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¹Egyzbaeva M., ¹Meirmanova G., ²Iovita Radu P.

¹Al-Farabi Kazakh National University, Almaty, Kazakhstan

²MONREPOS Archaeological Research Centre and Museum,
Romisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum Leibniz Research Institute for Archaeology,
Schloss Monrepos, D-56567 Neuwied, Germany,
e-mail: egyzbaevamk@gmail.com

The yurt and world view features of the Kazakhs

Abstract. Kazakh yurt is a traditional dwelling, existing since the ancient times and used up to the present time. The yurt of the Kazakhs is a portable house, which is typical for the inhabitants of the Great Steppe. This unique type of dwelling, made of felt and flexible willow rod, has become a symbol of the Motherland and its ancient culture.

The main goal is to show the role of the yurt and its place in the worldview perception of the Kazakhs, as well as to introduce the semantic meaning of its details and parts.

The article examines the details of the yurt as an ethnographic source in the studies of the traditional worldview of the Kazakhs. The article concerns not only a physical description of the yurt, but also conveys its semantic meaning. The symbol is considered as a sign characterizing its special significance. As a result, the authors came to the conclusion that the yurt has a complex architectural features and semantic meaning which reflects the level of cultural development of the Turkic-Mongolian tribes and their complex ideology. Thus, the symbolism of the yurt in the traditional worldview of the Kazakhs has also determined the experience of everyday life in their traditional perception of the world.

Key words: ethnos, nation, ethnography, custom, rite, dwelling..

Аңдатпа. Қазақ киіз үйі – ежелгі замандардан осы күнге дейін қолданылып келе жатқан дәстүрлі баспана. Қазақ киіз үйі – Ұлы дала тұрғындарына ғана тән көшпелі баспананың өзіндік бір түрі. Киіз үйі өзінің ерекше архитектуралық шешімімен, күрделі семантикалық мәнімен түркі-монғол тайпаларының мәдени дамуының дәрежесін, күрделі идеологиясын көрсетеді. Киіз бен талдан жасалған баспананың, архитектураның бұл түрінің қайталанбастығы, бүгінгі күні әр қазақ үшін Отанның, халықтың ежелгі мәдениетінің ерекше белгісі болып саналады.

Қазақ киіз үйі туралы айтқанда, ол баспана ретінде көшпелілер тұрмысының сұранысына ғана дәл есептеліп жасалып қана қойған жоқ, оның ішкі жиһазы безендірілуінің сәнділігімен ерекшеленеді, киіз үйдің құрылысының өзі олардың қоршаған ортаға деген көзқарасын білдіреді.

Қазақ киіз үйінің рухани-мәдени және ғылыми-философиялық мәнін ашатын оның символикасы ерекше зерттеуді қажет етеді. Көшпелі мәдениеттің бейнелілігі әлемге деген философиялық қатынасты білдірді және күнделікті өмірдің үлгісі болды. Әлем және тұрмыс философиясы бөлінбеді, олар бір-бірімен тығыз байланысты болды.

Түйін сөздер: Этнос, ұлт, этнография, әдет-ғұрып, салт-дәстүр, баспана.

Аннотация. Казахская юрта – традиционное жилище, существующее с древности, используется до настоящего времени. Юрта казахов своеобразный тип переносного жилища, характерный для насельников Великой степи. Неповторимость этого типа жилища, архитектуры, созданной из войлока и гибкого ивового прута, стала сегодня для каждого казаха емким символом Родины, древней культуры народа. Главная цель статьи – показать роль и место казахской юрты в системе мировоззрения

казахов, а также семантический смысл деталей и частей юрты и традиционного жилища казахов в целом.

В статье рассматриваются детали юрты, как этнографический источник в изучении традиционной мировосприимчивости казахов. Изучаемый объект статьи не просто физическое описание юрты, но и передает его смысловое значение. В статье символ рассматривается как знак характеризующий его особенное значение. В результате анализа материалов авторы пришли к выводу, что юрта с оригинальным архитектурным решением, со сложным семантическим смыслом отражает уровень культурного развития тюрко-монгольских племен, их сложную идеологию. Таким образом, символика юрты в традиционном мировоззрении казахов определил и мировоззренческий опыт повседневного быта.

Ключевые слова: этнос, нация, этнография, обычай, обряд, жилище.

Introduction

Speaking about the Kazakh yurt, it is safe to say that as a dwelling, it was not only accurately calculated and thought out, taking into account the needs of the nomads' everyday life, and its decoration was distinguished by the ornamental elegance of the decor, but the very principle of constructing the yurt was a reflection of their views on the surrounding world. The symbolism of the Kazakh yurt deserves a great attention, which reveals the spiritual, cultural and scientific-philosophical meaning of the yurt. Symbolism of nomadic culture was a philosophical attitude to the world and was the norm of life. There was no division of the philosophy of peace and life, but they were interrelated. A number of Kazakhstani researchers such as A. Toleubaev, N. Shakhanova, M. Karakuzova, J. Hasanov, B. Ibraev and others wrote about the reflection of the ancient space system in the design of the yurt.

