

## Turkic Manichaeism Anthropology and Folklore

Bakhyt Abzhet<sup>1</sup> and Zhumashova Zhuldyz<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Turkology Scientific-Research Institution of H.A. Yassawe International Kazakh-Turkish University, 29 B. Sattarhanov Avenue, Turkistan City, Kazakhstan, 161200*

<sup>2</sup>*Department of International Relations and Regional Studies, Faculty of Humanities and Law, Turan University, 16-18-18A Satpayev Street, Almaty City, Kazakhstan, 050020*

**KEYWORDS** Buddhism. Mythology. Tangri. Uighur Khanate. Zoroastrianism

**ABSTRACT** Diverse religions and different historical situations have influenced the formation of the Turkic folklore. Hence, the reflections of Manichaeism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism and Shamanism can be found in the majority of the Turkic folklore units. The periods of formation of the old Turkic written literature, old Uyghur writing system, which was used after the runic Orkhon scripts, also had a great impact on the formation of some folklore units. In this paper, the researchers revealed the features of the Turkic folklore units, considering the religious background, historical background and the highly popular old Uyghur scripts, “Huastuanift” and the “Golden Light Sutra”. The creation of the story-plots and the reasons of their creation and popularity were analyzed. The researchers reviewed the history of the creation and the transformation of some religious characters and mythical heroes present in the folklores.

### INTRODUCTION

Before the establishment of the Turkic khanate there existed diverse religious streams. Amongst them can be mentioned the Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Nestorian, Christianity and Manichaeism religions. “Pre-Islamic Sogdian literary relics, mostly on paper, epitomize the religious plurality found on the trade routed between Central Asia, India and China” (Rose 2014: 147). They were mainly agitated by the traders or the missionary-travelers. There were no restrictions on the agitation of any religion. “This region is where the world’s great religions burst into life, where Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism jostled with each other” (Frankopan 2016: 15).

It is a well-known fact that the Turkic people prayed to the Heaven, which is referred to as Tangriism. Orkhon inscriptions, engraved in the times of the Turkic khanate, start with the phrases: “When the blue sky above and the brown earth below were created, between them a human being was created.” Turkic people started to perceive Tangri – Heavenly-God as the Supreme Creator in the times of the Turkic khanate. During that period, Tangri was accepted as the supreme and the all-mighty God. Academician Qaskabasov (1984: 90) noted that Tangri was considered as the Lord of the Heaven. Hence, he was the Supreme God who was the owner of all the creatures and the secrets in earth and in the heaven. Tangri was regarded as the creator of

the human beings, all the creatures on the earth and the heaven and stars in it. These were the features attached to the Old Turkic Demiurge. Later, after the conversion to Islam these features were ascribed to Allah.

### RELIGIONS PRACTICED AMONGST TURKIC PEOPLE BEFORE ISLAM

Even though the Turkic people practiced monotheistic religion, Tangriism; they did not reject the other minor gods derived from the Shamanic religion. Turkic people practiced different religions in the times of the Turkic khanate. A well-known scholar on Orkhon inscriptions, Sartkhozha (2003: 52-53) stated about the diverse religious streams spread amongst the Turkic people: “If to mention only the heritage of the Turkic culture found near the rivers Orkhon, Selenga and Tuul, there can be listed artifacts of more than hundred places of worship, sacred places, more than 1000 monuments, balbals, cemeteries with plenty of data written on Brahmi, Sogdian, Uyghur, Mongolian, Khitan, Manchurian, Arab, Chinese, old Turkic scripts and Manichean alphabets in cities such as Ordu-Baliq, Bai-Baliq, Hatun-Baliq, Tuul-Baliq, Ezgenti-Kadaz and so on. In these artifacts, wealthy information about the nomadic administrative ruling, administration of household keeping based on man and the society interrelation, cultural types of economy, customs and traditions can be found.”

### Sun Worship

Herodotus wrote that the Turkic Massageths, who struggled against the Persians, worshipped the Sun as god. However, it seems that they worshipped the Moon more than the Sun. In the Turkic khanate people believed that there was the Supreme Creator-Tangri who is above the other minor gods, who sits in the heaven, and who created the Blue Heaven and the Earth. Majority of the people who worshipped the Sun were members of the Cumans. However, the Oghuz Turk tribes which were in the confederation with the Cumans worshipped the mother goddesses. According to Qasqabasov (1984: 74), after the fall of the Hunnu Empire the Mongolian plateau in Central Asia was dominated by the Oghuzes and the Kipchaks. Kipchaks were titled as the male clan (Ashina), which had the dominant power and Oghuzes were considered as the mother clan tribe (Ashide). These two confederations were strong competitors to each other. But, on the other hand, they always complemented each other with diverse experiences.

