

TATAR FOLK CUSTOM 'FAREWELL TO ICE': BASE ON THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE EXPEDITIONS

Zilya R. Abulhanova ¹
Liailia I. Mingazova ²
Ilseyar G. Zakirova ³
Gulnar V. Yuldybaeva ⁴

¹Kazan Federal University

²Kazan Federal University

Email: Leila69@inbox.ru

³Kazan Federal University

⁴Research Institute of History, Linguistic and Literature Ufa Research Center of RAS,
Bashkortostan

ABSTRACT

The article deals with the calendar rite of the Tatar people "Farewell to Ice". It reveals the original meaning, the mythological basis of the rite. The main method for collecting information about the custom was the interview method. Authenticity of the material is ensured by massive involvement, plurality of variants. The collected material allows for the reconstruction of the rite "Farewell to Ice". Rituals based on mythological views, formed based on words, movements and actions with magical powers enter largely into life. The basis of the rites is the belief in the possibility of achieving harmony in life with the help of words and movements formed as a ritual. Rites are performed during the changes in human life associated with some important event or with the season, with the state of the sun, moon, weather in general. The rituals associated with events in a person's life and with family relationships are known as family, popular family rites. Other ceremonies – calendar ones, are performed during elemental changes when nature and space are especially susceptible. The rite "Farewell to Ice" was a complex aggregate that included songs, magic spells, dances in a ring, games, and magic actions. This rite, which at the time of its origin is an agrarian-magical phenomenon, has recently begun to lose its original function, and today it is basically perceived as a simple entertainment. For example, the Tatars of Tatarstan, on the day when the ice drifting begins, go out just to look at it. Earlier that day all the villagers used to gather. The accordion played on the river-bank, the youth sang, danced, danced in a ring, made a fire on a floating ice floe.

Keywords: Tatar people, folklore, rite, farewell to ice, mythology.

1. INTRODUCTION

Rituals grounded on mythological views and formed based on words, movements and actions of enchantment enter largely into life. The basis of the rites is the belief in the possibility of achieving harmony in life via words and movements in the form of a ritual (Mingazova, 2014: 411). Rites are performed during the changes in human life

associated with an important event or with the period of year, with the state of the sun, the moon, weather in general. The rituals associated with events in a person's life and with family relationships are known as family, popular family rites. Other ceremonies – calendar ones, are held during changes in nature when nature and space are especially susceptible.

2.METHODS

Ritual folklore of the Tatar people, its traditions, performance features, its mythological foundations and poetic texts are studied in the works by F.I. Urmancheev, F.S. Bayazitova, R.K. Urazmanova, R.F. Yagafarov, M.Kh. Bakiro, I.N. Nadirov, I.G. Zakirova, L.I. Mingazova. Despite the complete picture of the rituals, today some of them continue to remain outside the scope of researchers' investigation. Among these rituals can be considered the custom "Farewell to Ice". The ceremony of farewell to ice drifting in folklore has not been studied so far as an independent calendar rite, which has a certain period, which has the traditions to have been formed and the functions to have been defined. Meanwhile, this rite occupied an important place in the life of the people, but today it is an almost forgotten rite, and only insignificant traces of it have remained. This explains the importance and relevance, and at the same time, the extreme complexity of the topic taken for study.

3.RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The main source base was the authors' field folklore and ethnographic materials. For the period from 2000 to 2017, the authors had taken part in more than 20 expedition trips to the areas of compact settlement of the Tatars of the Russian Federation. The information collected reflects the state of the rite since the years 50-60s of the 20th century to the present. The main method for gathering the information about the rite was the interview method. Authenticity of the material is determined by mass nature, multiple variants. The gained material allows for the reconstruction of the ceremony "Farewell to Ice". The materials for investigation of the ceremony "Farewell to Ice" are also contained in the mythology of the Tatar people, the peoples of Siberia and Northern Eurasia, in written literature, in dialectological collections of Tatar dialectologists.