Yurt of nomads is a product of long development and gradual improvement of more primitive types of dwellings. There are different opinions concerning the origin of the yurt. Most of the archaeological materials and written sources testify to the use of the yurt and its initial prototypes. In the process of study and developing the Andronov's dwelling, researchers managed to solve the issue on the origin of the yurt: it surprised with its genius idea and simplicity. It was believed that it could develop from a Bedouin tent, a Siberian plague, a hut. During the excavations of the Andronovo settlements in Chaglinka, Petrovka, Atasu, Buguly in the layers belonging to the XII-IX centuries BC has been discovered an open circular or polyhedral construction with frame walls of the vertical poles of the fence with a lattice, with a conical or pyramidal overlap, resting on the frame, through which the fumes coming out. Therefore, we can assume that the yurt originated in the ancient times and

the prototype of it was a round dwelling belonging to the Andronovculture [Orazbaev, 1970: 56].

A close connection between the image-conceptual model of the world and the yurt can be traced in its structure. The structure of the yurt consists of three parts: kerege (latticed frame), uyk (poles supporting the upper circle), shanyrak (upper circle) – each of these constitute a certain level along the vertical. The roofing felt cloth also consists of three parts: tuyrylyk (cover solves the base of the yurt), uzyuk (covering dome poles) and tundyk (felt for the upper circle) [Toporov, 1970: 65].

Methodology

The basic principles of the research were analyzed in several ways. Firstly, relative-historical method: the yurts of the Kazakh people have been studied in connection with certain features (construction features of the Kazakh yurt, its basic ritual actions, the meaning of the ritual) and on that basis, common historical and distinctive features of yurts have been identified. Secondly, the systematic approach, which considers the dwelling as the main constructor of the traditional worldview and lifestyle system. Thirdly, an interdisciplinary method: the ethnography related subjects (linguistics, folklore, archeology, religious studies) were used to identify stable and evolving elements of the tradition of the yurt.

Methods of interviewing, which are widely used in sociological and ethnological sciences, have also been used in the course work [Devyatko, 2006; Yadov, 2003; Strauss, Corbin, 2001]. The Kazakh people's yurt was compared to the homeland of Siberian, Central Asian peoples, and analyzed their genetic and cultural similarities. The objective of the modern approach was to analyze the subject from objective and critical analysis and critical research.

Shanyrak

The roof or «Shanyrak» is the most respected detail of the traditional Kazakh yurt. It is a symbol of the continuation of one of the most prominent pieces of the Kazakh national heritage. There are many famous cultural-historical motives, beliefs, symbols, sacred traditions and celebrations of the Kazakhs is related with “Shanyrak”.

According to the versatile provision of many nations «it is indeed real that it is sacred, and the sacred has been preserved as it makes up the space, so far out of the universe» [Fatikov, 1980: 114].

From the semantics of the shanyrak, the analogy of which is the horizontal plan with the cross in the circle. R.F. Fatikov stated that the «Shanyrak» can be regarded as a model of the world [Fatikov, 1980: 179]. In our opinion, the model of the world consists not only «Shanyrak», but also the yurt itself. In the cultural horizon, the yurt can be divided into four parts: «place for the honoured», «the door», «right», «left». Thus, the plan is represented as a quadrant (squared), inside a circle. The dome that consists of uyk and shanyrak connects with the quadrant foundation symbolizes the connection of the Sky with the Earth.

In the system of code translations «macrocosm and dwelling» shanyrak, being the highest level of the yurt corresponds with the sky. In the ascension of shamans to shanyrak with the purpose of meeting with their spirits-assistants, we see a parallel with the widespread view of the Siberian peoples about the journey of a shaman in the upper world – in Heaven. In the shamanistic representation of the ancient Turks, later the Kazakhs shanyrak and Heaven – comparable, mutually re-coded concepts. The sky – Kokaspan (lit. «blue sky») has a deep conceptual connection with the cult of Tengri [Mikhailov, 1980: 143-152]. The very name «Tengri», according to M.P. Khomonov, was formed during the period of commonality of the Altai languages and consists of two components: the ten (arch, arch, pillars) and the ger (yurt, house, and dwelling) [Khomonov, 1976: 55]. In our opinion, the special sacralization of the Shanyrak is explained by its connection with the two most important ancient Turkic cults – Tengri and ancestors [Stebleva, 1972: 213-214]. Adi

Shanyrak is one of the main classifiers of the vertical plane of the living space. On the one hand, it is the boundary between the top and bottom, on the other – between the external and internal space. Through the shanyrak the inhabitants of the yurt connect with the sacred celestial lights: the sun, the moon and the stars. The arrival of daylight, the rays of the sun in the

dwelling through shanyrak Kazakhs attached special importance. Probably, therefore, in the first months after the wedding, the bride was obliged to get up at sunrise and open the nightcloth (tundik) over the shanyrak [Toleubaev, 1991: 158].