### Moon Worship

The tradition of worshipping the Moon amongst the Turks was derived from the Shamanic teachings. The first shamans were women. In the period of matriarchy the moon was presented as a Goddess. Zholdasbayuli (2010: 66) stated that amongst the Hunnas, who are considered as predecessors of Turks, the tradition of worshipping the Moon was very strong. He wrote: "Annually, in Spring, Hunnas made sacrifices to their predecessors, the Heaven and the Earth and to the spirits. The ruler, who was considered as the incarnation of the favor the Heavenly god bestowed on the Turks, showed reverence to the rising Sun in the morning and to the Moon in the evening. The first day of the new Moon was highly revered. Kazakh people also have the same belief today. When they see the new Moon they bow showing reverence and say: "I saw the Moon, I saw it in my good health, bless me in the new Moon, and show compassion to me in the old Moon." Hunnas paid high attention to the phase of the Moon before starting any activity. They went to war only in the full Moon stage. In case it was waning they immediately stopped the war. The tradition of worshipping the Moon and the Sky is still practiced

amongst the Kazakh people. The practice of these omens proved that Hunnas and Kazakhs are ethnically related with each other. On the birth of the Moon qaghan and the nobles gathered in a sanctuary near the Khan and conducted small meetings. On the fifth day of the new Moon they all gathered to conduct the large meetings in *Lung-Ching* (Dragon City). In autumn when horses fattened they gathered in the mount Dailin and conducted national meetings, made sacrifices to the Heaven, the Earth and their ancestors. They did account of the number of cattle.

In the legend, the Oghuz tribe birth is described in relation to the Moon god. Oghuz khan was born by the Moon God. This legend was mentioned in "Oguzname" which was written in Uyghur. The Moon's influence on the birth of Oguz Qaghan is described in the following excerpt: «They said so be his appearance in this way. That was a blessing for them. As a result, one day qaghan Moon-god's eye opened widely and a baby-boy was born. The boy was blue in colour, his mouth was red as fire, eyes were purple, his hair was bluish. He suckled his mother once and rejected it. Instead he asked for flesh, food and wine. He started speaking. After forty days he started growing, going and playing. His legs were as bull's hooves, belt was alike to wolf's, shoulders were as sable's, chest was like bear's. All his body was covered with fur», as written in *Oguzname* (1986: 36).

In "Oguzname" writing, that Oguz qaghan was born by the Moon God, qaghan. In addition, he was also under the protection of the totem of the Wolf when he was raised and was hunting. These two cases are said to be similar to the sacred spirits in Shamanism which was believed to protect the people from evils. The hero's fast growth and similarity to the wild animals showed that the legend was created in the times when the cult of Goddess was dominating. Korogly (1976: 102) described the Oguz's marriage which was overseen by the Moon Goddess in the Matriarchy period in the following sentences: "Exposition of Uyghur scripture "Oguzname" presents a unique genealogical legend. He goes through all the stages of formation of an epic hero. He was born by the Sky Moon-goddess, saves people from rhinoceros which is accepted as the process of initiation. He gets married twice: The first time to a mythological creature, the second to a real woman. He organizes invasions."

Oguz qaghan called his children with names like, *Kun* (Sun), *Ai* (Moon), *Zhuldyz* (Star) which were the gods worshipped in Shamanism. As it was mentioned above in the matriarchy period the Moon-goddess was especially evaluated. Later, after the matriarchy age mother goddesses experienced serious transformations. The cult of the female goddesses and the Shaman women were replaced with the males. The first shaman man was known as Korkut dede. In order to be able to enter the ecstasy media-shamans had to be the same sex as the creator-Tangri's sex.

Male gods were praised in the first stages of the religions' formation. In the latter monotheistic religions prophets were also selected from among the men. This proved the total domination of the patriarchy age.

### Manichaeism

Before the establishment of the Turkic khanate there existed other religious streams. Amongst them can be mentioned Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Nestorian, Christianity and Manichaeism religions. They were mainly agitated by traders or missionary-travelers. There were no restrictions on the agitation of any religions. In spite of the fact that in the period of the Turkic khanate there were no serious conflicts on the religious matters, this tension became strong in the period of Uyghur khanate. Especially, it rose to serious levels when Manichaeism became an official religion. Representatives of the Manichaean religion spread their religion and their writing system.

