

Medieval Turkic Nations and Their Image on Nature and Human Being (VI-IX Centuries)

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Abstract

The article aims to consider world vision of medieval (VI-IX centuries) Turkic tribes on nature and human being and the issues, which impact on the emergence of their world image on nature, human being as well as their perceptions in this case. In this regard, the paper analyzes the concepts on territory, borders and bound in the Turks' society, the indicator of the boundaries for Turkic tribes and the way of expression the world concept on nature and human being of above stated nations. The research findings show that Turks as their descendants Kazakhs had a distinctive vision on environment and the relationship between human being and nature. Human being and nature were conceived as a single organism. Relationship of Turkic mythic outlook with real historical tradition and a particular geographical location captures the scale of the era of the birth of new cultural schemes. It was reflected in the various historical monuments, which characterizes the Turkic civilization as a complex system. On this basis the ideological model of the Turks was elevated to the rank of law, the observance of which was compulsory.

Keywords: nature, history, Turks, Kazakhs, culture

1. Introduction

The paper seeks to analyze a world vision on nature and human being of the medieval (VI-IX centuries) Turkic tribes, descendants of current Kazakhs, the factors, effecting the development of their world image on nature and human being and their position in this regard. In addition, the paper reflects on the concepts on territory, borders and bound in the Turks' society, the indicator of the boundaries for Turkic tribes and the way of expression the world concept on nature and human being of above stated nations.

The monuments of written literature and the oral folklore turned out to be the basis of Central Asian Turkic tribes' culture. Recently the world image of Turkic people on sustainable development has become important as a concern of research. Interestingly, this idea of the nomadic Turkic nations is still in practice of current society. Thus, "Kitab-Dedem Korkut", "Oguz-name", "Manas" and other epics are one of the core resources of understanding the emergence of Turkic world model. Moreover the inscriptions on gravestones, created by Turkic people and founded in the territories of Central Asia and Mongolia, are rare and useful help to reveal main issues of this paper (Turkish sources of the history of Kazakhstan, 2005).

Conceptualization of Turks' mythology has been advanced by historians (Bartold & Klyashtorny, n. d.), writers (Magauin, n. d.), philosophers (Naurzbaeva, n. d.) and ethnologists (Shahanova, n. d.). Barfield, T. (1996), Tashagil, A. (2011), and Dosimbaeva, A. (2006) through their research suggest connection among the Turks, the environment, their lifestyle and the way they adapted to the nature. According to research findings of F. Ratzel a human being is a descendant of the earth since all previously emerged things were before a human being appeared. The human being is a creature with educational needs and capacity to be educated. The nature on Earth forced a human being to struggle with its forces and beasts, thus the original of a human being is closely connected to the Earth. In this regard, external examination of human being's place in nature requires to be considered (Ratzel, 2003). To gain this goal we need to clarify the terms of nature and human being.

The literature suggests that nature in an extended meaning is all things, the Globe and the variety of its forms. At the same time, it is the research subject of natural sciences and the synthesis of natural environment of society (Kazakhstan National Encyclopedia, 2006). As to the concept of image of the world, it is a system of broad view

on the world, human being's role in it, the approach of individual to environment and other members of society. The world outlook contains assumptions, values, fundamentals of knowledge and activity of people, effected by above stated views. In general world-view is reflected in different areas such as religion, art, group communication, entertainment and etc. Thus, these fields were looked over in this research.

2. Methodology

The methodology of this paper taken by the authors includes comprehensive, synergetic, integrated approaches, historical-genetic, historical and comparative methods. The integrated approach was utilized through application of expertise gained from Turkic philology, archeology and ethnography. Furthermore, the findings of Turkic written monuments and archaeological expeditions were used in the paper.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Nature and Culture