Also, shanyrak is a symbol of family well-being and peace. The Kazakhs had such a ritual of oath: looking at the shanyrak, people swore an oath.

Shanyrak is a symbol of unification, that's why Kazakhs, when they perform the battles – these are the wishes of the old people – they say «шаңырағың шайқалмасын» let the dome of your yurt, be strong, unshakable. This means: «Let peace, friendship and brotherhood reign in the family». In the national consciousness, the outlook of the Kazakhs «shanyrak» is «home», «family», «generation», in the spiritual and philosophical sense it is the symbol of the hearth, the continuation of the family, traditions and upbringing, spiritual intimacy. On the descendants of the family usually said: «Әкесінің шаңырағын құлатпай, түтінін түтетіп отыр», which means «Worthy continues the father's kind». Shanyrak was closely associated with the concept of the family, therefore, when the family was in great trouble or the family disintegrated, they said: «Шаңырағы шайқалды» – «Shanyrak swayed». In the Kazakh view, shanyrak was associated with cult rites and served as a symbol of the continuation of the family. Therefore, they tried to pass on from generation to generation. In the event of the death of the owners who did not have offspring, the shanyrak of the yurt was left on the grave, which meant the end of the tribal genus. The well-established Kazakh benevolent expressions: «Шаңырағың биік, босағаң берік болсын» – «Let the shanyrak be tall, the door racks – strong» – contain the idea of peace, prosperity and happiness.

Shanyrak of the Kazakh yurt is considered a sacred detail, protected from the devil. Shanyrak's form, its parts, material, quality – all this is directly related to the concept of «kut» – the protector of the family's good [Shakhanova, 1998: 12].

In the circles shanyrak – kuldrewish – is made in the form of a cross, which is a symbol of the eternal movement of the sun, evolution, the continuation of life. In all likelihood, the three pillars of the Kuldrewish, firmly tied together, symbolize the unity of the three Kazakh zhuzs. If you look down on the Kazakh yurt, then the shanyrak looks like the sun, and the poles (uyk) – on the sun's rays.

In the popular view, shanyrak often acts as the equivalent of a yurt. This is evidenced by the well-established expressions «үлкен шаңырақ», «қара шаңырақ» (house of ancestors), «шаңырақ салық» (tribute from each yurt) [Arginbaev, 1973: 34].

«Shanyrak is one of the few terms related to the yurt, almost unambiguous among the Turkish and Mongolian («tsagryk») [Kuftin, 1926: 34], in the Kalmyk language «shanaran» [Pyrveev, 1975: 10] reminds us of a far common basis the name and this important part of the yurt.

Bosaga and the door

One of the important sacralized parts of the yurt is «bosaga» the door, more precisely – doorjambs. In the Kazakh view, doorjambs and thresholds are a sacred place, where wealth and prosperity lie. All actions at the entrance-exit were attributed to a high degree of semioticity [Seidimbekov, 1989: 125]. So, at the first entrance to the yurt of the father-in-law or in the “otau” (yurts of the newlyweds), the bride was to make three bows at the threshold, lean her head against the door jambs, cross the threshold first with her right foot; Kazakhs forbade children to lean against the door jambs («босағаға сүйенбе»), stand at the entrance (босағада тұрма); in the case of frequent death of children in subsequent birth, the cord was cut at the port; some of the Kazakh tribes deceased before removal three times raised and lowered at the threshold. European ambassadors, when visiting the khan’s bid, tried not to step on the threshold, for this was considered a sign of unkind feelings, a bad omen. «Black» messenger reported bad news, stepping with his right foot on the threshold and hands propping up the door jamb. This custom, known since the time of the Türkic Kaganate, reached the Kazakhs of the beginning of the 20th century [Toleubaev, 1991: 159].

In the popular view, the space outside the organized structure of the dwelling was a world of elements and wild nature, that is why the Kazakhs said: «Esikten қырық кadam shykkan adam мыспир» – «A man who has gone forty steps from the threshold needs help». In the Kazakh tradition, as practically all Turkic-Mongolian peoples, the bride’s relatives prepared a yurt for newlyweds. However, the doorjambs brought with them the groom. According to N.Zh. Shakhanova, the manufacture of the skeleton of the yurt and the door by different masters was due to the idea of the obligatory union of two beginnings (male and female) in the yurt, realized in the union of the groom and the bride [Shakhanova, 1998: 21].

