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TENGRI FUNCTIONS

IN ANCIENT TURKISH WRITING MONUMENTS

FUNCIONES TENGRI EN LOS ESCRITOS DE MONUMENTOS TURCOS

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ABSTRACT: In the article the essence and value of concept “tengrianism”, based on ancient Turkish beliefs in the uniform God - Tanry (or Giok Tanry) is investigated. The author of article comes to conclusion, that tengrianism as the religious-mythological system, originates from ancient representations about unity of the sky and the earth. It is proven in the paper that Religious beliefs, cults and rituals are based on a number of elements, the composition forming the core of a particular culture. Archaic religious phenomena in ancient societies were associated with social institutions, and beliefs, being in this case carriers of both sacred and secular functions, regulated social behavior.

Keywords: Ancient Turkish, Goy Tanry, the Orkhon-Yenisei monuments, functions, creation, protection.

RESUMEN: En el artículo se investiga la esencia y el valor del concepto “tengrianismo”, basado en antiguas creencias turcas en el Dios uniforme - Tanry (o Giok Tanry). El autor del artículo llega a la conclusión de que el tengrianismo como sistema religioso-mitológico se origina en representaciones antiguas sobre la unidad del cielo y la tierra. Está probado en el trabajo que las creencias religiosas, los cultos y los rituales se basan en una serie de elementos, y la composición forma el núcleo de una cultura particular. Los fenómenos religiosos arcaicos en las sociedades antiguas estaban asociados con las instituciones sociales, y las creencias, siendo en este caso portadoras de funciones tanto sagradas como seculares, regulaban el comportamiento social.

Palabras clave: Turcos antiguos, Goy Tanry, los monumentos Orkhon-Yenisei, funciones, creación, protección.

INTRODUCTION

In the history of the development of human culture, it is impossible to find the exact time and place of the beginning and end of religious consciousness. At all stages of the development of history, mythological elements constituted an integral part of religious consciousness, because the myth from the moment of its inception was perceived as a potential religion (Kassirer, 1998).

Belief in one God - Tanrı (Tengri) and the very concept of "Tengrianism" as a religious-mythological system originate from the concept of integrity, unity of the Earth and Heaven. The main identity of this deeply rooted belief system originated from cosmogonic myths, in that it perceives the universe (space) as a single whole (Abayev, Feldman & Hertek, 2002). The religion of the ancient Turks is sometimes called the religion of Gyok Tanrı; here the words "gök" and "tanrı" complement each other. In the collocation "Gyok Tanrı" the word "Gyok" does not mean the sky and the color of the sky, but indicates its sacredness as the highest substance, depth, including Tanrı's correlation to heaven, its antiquity and greatness.

The sky should be understood not only as a sphere, but as absolute height, inaccessibility, superiority. Tanrı are a primordial, ever-existing divine principle that creates and protects order. Therefore, the expression «Gyok Tanrı» means Great Tanrı or Almighty Tanrı (Beydili, 2007). This article analyzes the interpretation and manifestation of this concept in the Turkish religious system

DEVELOPMENT

The word "Tanrı" in the ancient Turkic language was used in the form "Tengri" and was the designation of the divine principle in the meaning of "visible sky" and "Allah". Tengrianism, as a system of religious beliefs, being an inseparable part of the Turkic society, did not stand out as a separate social structure. It was an expression of the religious and mythological concepts of the ancient Turkish, based on the Turkish mythology and mythological views.

Traditional Turkic society was introduced to the belief in the forces of nature, considered sacred. This consciousness is also the source of regulation of the Turkic society, which lives in harmony with nature. The main advantage of this belief system was the perception of the universe as a whole. Tengrianism, which constitutes the essence and determines the structure of the Turkic religious and mythological worldview, is a religion sent down from above without the mediation of prophets. This means that there are no intermediaries between the person and Tanrı. This system consists not only of belief in Tanrı; there are also numerous beings (spirits) of a lower order (Beydili, 2007).