Current research revealed that one of the aspects, characterizing the concept of environment and Turks' beliefs is close relation and reliant on nature. Ecology of Medieval Central Asia was fragile. As consequence, Turkic tribes struggled to adjust to unstable weather changes. For periodization and making Holocene chronology Kazakhstani scholars applied Blytt-Sernander scheme, which was modified by N. A. Khotynsky. This scheme showed that in VI-VIII centuries, high humidity and low temperature on the most part of Kazakhstan territory were prevailed (Aubekerov & Nygmatova, 2007). The opposite situation took place in IX-XII centuries, the temperature increased and the supply of moisture declined. Recent study results uncovered the fact that geological conditions in this period were similar to present one. Subsequently, all these transformations, forced the Turkic tribes to look for new territories (Aubekerov & Nygmatova, 2007). This effected on development of nomadic economy (Barfield, 1996). Moreover, the worshipping of Turks made it an important element of their traditions (Gabitov & Alimzhanov, 2005). In line with nomads' world-view, the prairie landscape is an illustrative of a perfect space, which is associated with the process of creation. Interestingly, the procedure of visiting sacred places is still practiced in Central Asia. Turks' world outlook is overwhelmed with the idea of environment majesty (Dosimbaeva, 2012). Utilized space, conceived as a core part of the generic land, which was signed by relevant symbols. Area, mountains, trees, stone sculptures, in the cycle of rituals, sacrificial observance, is "illuminated by oath" and this center becomes highly sacred (Dosimbaeva, 2012). This is confirmed by series of archeological research. For instance, in 2001, runic inscription was found on the rock stone of the right bank of Merke in Merke area in Zhambyl region. Turcologist A. S. Amanzholov interpreted this text as: "My sorrow is the death" and "disperse my sorrow". Here is the version Japanese Turcologist O. Takashi: "Eternal sacred land", which means Merke is everlasting blessed land (Kadrimbetova, 2011, p. 333).

One of the dominant idea in the world-view was the conception of relation of nature cataclysm and crisis in the society. "Any violation of the world order entails upheavals in the state ... When the sky presses and the earth opens up" (Klyashtorny, 1977, p. 137).). Thereby, conflicts in society were connected to natural disasters, which in turn were conceived as the penalty of heaven. Epic frame of this belief is presented in the joy of

rebirth of lost world in the plot of a BAMS-Beyrek's, son Salorio, revival: "Your Black Mountain tottered, staggered and collapsed, (again) it finally got up! Your blood-spattered water dried up; (again) it purred at last! Your strong tree withered away; (again) it finally became green!" (The book of my grandfather Korkut, 1962, p. 47).

3.2 Nature Protection Idea

The Turks promoted the idea of environment protection and punishment for infliction of harm to nature, which was reflected in epics and legends. The cases of negative behavior of people in relation to nature are illustrated in ancient legends of Central Asian Turks, where it was forbidden to kill sacred animals. For example, the Kyrgyz have legends about the hunter Kozhozhas, who mistook deer for this son and killed the latter. This was a punishment for his greediness, since there was a belief of thousands animals, the number of which can be killed by hunters (Discover this wonderful world of legends. (2009, pp. 103-104). Another example of environmental protection is reproduced in "Er Tostik" tale. Er-Tostik saved the nestlings of bird Samruk from a huge snake, crawling on a tree. This tale and other stories and legends such as "Just punishment", "Kyuyum batyr", "Shynyrau" and others exemplify the concept of nature and human being connection (Naurzbaeva, 2003).

The next determinant effected the approach of Turks to nature was a religion. The idea of duality of creation of all things was widely spread. For instance, Tengri and Earth-Water (ZherSu) are together a unified whole (Dosimbaeva, 2012). The Turks religious beliefs are linked to Tengrianism, where Tengri is a "lord" and "sanctuary" of all things. Therefore, sky, Earth-Water (Zher-Su) and Hagan Khatun were considered to be sacred.

In line with this idea sky is as the embodiment of Tengri, Earth-Water (Zher-Su) is happiness of Tengri and Hagan Khatun associates the will of Tengri, the guardians of people, etc. (Kenzhetai, 2005).

Formation of the world was attached to Tengri: the blue dome of sky covers habitable, "brown earth" as the "roof". This comparison is applied by authors of two rock paintings on the coastal cliffs along Tuba river (a tributary of the Yenisei). One of these so-called "second monument of river Tuba", can be read with some refinements in the last two lines:

- 1) Tenrim öçük bizke *bol+
- 2) Idil jerim a bengü bol
- 3) Oh my heaven, be a roof over our heads
- 4) Oh my country Idil, long life to you (Klyashtorny, 2001)!

As it is already seen from before stated examples the Turks concept of nature and human being was reflected in folklore, ancient Turkic written sources, symbols of Statehood such as flag, "tamga" (family symbol).