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Shanyrak and the door, being permeable boundaries of vertical and horizontal organized structures, were considered the most vulnerable parts. Therefore, the shanyrak and the door for the night were compulsorily closed and hung out things with apotropeic (protective) meaning. For example, at the door jamb («bosaga») hung the elbow of the ram («қары жілік»), which, it was believed, kept from various troubles. At the pie for the night, milk was left in a flat pan («ақ»), so that the snake did not harm the residents of the yurt; during the birth, to prevent the arrival of various evil spirits, a horse with a whiteness in front of the eyes («ақшығырат») was held at the door while the shanyrak had a golden eagle. Sometimes, at the entrance to the yurt, they established a lie – a spike as a guard for the well-being of the family that lived in it [Baybourin, 1983: .16].

Shanyrak, the door and hearth are parts of the yurt of a high degree of semioticism, sign and sacredness. Most religious, mythological and religious rituals are performed with the participation of these ritual symbols.

The next closely related to the shanyrak element are the uyks (supporting poles supporting the Shanyrak.) Some scientists believe that the time can be determined from the angle of the sun’s rays through the upper hole (shanyrak) of the yurts to the tips of the poles, which are about 60 [Pyrveev, 1980: 175].

The Turko-Mongolian parallels in the names of parts of the yurt also refer to the names of the dome poles: «uyk», Mongolian «uni» [Vainshtein, 1976: 65], Kalmyk «unin» [Ancient Turkic dictionary, 1969: 10]. Obviously, «uyk» in the semantic sense goes back to «ok» (arrow). In fact, a long pole, sharpened on one side, resembles an arrow or a spear.

One of the main distinguishing features of a yurt from all mobile homes of nomads is the collapsible-folded lattice frame of the walls [16, pp. 199-200]. This element is such an important part that, in the opinion of some researchers, the name of the yurt goes back to the name of the lattice skeleton. Disclosing the semantics of the words «termeger», ethnographer M.S. Mukanov writes: «It can be assumed that there is a semantic connection between the terms»termeger and «termealasha» – in both cases there are personal in its meaning elements of material culture, not a sign of interweaving, gratings, linen weave under the elders of ancient times, the creation of a dwelling of the hunnic type, and then the invention of the lattice as a more convenient and practical design of the portable

dwelling of nomads» [Mukanov, 1981: 205]. There is a controversial link between the word «terme», «teru» (in modern Kazakh language «sorted») with a lattice backbone, like the translation of the words «termeger». S.A. Kozin translated «termeger» as «latticed yurt» [Kozin, 1941: 190], N.P. Shastina – as a «yurt with a sharp (conical) top» [Shastina, 1958: 137].

In our opinion, the Mongolian name of the yurt «ker» (ger) is genetically traced back to the ancient Turkic keraġu, which means «tent, yurt» [Ancient Turkic Dictionary, 1969: 212]. The semantic content of the Ancient Turkic «keragu» and Late Cossack «kerege» goes back to the common root –«ker». In his time, the explorer of Kazakh culture B.A. Kuftin wrote: «... the word «kerege» is etymologically derived from the root «ker» – «stretching» [Kuftin, 1926: 34]. Indeed, the main distinguishing feature of the latticework of the yurt walls is precisely the ability to stretch during installation. M.S. Mukanov notes that in the Eastern Kazakhstan the yurt is sometimes called one word – «kerege» [Mukanov, 1974: 195]. The Kazakhs of this region have the expression: «Баласын үйлендіріп бөлек кереге тұғызып берді» (I married my son and gave him a separate kerege, i.e., a yurt).

Conclusion

Finally, it can be considered that in the Kazakh language the word «kerege» was previously used also in the meaning of the yurt as a whole. It seems that the Mongolian name of the yurt –«ger» is genetically traced back to the ancient Turkic «keragu», more precisely, to its root «ker». If we assume that the borrowing of the trellis-collector yurt of the ancient Turkic type by Mongolian nomads is more or less proven [Lubsan Danzan, 1973: 52-54; Popov, 1961: P.52-54], then borrowing the name of the yurt in a slightly modified form is beyond doubt.

We can conclude that the symbolism of the yurt in the traditional outlook of the Kazakhs has also determined the worldview of everyday life. Speaking about the Kazakh yurt, it is safe to say that as a dwelling it was not only accurately calculated and thought out, taking into account the needs of the nomads' everyday life, and its decoration was distinguished by the ornamental elegance of the decor, but the very principle of constructing the yurt was a reflection of their views on the surrounding world.

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