In general, if the peoples of the world came to monotheism through paganism, then the Turks came to the belief in Tanrı bypassing this stage. Researchers have proven that the belief in "Gyok Tanrı" was originally inherent in Asian tribes and peoples. The Turkish researcher I. Gefesoglu noted in particular: *"At an early stage of development in this belief system, which arose without outside help, Tanrı / Tengri, being the highest entity, was placed in the center of faith. The Creator was the sovereign master"* (Kafeso lu, 1998, p. 308)

The spread of the Gyok Tanrı cult by all the Turkic dynasties that founded the states in Central Asia is regarded by some researchers as a form of the "imperial Tanrı" (nan, 1972). The French researcher J.-P. Roux, having separated the "popular religion" from the "state religion" in the Turkic religious system, emphasizes that the concept of "Tanrı", being associated with the state (power), at times either decreased or increased, becoming isolated during the period of great empires; and only in the period of disintegration of empires and loss of faith in a single Tanrı does Gyok-Tengrianism appear (Günay, 1998). Chinese sources report the existence of faith in Gök Tanrı in the Huns in the II century BC. The Byzantine historian Theophylact Simokatta pointed out that the ancient Türks had faith in Gyok Tanrı, whom they considered the creator of the universe and the lord of the Sky (Tanyu, 1986). The famous Arab traveler of the 10th century Ibn Fadlan noted that the Oghuz people, when faced with difficulties or experiencing torments, turn their eyes to the sky and pray, saying: "Bir Tanrı" (ie, "One Tanrı"). Mahmud Kashgari, the compiler of the first Turkic encyclopedic dictionary "Divanu lugat-it Turk", gives in this publication the concept of "Tengri" in the meaning of "Ulu Tanrı" (ie "Great Tanrı") and notes that *"the Inovers say" Tengri "when referring to the sky ... But also these same people call a high mountain, and a tall tree by the name Tengri"* (Ka qarly, 1999, p. 377).

In the Orkhon-Yenisei monument in honor of Tonyukuk, the concept of "Türk Tanrı" (ie "Tanrı of the Turks") is found in the form "Kök menqi Tenqir" (ie, "Eternal God Tanrı"). In the religious-mythological system of Tengrianism, Tanrı was considered the creator of the universe and the only source of the spiritual strength of the Turkic society. Therefore, the ancient Türks sought refuge in him, they expected help from him, and associated their victories and defeats with his name. So for example in his letter to Chinese emperor the Hunnic kagan Motin wrote that he was enthroned by Tanrı himself, that he achieved military victories with the help of "Gök Tanrı". Another Turkic ruler in 328 after defeating the enemy, raising his hands to the sky, expressed his gratitude with the words: "Glory to

Thee, Gyok Tanra!" and the third Turkic kagan, concluding a peace treaty with the Chinese emperor, made the following oath: "Let Tanry punish the one who breaks this oath!" In Chinese sources, prayers-requests for victory are given, with which the Gyok-Turks turned to Gyok Tanra. So, for example, kagan Tardu in 590 before the battle dismounted from his horse, gazed to the sky, and raised his hands, asked Tanra for blessings and good luck in the upcoming battle (Beydili, 2003).

Tanra had no shrines; they never seem to have been portrayed as statues. In a well-known conversation with the imam of Bukhara, Genghis Khan said: "The House of God is the entire Universe. Why appoint a special place, for example, Mecca, for pilgrimage? "The heavenly god is omniscient, like the gods of other nations. When pronouncing oaths, the Mongols always added: "The sky is witness to this!" (Eliade, 2002).

People in those days believed that the sky is the master of the world, it sees everything and knows everything, and everything that happens in society was associated with the expression of the will of Gyok Tanra. I V Stebleva (1972), noted that *"the highest deity of the ancient Türks is characterized as invisible and not participating in the everyday events of a person's life. Ancient Türkic Tengri is the supreme deity, the source and giver of good and joy, the arbiter of people's destiny. The cult of Heaven intertwines and even merges, making up one single whole with the cult of the earth. Only Tengri is free in the life and death of a person."* (p. 214)

In the system of Türkic beliefs of Tanra (along with greatness), he knows everything and can do everything. In the minds of the Turks, there is no idea of a rebellion against Tanra, because the aspiration of the Turks, the meaning of their existence as a people, is Tanra's selfless service. The Turks can only be offended by Tanras (Ergin, 2002).