3.3 Territory Identification

According to assumptions of many scholars tamga was used by nomadic ethnics - toguzogyz, segizogyz, turgesh, on ok, kyrgyz, karlyk and many others mentioned in inscriptions to mark territorial boundaries. They had independent tamgas, such as tribal ones and derivatives of them, including personal, family, patrimonial that defined their public or social status and the right to the property (Kazakh National encyclopedia, 2009).

Before we consider "tamga" it would be better to find out what territory, borders and bound was for the Turks and how the boundaries of individual tribes and nations were defined in Turkic tribes.

The territory is not just a special kind of space. From both human and natural sciences perspective the concepts of "space" and "territory" are varied. The space involves both actual physical space (territory) and its geographical field (geographic relationship). If the physical space is discrete (dashed), the geographic field is continuous. The information on constitutives of territory could be found from before stated inscription. The words such as (land-water, pasture) and phrases as (may no land and water got orphaned) and (may no livestock left without pasture) are applied in it. For example, similar information is provided in the text of this classic written monument in honor of Bilge Kagan on line 16: "the people of onok Budun was in pain. We cared about the land and water not got orphaned. There is a great number of such samples in many Turkic characters.

3.4 Boundary Clarification

Additionally to criteria stated in previous paragraph, one of the most important parts of the territory is a bound. The word boundary refers to line between the territories abroad the violation of which leads to conflict. This issue is governed by the laws of individual countries, international agreements.

The Turks were engaged in nomadic pastoralists and nomadised in strictly defined boundaries. Chinese sources reveal the following information about the Turks: "They owned certain lands. They do not stay in one place for a long time. Permanent seat of Kagan was Otuken mountains. Moreover the tribe Telek, stationed in the Western Turkic Khanate, was mentioned in "the book of Northern Dynasty". They were forced to migrate in search of pasture and water sources in specially established territories.

In Western Kakhanaat territorial boundaries were determined by natural objects. This is confirmed by Chinese sources. For example, according to the history of the North Dynasty Yshbara Hagan led the long negotiations over the establishment of territorial boundaries. As a result of negotiations, the boundary was set at Mangar desert (Chinese sources of the history of Kazakhstan, 2006).

Due to lack of written information and archaeological sources of the Middle Ages on this issue the author offers to consider the issue compared with other tribes and Turkic Khanate receivers with the Kazakh Khanate. For example, general population of Kazakh Khanate owned land and was engaged in nomadic pastoralism in the XVIII century. Therefore, each tribe had its own land with clearly defined boundaries. There were winter and summer pastures. This prevented the intergeneric disputes. These relations were governed by the laws of the vault, "Jetizhargy." Genus Chief, elder established a special mark on the ground of village stop. This is usually plunges a spear into the ground, mounted Kuruk (loop for catching a horse) (Artikbaev, 2006). For example, the mark of the territory by the spear and Kuruk could be make on a spring, the genus chief left a thing (for instance, shackles), and put the fabric on the tall grass (Teleuova, 2007). Furthermore, to determine generic boundaries sometimes wells and dug canals were used. Intergeneric land disputes were resolved based on the historical identity of the region. According to authorto solve the issue of inter-state borders this kind of marking of the area

was utilized by genus and tribes of Western Turkic Khanate.

Many scholars note the relationship between the continuity of Western Turkic Kakhnate and Kazakh Kakhnate. For instance, this concern saving Tengrianism, continuity of territory and language and nomadic herding. As it was mentioned above, generic labeling tamgas used in Western Kahanat were popular in Kazakh Kakhnate as well. Based on this the author tries to suggest that marking the territories and borders in Western Turkic Kakhnate emerged in approximately the same way as in Kazakh Khanate in the XV-XVIII centuries.