However, not all the other religions accepted Mani's system of religion. Even though he presented himself as a prophet, he could not show potentials as other prophets did. Therefore Christians and Muslims did not accept his teachings. The first man who wrote about Mani was Biruni. Biruni used the book "Shapurakan" only to eliminate the historical data. He did not admit Mani and criticized him for using magic and for self-proclamation as being a prophet. Biruni defined him as a false prophet. He strongly doubted that revelations were delivered to him by the Creator. He did not believe that he could show any potential.

Mani titled his teachings "Shapurakan" because he started to spread his teachings in the reigning period of the Shapur padishah. "Mani knew Christian Gnosticism, Zoroastrianism, and also a little Buddhism which enabled him to use

different items from these religions for preaching and his interpretation of the former religions" (Stausberg and Vevaina 2015: 488). Only parts of the book survive to our days. He was prosecuted in Iran by the representatives of the Zoroastrian religion. Bahram padishah issued death to him because of the Zoroastrians oppositions. After his death his teachings were continued by apostles Sisin and Innai. Western agitators of the Mani teachings spread his teachings in Coptic, whereas Eastern formal language used to spread Manichaeism was Sogdian. Babylon was the center of Manichaeism. Amongst the Turkic tribes Uyghur people converted to Mani's teachings in the period of the Turkic khanate. After the fall of the Turkic khanate in 747 a conflict occurred amongst the Uyghur people between the Manichean representatives and the Nestorian representatives. In 763 Moyu qaghan came to the reign and approved the Manichean religion as the formal state religion. From this period Uyghur khanate became a religious state and the power was given to the members of the Manichean religion. Qaghan's power became very limited. He had full authority only in the military affairs. Manicheans who gained full power started struggling against other religions.

According to Manichaeism teachings it was prohibited to eat meat, to kill and go to the war. All these restrictions were against the nomadic style of life. For the Turkic people, who obtained food by hunting and invasions, these restrictions were too strict. People had to refuse eating meat and to adapt to an agricultural style of life. In 840-847 years the Kyrgyz people rebelled against the Manichaeism and invaded the Uyghur territories. This invasion was hard for the Manichean representatives to overcome and they could only preserve their teachings to the 10<sup>th</sup> century only in the territory of Samarkand. Manichean religion weakened and later disappeared after the strengthening of Islam in the territories from China to Europe and Northern Africa.

In spite of the fact that Mani's teachings stopped from being practiced it left its reflections in the medieval oriental and western literatures. As one of these facts the researchers can point to the tradition of adoration of art painting. Mani was one of the most prominent and talented painters and writers in his times. Muslims perceived Mani as the founder of art. He created

his own Aramean style of writing aiming to spread his teachings. This writing system was widely spread amongst the Uyghur people and became to be known as "Uyghur writing". Many Turkic works were written in this writing system. Painting and engraving developed highly in the Uyghur khanate. We may assume that the admiration of the art of painting considered as Chinese art could be reflected in the folklore items.

### Zoroastrianism

Zoroastrian religion was one of the oldest religions in Iran and had a great influence on the neighbouring countries. Hence the image of the Lord of all the goodness Ahura Mazda in Zoroastrianism was mentioned in the Turkic, Mongolian and other Altai region's folklore. His image came to the Turkic culture both from the Central Asian regions, and by Buddhism. Later he became one of the well-known personages in the folklore of Turkic, Mongolian and Altai people. Sagalaye (1984: 49) investigated the elements of the Zoroastrian religion amongst the Mongolian and the Siberian people and divided its penetration into several stages: "Amongst several Central Asian people, contamination of the supreme God Qormusta with Eternal blue Heaven which represents state shaman god occurred. Worshipping Qormusta-god by Turk-Mongolian people was a result of the propagation of Buddhism. In the Mongolian chronicle "Altan Tobchi" written in 17<sup>th</sup> century, it was stated that Genghis Khan was a regeneration of Qormusta tangri and that He gifted a valuable nephrite cup to Khan for his previous good deeds. Under the influence of Buddhism, which rejects monotheism, and Shamanism, which adapts everything new to its own content, the image of Qormusta experienced serious transformations."