Discussion

In different regions, the rite has many different names: боз каpay, боз бary – to watch the ice, боз озатма, боз озату – farewell to ice, ice drift, зин китү – ice motion, су-туй – water wedding, ташу каpay – to watch the seasonal flood or floating of ice. Despite the variety of names, the content of the rite in all cases is basically the same. When ice begins to break up on the river, the rural people in their best turn-outs gather on the shore front to watch how the ice is moving. F.S. Bayazitova described how the Siberian Tatars wore their holiday clothes when they walked on to farewell performance of the ice drift: "When they saw the ice drift, they covered themselves with the best scarf" (Galimullin, 2014: 3262). Young people gathered. Among them were the accordion players. Cheerful noise sounds of the Russian accordion were heard from the riverbank until the night.

The ceremony “Farewell to Ice” was a comprehensive complex that included songs, rhymes, round dances, games, and magic actions. This rite, which at the time of its origin is an agrarian-magical phenomenon, has recently begun to lose its original function, and today it is basically perceived as a simple entertainment. For example, on the day when the ice begins to move the Tatars of Tatarstan go out just to look at it. Earlier it was customary for all the villagers to gather that day. The accordion played on the shore, the youth sang, danced, took a dance in a ring, a bonfire was made on a floe of ice (Bikmullina, 1954). The custom “Farewell to Ice”, today, basically, also remained only as a relic among the Tatar people living in various regions of Russia.

Siberian Tatars have this ritual to be still extant o this day known as “Су-туй” (lit. water-wedding). Also called “Wedding of water”, a celebration of water. People held it on the banks of the Irtysh. They put samovars, cooked. It was a holiday of the whole village when there was an ice drift. The villagers played various games, threw bread on ice as alms, made wishes. They baked potatoes” (Zakirova, 2015: 253).

The ceremony “Farewell to Ice”, as well as “Капра боткасы” (“Rook’s kasha”) is a celebration of the meeting of spring. The essence of the Rook’s Kasha ceremony relates to the coming back of the rooks. And if it says that the rooks bring spring with them, that the earth awakens, then the ice drift is indicative of a change of season, of the end of winter. Ice symbolizes winter, cold. The time of ice drift, the awakening of nature, in general, the time of chaos in nature can affect a person who becomes especially strong and sensitive. Therefore, in due time, beliefs, customs and rituals associated with the ice drift were formed.

For example, in the Tatar villages of the Omsk region, located on the banks of the Irtysh, the festival “Farewell to Ice”, based on mythical beliefs, has been held till now. For example, the rite “Су-туй” in the village of Kuskuny in the Tevriz district is held on the banks of the Irtysh River with the beginning of the ice drift. On this day, people gather on the bank, bring samovars with them, boil tea, arrange a holiday. Here is how the informant told about it, “It happens “Су-туй”. They also say the feast of water. It was held on the banks of the Irtysh. They put samovars, celebrated “Су-туй”. They brought baked goods with them. When the ice was moving, all the villagers celebrated, played various games. They threw bread on the ice as alms making wishes. They baked potatoes” (Zakirova, 2015: 253). The informants of the village of Tavinsk in the same region told that during the ice drift, wishing themselves good health, people threw coins into the water (Zakirova, 2015: 253). Thus, people believed that the ice drift carried away all diseases and ailments, all troubles with it. Therefore, even sick people hurried to the bank during the ice motion, and repeating the words “чирем-чирем чирмешкэ, чирем китсен инешкэ” (“let my ailment go into the river”), threw threads or other objects drawn from their clothes into the river, and clothes of sick people. Being sure that the spring water of the ice drift would take all their sins and ailments with it, that they would remain clean and rejuvenated, the villagers had the habit of quick immersion into the water, washing their hands and feet.

During the ice drift, bonfires were burned along the banks. It was a rite of purification during floating of ice. It was a double purification. Firstly, water, having cleansed the whole world, carried away all ailments with it, and secondly, people were purified with the help of fire: “When ice was moving, the fires from reeds were built on the banks. Girls, young daughters-in-law jumped over the fire:

Алас, алас,
Һәр бәләдән калас.