In the Orkhon-Yenisei monuments Tanra acts as a carrier of several functions:

a) The function of creation: *"When the blue sky (and) below the dark (literally: brown) earth was created (or appeared) above, between (them) both were created (or arose), sons of men (ie people)"* (Malov, 1951, p. 36). In this sentence, the phrase "blue sky" is not an image of Tanra himself, but an expression of the sky, the celestial sphere (otherwise the creator will be born at the same time).

According to the Türkic mythological thinking, Tanra is not born, and the whole world is considered the abode of "not born either from mother or father". The concept of "Tanra" combines ideas about the divine order, expressed in the

unity of heaven and earth, as well as about the higher power that created this order.

The word "Tanra" reflects the origin of the world from water or a part of land from primeval water, associated with the Turkic cosmogonic myths, then - the cosmic order in the form of the appearance of the universe as a result of the separation of heaven and earth. Great Tanra, devoid of any -or anthropomorphic traits, is a creator who gives life. For all Turkic peoples, Tanra is considered as the highest cult of worship that does not have a specific time and space. In Turkic beliefs, the world is the order established by Tanra, and everything that is in it was created by His will. Belief in the sun, moon, stars, water, earth, and other existing beliefs, as in the celestial religions, failed to cast a shadow on Gyok Tanra as the only creative force.

It should also not be forgotten that there was no absolute monotheism in any religion, i.e. the peoples of the world did not worship exclusively any one deity. In the system of beliefs of the Türks, along with the Tan-ry, the belief in the divine essence of the sun, moon, stars, water, earth, etc. was allowed, which were also objects of worship. In other words, belief in the Heavenly Tanra did not exclude parallel beliefs in a host of "lower" entities. It is for this reason that at the time of the Huns the sun, moon, stars, and at the time of the Gyok-Türks - the earth-water became sacred Tanra (Kafeso lu, 1998). The beliefs of the Turks related to the sun, moon, stars, lightning, etc., go back to the Tanra cult. Therefore, many researchers believe that the fundamental principle of this cult is the belief in the elemental forces of nature. The belief in Tanra as the creator of all that exists among the ancient Turks was so strong that it did not leave even a drop of doubt in Him as the ruler of Heaven and Earth. In our opinion, creation and originality are the primordial attributes of Tanra.

b) The function of bestowing power on the kagan: *"The sky-like, unborn (proper "in the sky" or "arisen from the sky") Turkic kagan, I now sat down (on the kingdom)"* (Malov, 1951, p. 33) or "(But) above the Sky The Turki and the sacred Land and Water (ie the Motherland) said so: "Let not perish, speaking, the Turkic people, let it be a people" - so they said. The sky, guiding from its (heavenly) heights by my father Ilterish-Kagan and my mother, Ilbilga-katun, lifted them (above the people)". (Malov, 1951, p. 37)

In our opinion, the words "Tenqri teq Tenqri" in the text of the monument should be understood in the sense of "Heavenly Tanra", i.e. the great Turkic deity can be identified only with himself. As for the appearance of Tanra, there is no information about this in the ancient Türkic religious views. Perhaps because the Türkic Tanra from the very beginning acquired the meaning of a spiritual essence.