3.5 Land Using Specification

According to Kishibekov D. nomads of Central Asia in the period under consideration roamed from one place to another at a distance of 10-15 km. Prosperous lands were chosen as nomadic locations. They had to be found on the upland areas (Kshibekov, 1984). Similar allegations put forward Kradin N. N. His research yielded that in a nomadic society 1.5 acres (1 tithing - 1.092 hectares), are required per capita, while settled nations need 0.78 acres of land on average. The average population density was 0.5-2 persons (Kradin, 1992). If the land was in the desert and semi-arid steppes they needed more land and the distance between the areas declined. According to geologists in the period of Western Turkic Kakhnate (about 603-704 years.), the temperature in the deserts was relatively close to the current temperature in the deserts of Central Asia. Chernyshevsky (Selected works of economic M, 1948, T 3, h 1.) concludes that the area was not measured by the human soul and the number of cattle. For example, for 24-25 horses nomad took 2-3 square meters of pasture. The land of nomads was communal property. On the basis of Maykov I. M. expedition materials to Mongolia in 1921, N. N. Kradin argues that extensive farming forced nomads to expand external lands but not internal. This was expressed by pasture land expansion. Taking in account the fact that animal husbandry required vast areas of land, favorable territory was separated rapidly. This led to a breach of population and livestock growth. As a result, in a certain area a dynamic balance was established in livestock number and population. There is a famous Mongolian proverb associated with this situation "there is no cattle without grass, no food without cattle".

According to Pletneva S. A. (Pletneva. Nomads of the Middle Ages, Moscow, 1982) continually land grabs have been taken place in Central Asia, including Western Turkic Kakhnate until the end of the XI century. Therefore, the problem was solved by established rules within the state, tribes and genus. For example, in famous medieval source on the history of the Mongols "Secret History of the Mongols" it is stated that "the posture and specific area were determined within the state along with collective decision. Genus in large nomadic tribal unions traveled on the same principle. Markov G.E. defines the concept of territory for nomads as "a collection of pasture land." The main area in a nomadic society was allocated for cattle breeding (Markov, 1976).

Territories were defended by arms. Weak tribes were displaced from their lands. Geologists assume that in the period of Western Turkic Kakhnate tribal movement was caused by climate change and political reasons (Aubekeroev & Nygmatova, 2007). However, interestingly, despite all above mentioned, there were cases when particular tribes were allowed to cross the territory of others on the basis of the contract. Currently this is called *severtut*. *Severtut* - is a limited use of land, hike and go to transportation.

For Turks of Kakhnate and the nomads of Central Asia, the concept of the territory, border was nominal and movable. In other words, territorial boundaries were not shielded obstacles. Additionally there were constantly expanded.

Tamgas were utilized to mark the territory of the movement and dispersal of the Turkic tribes. For example, archaeologists found tamgas of Western Turkic Kakhnate in the territory of a former Bulgar state. According to researchers tamgas provide information on migration of individual tribes and genus of Western Turkic Khanate in Eastern Europe. Found generic tamgas on the walls of ceramics Pliska are similar to those carved on rocks sanctuary Zhaisan (located in the district of Shu, Jambul region of the Republic of Kazakhstan) (Dosimbaeva, 2011).

Ancient Turkic tamga-signs are drawn on surfaces of some worship-memorial objects: complexes consisting, except specially erected constructions, of stela with inscriptions, sarcophagi, statues of especially important persons, zoomorphic sculptures, balbal-mengirs. Their sacramental and the special semiotics status is emphasized by this fact.

3.6 Models of the World

All these above stated issues additionally reflect the Turkic world-view models. There were 3 models of world's image: 2 horizontal and 1 vertical.

The first horizontal model is founded on the global perspective of space. This includes the Turks concept of space, celestial bodies, planets, earth and sky. Genealogical legends suggest that Oghuz tribes are descendents of

progenitor Oguz Khan, who had 6 sons called the Sun (Kun), Moon (Ai), Star (Zhulduz), Mountain (Tau), Sea (Teniz) and Heaven (Kok). The names of his 24 grandchildren were delegated to each of Oguz tribes (The book of my grandfather Korkut, 1962, p. 138).

The characteristic of the sky were the sun and the moon, associated with life on earth. The cult of "born of the sun" is presented in the Orkhon inscriptions. "The side, where the sun was born" (kun toyusıqan) was one of the core directions. Therefore, the Kagan's doors were open to the east "as the reverence for the ascent of the sun" (kun batsıqıñ) (Klyashtorny, 1977, p. 32).