Алас, алас,
Авыру-сырхаудан калас.

(Алас, алас, / Shield from misfortune and bad luck / Алас, алас, / Shield from sickness and ailment). The adults told that” (Bayazitova, 2010:125).

Throwing bread and coins into the water, people sought to propitiate the spirits of water. Through appeasing the spirit of water, people seek to incline the element of water, being capable of causing a person troubles, to mercy, i.e. to establish harmony in the world through the elements. There was a belief that in the years when the spirit of the water was not given alms, disasters occurred. Until the end of the twentieth century, the same belief had been existing among the Tatars living in the territory of Tatarstan. Informant Bismullina Rushaniya Garifullovna, who lives in the village of Burtasy, the Kamsko-Ustinsky district of Tatarstan, says that every year after the end of the ice drift, she used to bring bread to it to appease Vodyanaya: “Vodyanaya often cried. Jagfar-babai often beat his wife, saying: “Why didn’t she take anything to Vodyanaya?” (Bayazitova, 2010: 123). It was believed that if people did not give bread Vodyanaya, then it drowned these people.

The Tatars of the Omsk region had a tradition of laying dolls on a floating ice. According to the information obtained from the Siberian Tatars the charmed dolls laid on the ice took away all the diseases. “I carefully wrap the dolls in rags, put them on an ice floe and let it go. I say that I have taken all the ailments and misfortunes” (Bayazitova, 2010: 103).

Among the Baraba Tatars, the rite of doll (kongyrchak) worship had existed until the end of the 20th century. Even though the people were considered to be Islamic officially, they secretly kept dolls. They were sewn from pieces of fabric, gradually renewed. Every day people put food for them, and after slaughtering an animal and its blood. Turning to the doll, they asked for health, well-being, success in household affairs. If everything happened unsuccessfully, the dolls were carried away to the forest, or left by the tree next to other dolls. Instead, other dolls were sewn.

In Siberian villages, there was a picture observed when greetings sent to the future and even to the eternity through floating ice-floes: “Mengeli-babayu – we are sending greetings to the spirit of the north. When, turning to him, they threw money, they kept saying: “Mengeli-babai, give us health!” (Bayazitova, 2010: 123). “My mother taught me: “When the ice breaks, say hello to Menkele. Menkele is the eternal ice” (Bayazitova, 2010: 124).

At the time of ice drifting in the village of Eshevan, they send greetings to other spirits – Tain-Vain or Ehelei-Mehelei, they give alms to the spirit of Senke-babai. At the time of ice drifting in the village of Ebarkul, greetings are given to Mengue-babai and Mengeli-babai. They are considered the owners of the Irtysh. During ice drifting in the village of Kuchum, along with the greetings to Ehelei-Mechelei bread is also thrown onto ice (Zakirova, 2015: 253). These rituals concern mythological images, still unknown to Tatar folklore - Menke, Menge, Menkele, Mengeli. The informants explain them differently. This is the spirit of Water, the owner of the Irtysh, the spirit of the North or the spirit of the Arctic Ocean. Substantively, it comes down to the concept of eternity.

4.SUMMARY

Eternity is another world, the world of the dead. In the mythology of the northern peoples of Eurasia, the Arctic Ocean is the world of the dead, the world of darkness.

According to the mythology of the Siberian Tatars, parallel worlds are divided horizontally, they are located on the same plane, the north, including the Arctic Ocean, considered to be its center, is also the world of the dead. From the mentioned, parallel worlds are interconnected by the rivers. When rivers are freed from ice, the link between the worlds becomes stronger. The time of spring floating of ice was perceived as sacred time.