In the Turkic mythological consciousness, infinity and immortality are inherent only in Tanra. According to this view, Tanra did not give birth and is not born. In "Kitabi-Dada Gorgud" we find traces of this very belief, which are reflected in the words: "You are above everything high; no one knows what you are, bright God! Why do fools seek You in heaven, want to find You on earth, you are in the hearts of the believers themselves. God, the everlasting ruler! God forever- *but the remaining keeper of secrets!*"

In the Turkic mythological consciousness, there is a belief in the heavenly origin of the kagan, as well as in the "kut" (qut) sent down by the Turkic deity. Tanry, considered the creator of the universe, sent down the kut not for the rise of the kagans and beks, but specifically for the rise of the Turkic nation. The Türkic kagans, sent to earth and called upon to teach people the commandments of Tanra, at the end of their mission, saying "I have fulfilled my duty to Tanra", return to the monastery of Tanra (Ögel, 1989). Where the laws of origin prevail, there is also a kut. Kut is Tanra's gift. Tanry, passing the kut to the Turkic kagan, makes him the most powerful person in the world. The kagan, who becomes the ruler of the world, receives this seniority from Tanra himself. The belief in the heavenly origin of "kut" also clarifies why the Hunnic kagan bears the title "Kut Tengri". From 176 BC Mo-tin was called "Kut Tengri Tan-Hu". And the monument to Bilge-kagan quite clearly says: "*I became a kagan because I have a kut*". (Beydili, 2003, p. 206)

c) The function of patronage: "*Since Heaven gave (them) strength, the army of my father-kagan was like a wolf, and his enemies were like sheep*" (Malov, 1951, p. 37) or "*Heaven, (goddess) Umai, the sacred Motherland (earth-water) - here they are, one must think they gave (us) victory*" (Malov, 1951, p. 68)

Giving life and creating Tanras in the Turkic mythological consciousness acts as the patron of the Turkic ethnos, Turkic statehood. From the Orkhon monuments it becomes clear that Tanry in various forms provides assistance to Ilterish-ka-gan, Bilge-kagan, etc. In our opinion, Tanry helps the kagans in order not to forget the name and glory of the Turkic people, since the Turkic statehood is connected with the name Tanra and ruled by him (through the kagans). That is why Tanry, giving Ilter-rish-kagan kut, greatness and power, helped his uprising. "(Tanry) took away the kagans *who had (their) kagans (that is, among the peoples hostile to him); he forced enemies into peace, those who had knees, he forced to kneel*" (Malov, 1951, p. 38). In the concept of Turkic statehood, among other duties of the state, the main ones are: shoe, feed and multiply the people.

d) The function of determining human destinies: "After that - may Heaven be (to me) favorable, - since there was happiness and good luck on my side, I raised (that is, called) to life a people ready to perish, furnished a naked people with a dress, made a poor people rich, made a small people numerous" (Malov, 1951, p. 40) or "Time (ie fate, timing) distributes Heaven (ie God), (but one way or another) son's human beings are all born to die" (Malov, 1951, p. 43) or "By the grace of heaven". (Malov, 1951, p. 69).

In the ancient Turkic culture, the belief in the prescription (predestination) of fate was so strong that people sought protection in Tanra, expecting him to avoid his fate. In Orkhon texts Tanra, who is the lord of the earth and sky, the creator of the universe, personifies at the same time the only essence that continues "Time". The timing of life is distributed by heaven; the sons of men are all born in order to die. This means that the ancient Turks perceived the sky as the beginning, giving life, and as the end, bringing death.

e) Punishing function: "By the grace of Heaven, he took away the tribal unions from those who had tribal unions (ie, from the hostile khans) and Heaven, perhaps, said so: I gave (you) a khan, you, leaving your own (literally: your) khan, obeyed others. Because of this submission, heaven - one might think - (you) struck (killed). The Turkic people donkey-bel (died), became exhausted, came to naught". (Malov, 1951, p. 65).

CONCLUSIONS

In the writings of the monuments analyzed Tanra becomes apparent with several functions highlighting: creation, bestowing power, patronage, the determination of human destinies and punishment. Such actions as the refusal of many kagans from faith in Tanra and their adherence to other beliefs, disobedience to laws, leaving the tribe became the reason for their overthrow. The ancient Turks, who believed in the strength and omnipotence of Tanra, associated the defeat of the kagan with the name of Gyok Tanra. Thus, all these samples we examined once again prove that the true religion of the Turkic tribes was the religion of God Tanra.

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