгө* (Tadysheva, 2011: 119).

Tuvans also attach great importance to juniper. So, in order to recover, the patient must be washed with holy water *аржаан*. The preparation of holy

water usually proceeds as follows: milk is poured into a plate with water and a handful of crushed junipers is added to it. So, it turns out three-part *аржаан*. It is forbidden to spill holy water on the ground (Kenin-Lopsan, 1999: 48).

Арчын is present in the funeral and memorial rites in Tuvinians and Khakas. Khakas people who washed the body of the deceased, rinsed their hands, fumigated them with *ирбен* (thyme) or *арчын* (juniper) and gave them soap and a towel (Burnak, 2009: 129).

Tuvans have obligatory fumigation of the grave with juniper. Plant branches around the monument with glowing branches, and sprinkling a grave mound with crumbs (Kissel, 2009: 81). Dry juniper is often present in offerings laid out on the grave (Kissel, 2009: 89). Upon returning from the cemetery, all the participants in the funeral fumigate themselves with the smoldering branches of juniper and perform a cleansing wash of the hands and face with water mixed with milk and crumbled dry juniper (Kissel, 2009: 90).

In the funeral and commemoration rites of the Altaians, one can also trace the special significance of the cult of the tree. According to archaeological materials it can be concluded that the burial under the tree is an ancient Turkic-Mongolian tradition. In the memorial complexes of the ancient Turks of the Altai, there are remnants of larch trunks dug there with rhizomes (Kubarev, 1978: 94).

Also, *арчын* and larch were found in the monuments of the Pazyryk culture, they were found in the horse grave of the Pazyryk kurgan-2. The corpses of horses were laid on a bed of *арчын* and larch (Achimova, 2012: 6). Today, the Altai people do not use *арчын* in funeral and memorial actions, as it is considered to be pure, sacred, and using it in this ritual will lead to its «desecration». Currently, family members of the deceased adhere to special norms of behavior, for example, close relatives of «ага-ташла уруштас» (for example, they are not associated with wood and stone, should not be built or repaired).

Some trees were honored for their «strange form», for the fact that they have some kind of power, some kind of spirit. In this regard, the Altaians' views of larch – «тыт» (thit) are very interesting. The people worshiping this tree was associated with the activities of the shamans. According to the shamanistic notions, this tree in Kudaya allegedly once begged for itself кам (kam). Even in the speech of a modern Altai one can often hear «кам-тыт» (kham-thit) (literally «larch kam», here «shaman-

larch»). Not all larches belonged to this category, but a specific tree with certain characteristics: a tree with a particularly lush intertwined crown. A kind of spherical outgrowth was located at the top or middle of the larch. Considering that this tree belongs to the shaman, the Altaians did not approach the «кам-тыт» (Kypchakova 2006: 132). Informants reported that the host spirit protects the shaman and may therefore have a negative effect on the common man. It was impossible to approach such a tree (ON NIIA. MSE, case No. 127, diary entry 2012, Toedov Echish Nokorovich, ochi, born in 1933, place of birth and residence with. Keley Ust-Kansky district, entry Tadysheva N.O.).

Non-dark forms are also present in the Tuva culture. You cannot unleash the branches of trees that are intertwined naturally. If in the forest the branches of two poplars were intertwined, it was believed that the inhabitants of this area are very friendly. If two or three trees have grown from one root, they cannot be cut down. Such trees are said to be the most valuable wealth of the earth (Kenin-Losan, 2009: 14).

The identical plots in the worldview of the Sayano-Altai Turks: Altaians, Tuvans and Khakas are explained by a common ancient history, as a result of which a close cultural heritage is preserved. Worldview universals are determined by the natural and historical experience of peoples, which allows them to experience, evaluate and interpret the world in the same way, but each ethnic group forms its own image of the world, expressing the picture of the world inherent only in it. The local peculiarities can be explained by the influence of Buddhism among Tuvans, Burkhanism among Altaians, and Orthodox Christianity among Khakas. Thus, transforming the traditional worldview, develops the traditional culture of the Sayano-Altai Turks. And apparently, through the use of modern ritual practice, cultural memory preserves traditional knowledge for subsequent generations. Oral monuments: epic, legends, riddles, legends reflect the value orientations, ideas about nature, about man and about ethnicity. This material shows the influence of the cults of fire, milk and wood on family rituals. Preserving it in one of the most conservative areas of the traditional culture of the people speaks about their sustainability in the modern traditional picture of the world of the Turkic population of Sayano-Altai.

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List of abbreviations

ODT – Old Turkic Dictionary

MSE – Materials of scientific expeditions

NA NIIA – scientific archive of research institute of Altai of S.S. Surazakov.