5.CONCLUSIONS

Thus, “Farewell to Ice” is one of the rites of the spring calendar of the Tatar people, almost forgotten in our time. And only in the Omsk and Novosibirsk regions where Siberian Tatars live, the ancient attributes of this rite are still extant. It can be seen from the analyzed material that the farewell to ice rite, being not only a rite of farewell to winter and greeting spring, is also a particularly sensitive moment of nature when the relation between the world of the living and the world of the dead becomes stronger. People perceive this as the gateway to the world of the dead, i.e. portal opening time. At this time, the people seek to get rid of everything unnecessary – diseases, misfortunes, sends them off along with ice to the world from which there is no way back. Menke / Menge / Mengeli / Menkele, according to the mythological beliefs of the Siberian Tatars, seems to be the master of the Arctic Ocean, symbolizing the world of the dead. As regards these images, we are inclined to believe that this is a spirit associated with eternal life.

6.ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The work is performed according to the Russian Government Program of Competitive Growth of Kazan Federal University.

REFERENCES

1. Bayazitova, F. S. (2010). Mehta Tatarca dialektlarynda ethnoculture leksikasy, Jola h m tekstlary yassylygynda mitoloji deđiřmektedir. Kazan.
2. Mingazova, L. I., Galimullin, F. G., & Galimullina, A. F. (2016). the mythological image of Shuralen and its reflection in the folklore of Volga-Ural region. *Turkish online journal of design art and communication.*–Turkey, *TOJDAC*, 6, 3256-3262.
3. Zakirova, I. G. (2015). Informant Bikmullina Rushaniya Garifullovna, born 1954, the village of Bolshye Burtasy of the Kamsko-Ustynsky region of the RF (Personal Files of Zakirova I. G.).
4. Zakirova I. G. M ngелекк  аккан сулар бар // Милли – м д ни мирасыбыз: Омск  лк се татарлары. Казан, 2015. [Zakirov I. G. M ngelekk  Akkan sular  ubuđu // Milli - m d ni mirasybyz: Tatarlar  lk se Omsk. Kazan 2015.] (– P.253. Informant Tuktasimova Maginur Kalimullovna. Born in 1929. The Omsk Oblast, the Tevrizsky Region, the Village of Kuskuny; P.259. Informants Niyazova Gulsina Nailevna, born in 1959; Zaidullina Khalima Sharipovna, born in 1956; Abdrazakova Gulshat Iskanderovna, born in 1959; Niyazullina Alfiya Alfredovna, born in 1968, the village of Tavinsk of the Tevrizsky region of the Omsk Oblast; P.261. Informant Khamitova Zakiya

Aitmukhammetovna, born in 1938; the village of Ashevany of the Ust Ishymsky region of the Omsk Oblast. P.261. Informant Khamidullina Shamsiya Kasimovna, born in 1925, the village of Ashevany of the Ust Ishymsky region of the Omsk Oblast; – P.258. Informant Fattakhova Asiya Khamidullova, born in 1937. The village of Kipo-Kulary of the Tevrizsky region of the Omsk Oblast).

5. Sayfulina, F. S., & Karabulatova, I. S. (2014). European studies of barabin tatar folklore: the role of investigations of the german scientist VV Radlov. *Life Science Journal*, 11(9s), 116-119.

6. Dautov, G. F., Mingazova, L., Sayfulin, F. S., & Kayumova, G. F. (2018). Written heritage of the Golden Horde. *Opción*, 34(14), 895-911.

7. Zakirova, I. G. (2011). Folk Art of the Golden Horde Period: Mythological and Historical Foundations. Author's Abstract of Dissertation for the Degree of Doctor of Philology. Kazan.

8. Zakirov, I. G. (2011). Altınordu Sanat ve El Sanatları dönemi: Mitolojik ve tarihi temelleri. Filoloji Doktoru derecesi için tez Özet. Kazan.

9. Zagidullina, D., & Yusupova, N. (2017). Pair Sufi symbols in Tatar poetry of the 20th century: Complexity and transformation of symbols.

10. Kayumova, G., Sheymardanov, S., Akhtarieva, R., & Zhundibayeva, A. (2019). Developing Creative Potential of a Schoolchild by Means of Native Language. *Journal of Social Studies Education Research*, 10(1), 81-92.