In the period of the Turkic and the Uyghur khanates, written literature significantly evolved amongst the sedentary people, whereas amongst the nomadic Turkic culture oral folklore became popular. In the folklore many characters were taken from the religious teachings which later experienced some transformations. For instance, the image of Qormusta amongst the Altai people became weak and his ideal image lost its initial features. Latter his image started to be known from a negative side. For example, in Altai epic poem "Qurbustan" Qormusta-tangri is described as the creator of the thirty-three infidels which

show his image's absolute difference from the Zoroastrian and the Buddhist traditional image.

In regions such as Western Mongolia, Southern Altai and some Siberian regions' folklore Qormusta-tangri transformed into the spirit of evil. Altai people titled him "Kormes (Unable to see)", Mongols titled him "Hormuchkin" and described him as the one who does evil to the people. His positive image was lost from the peoples' memory. It shows that some elements taken from Iranian religions by nomads with Shamanic world perception could not find its proper place in the peoples' consciousness and went through some transformations.

Sagalaev (1984: 57) also pointed to this fact. According to him, Juch-Qurbustam penetrated the Altai mythology and epos from Mongolian. In spite of the fact that Qormusta's character in the Buddhist image and his shamanic image in Altai made serious influences on the Turkic traditional belief, it can be seen that the initial image of Qormusta significantly changed. It can be traced from the Altai epic poems and myths that Qormusta's image entered into the Altaic belief system. However it was difficult to find any elements with this character in the Shamanic beliefs.

### Buddhism

Many religious streams in the period of the Uyghur khanate had tough conflicts with each other. Gumilev (1994: 198) wrote that Khereid tribes accepted Christianity from the Turkic tribes from China: "Tangut and Khitan empires were separated from China and the steppe peoples. They were known as Empire Tuoba-Wei and Tang. For the Chinese, they were barbarians, to the steppe nomads - renegades, betrayed to the Chinese. Buddhism played the role of an indicator which was persecuted in China. In 845 in China the secularization of Buddhist monasteries, burning of Manichaean books and pictures were carried out and Christianity was outlawed. During that period, it was the time of persecution of Buddhists, Manichaean and Nestorian teachings. But the persecuted found refuge among the other populations on the northern outskirts of China. Buddhism was adopted in Tangut and Khitan as non-Chinese religion, Uyghur people converted to Manichaeism, and simple-steppe Basmyls, Onguts and Khereid were baptized by the Nestorian priests expelled from China. Since

those times, religion served as the ideological banner, converted nomads became principal enemies of the Tangut, who had to fight on two fronts, and so that “the blood flowed like a babbling stream.”

This was the period when Buddhism started to be propagated amongst the Turkic people. Both shamanic and the Buddhist religions had believes related with nature. This commonness later made many Turkic people convert to Buddhism. Amongst them can be mentioned Kalmyks, Mongols, Tuvans, Khakases. It is worth mentioning that written literature also had an influence on the folklore. In China and Iran which were sedentary cultures and had developed urban style of life, written literature was more popular than oral folklore. There were established religious views and religious texts. Those religious texts later penetrated into the Turkic culture by books. Undoubtedly, those religions influenced the mythological world perception of the Turkic people. For example, after the introduction of those texts some personages form Buddhism and Zoroastrian teachings began to appear in some fragments of the Turkic mythological tales. But the personages were somehow related with the mythological perceptions. Myth is usually related with a natural phenomenon, whereas religion is directly related with the god. Losev (1991: 83) states: “In each monotheism time does flow as a function of natural processes, but according to the will of God. If psalms praise times and deadlines set over, the prophets give what you can call the religion of the future. Time is reduced, and only the future is left. God the creator recedes into the background. In the Persian religion the idea of the future also dominates, but it is more earthy and less rich. It’s all due to the defeat of Ahriman and the beginning of a new period. Here you can find optimistic will to culture, which is sanctioned in religion.”

Qonyratbayev (1987: 116) underlined that Buddhism and Shamanism had many common features. He stated that in the period of the reign of Modu Chanyu Hunas there were no shamans yet. According to him Shamanism came to the Turkic people from Tibet: “Hunnas emperor Modu worshipped the Sun in the daytime and the Moon at night with words: “bless me in the new Moon, show compassion to me in the old Moon.” Cult of shamanism was not yet wide spread in those times. Due to a child birth Scyth-

ians showed reverence to the Sun and sacrificed a horse. Tibetans, Indians and Babylonians also worshipped Banu (the Sun). But Shamanism was practiced only amongst the Tibet, Mongol and the Turkic tribes. It is true that Shamanism was one branch of Buddhism. It penetrated from India to Tibet and China in 6-7<sup>th</sup> centuries. Then it was introduced to the Turks and the Mongols. Indians called shamans “Bhishnu”. But the difference between Turkic Shamanism and Chinese, Tibetan and Mongolian Shamanism was, in that the latter worshipped idols via Lamas, whereas Turkic people worshipped the spirits (ongon).”