The second horizontal model of the world is represented as a square or flat space. The earth was perceived as a quadrangular (square) space, inhabited by the people and hostile Turks on the edges. To show the boundaries of the world consistently, the notion of *buluñgöl*: *tört buluñ* (four corners) was illustrated in runic letters. There is a clear confirmation of this in the text, devoted to Kultegin: "When the blue sky was made in the overhead (and) the dark (brown) land in the bottom, sons of human being (people) were created between them. My ancestors Bumin Kagan Istemi-Kagan had power over the sons of human being. Reigning (the kingdom), they supported, arranged a tribal alliance and founded the Turkish nation. Four corners are associated with people, who lived in four corners of the earth and were all (their) enemies. They conquered nations in four corners of the World, which is described as following: they made bow heads of those, who had heads and forced to bend the knees those, who had knees. The Turks settled to the east by the lands of Kadyrkhan people, back to the west by the land of Temir kapyg ("Iron Gate") (Malov, 1951). Center of the world was conceived to be a "sacred Otyuken land", the residence of Turkic Hagans, from where they conquered "four corners of the World". This idea is clearly illustrated in the monuments, dedicated to El Etmish Yabgu (chronology is approximately 716 and 728), who was Shad by Elteris, Kapagan and Bilge Kagans: "Our ancestor Jami Hagan conquered four corners (*törüt boluñuy*) of the World, including the whole Turkic people; Turks in the east (kun toyusıqan), in the west (kun batsıqıñ), those, settled from the neighborhood (*beriye*) to China and further... set balbals (stone statues). In addition, the following words indicate four main directions that we previously talked to: "kun toyusıqan" (east), "kun batsıqıñ" (west), "beriye" (south) and "yariya" (north).

This model of the world is a different horizontal perspective. It is a representation of the landscape with its orohydrography. First, it is land -water (*jer-sub, jer-su*), which opposes to "blue sky". It was believed to be a sacral and terminological notion. The Turks associated land-water ("*jer-su*") with land and space in general. The instance of its application is found in the Turkic literary monuments: "may land-water not be without a master" (*Jer-su bidsiz bolmazun*). Moreover, the text on the stone stele, dedicated to Bilge Kagan confirms this: "the people of "ten arrows" were harassed. Saying, let it not be without a master land and water owned by our ancestors ... a leopard-bag, at that time we gave (him) and gave the title of Kagan (his marriage) my little sister - the princess (Turkish sources of the history of Kazakhstan, 2005, p. 55).

3.7 *Space as a Place of Birth. Motherland*

In the Turks' beliefs on space in above mentioned model had an emotional active aspect. This dealt with such notions as native land, homeland, *Zheruik* (promised land). The Turks believed that a land is the place, where all things were created. It is the middle of the world; it is *Zheruik*. The Turks call Motherland the "land, where dripped the blood from the umbilical cord". *Zheruik* and home were conceived to be synonymous. Outstanding instances of this are reflected in legends and *kyus* of Korkyt: (Korkut), (My People) ((Elim-ai, halkim-ai)) (Camel Targil) ((Targil tana)). These legends and *kyus* describe Korkyt's pursuit of *Zheruik*.

For the Kazakhs, the descendants of the Turks, a Motherland, as for other nations of the World, played a crucial role. Well-known Russian scholar A.I. Levshin revealed the following fact about the Kazakhs: "the Kazakhs are tied to their own land. They are ready to stand all challenges and suffer but not leave their Motherlands" (Levshin, 2009, p. 330).

As to vertical model of the world-view, it refers to a top and bottom world: human world and the underworld (Suleimenova et al., 2011). "World Mountain" and "The World Tree" are connected to the world beyond the grave and the earthly life. To dream of a falling tree was an evil omen, it meant death of a loved ones. In addition, it was forbidden to cut down the forest saplings, as this could result in the death of children (Sagalaev & Oktyabrskaya, 1990, p. 47).

Summarizing above stated issues, the aspects of Turkic world image is overlooked conceptually. The Turkic nations live in the country retaining traditions of their ancestors in demarcation of territorial boundaries, defining territories and left them to inheritors.

4. Conclusion

The Turks as their descendants Kazakhs had a special presentation about the environment and the relationship between human being and nature. Human being and nature were perceived as a single organism. This representation is passed on through tradition from generation to generation. Relationship of Turkic mythic outlook with real historical tradition and a particular geographical map captures the scale of the era of the birth of new cultural schemes. It was reflected in the various historical monuments, which characterizes the Turkic civilization as a complex system. On this basis the ideological model of the Turks was elevated to the rank of law, the observance of which was compulsory.

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