### IMPACT OF RELIGIONS ON TURKIC FOLKLORE

Buddhism had a great impact on the Mongolian, Tuvian and later the Altaic culture. But it did not spread amongst the Kazakh culture. However, the Shamanic teachings had a high popularity amongst the Kazakh people. Legends about Genghis Khan amongst the Kazakhs were spread in the time of Shamanism. However, the following legend about the birth of Genghis Khan is very similar to the other legend in the Zoroastrian religion. In the Zoroastrian book “Denkard” Zoroaster’s birth is described with the following sentences: “The All-Mighty Creator Jabbar made atashgah (place of fire worship) to pray for the Frahim family, and set the fire without any tool. Frahim’s wife became pregnant after seeing the fire and gave a birth to baby-girl. She was given the name Dughdova. When she was aged fifteen the Creator sent her the light. The light made the place where she was special. She got pregnant with Zoroaster after that” (Khashem 2001: 21).

This plot peculiar to the Zoroastrian religion was later adopted by the Turkic and the Mongolian myths. In the major ancient scripts before the conversion to Islam it was written that qaghans were created from the light of the Creator. Particularly this fragment can be found in “The Secret History of the Mongols: “She’s given birth to new sons. Who is their father and what is their clan? You are right to ask questions like this, so I’ll tell you. Every night a man as yellow as the sun would enter my tent by the light from the smoke-hole or by the place light enters at the top of the door. He’d rub on my belly. The light from this man would sink into my womb. Then he’d leave me, crawling out on the

sunbeams or the shafts of moonlight crawling up like a dog as yellow as the sun. So now do you believe me? Now that you know the truth can't you see that this is a sign. These brothers of yours must be the sons of eternal heaven. How can you think these are the sons of a mortal man, they become Lords of all people, then common men will understand who they are" (Paul and Woodman 1998: 6).

The legend about Genghis Khan is very similar to the one mentioned: "Yesugei's widow gave birth to four children. People noticed that every night an unknown man enters her tent as light and leaves her as a dog. Because of that Genghis Khan was known as the son of the Sun" (Qonyratbayev 1987: 202).

In general this plot is very common to many legends about the birth of the rulers. They were supposed to be created by the Sunlight and had the power to rule the Earth. These kinds of fragments can be found in the tales about the Oguz qaghan. For example, in the tale about Oguz it was told that he married the girl who was created from the sunlight or that he followed the sacred wolf which was created from the sunlight. This is the similar excerpt from Oguzname epic poem: "In the early morning sudden light entered to the tent of Oguz qaghan. This light turned to the blue wolf. She spoke to him as a man: Hey, Oguz, you are going to Urym. Hey, Ogyz, I will lead you there" (Korugly 1976: 41-42).

In the legends of the Zoroastrian religion and the Turkic-Mongol legends main heroes were born with the impact of the Ahura Mazda, the god of light. In the epic poems composed in the later periods the researchers cannot find similar fragments. By the influence of the Islam heroes usually received the signs from the spirits, angels in their dreams. It showed that legends about Genghis Khan were influenced by Buddhism. In the other legend it was told that people asked Temüjin to prove that he was the son of the Sun. Then by request of his mother Temüjin hung his bow on the stream light of the Sun.

Zoroastrian religion was established in the very early ages. In addition it was wide-spread in further territories than Iran, it influenced the Indian culture as well. Names peculiar to the Zoroastrian religion can be found in the Vedas. Accordingly, the researchers noticed that initially Zoroastrian influenced Indian belief, reflecting in Buddhism and later penetrated into Shamanism through Buddhism. Surveying data about

Genghis Khan, the researchers noticed that the legends about him are dominated by the Buddhist elements, rather than the Turkic tradition of worshipping the ancestors' spirits (ongon). It seems that he believed Hormusta-tangri to be popular amongst the Mongol people. Hara Davan Yerenzhen, who made thorough investigations of Genghis Khan's life wrote: "Genghis Khan was completing his conquests to East and West in 1195. In 1196 the tribe Sartagol was subdued, in 1196 Tibet was taken, then three provinces of Kara-Tibet obeyed Genghis Khan's reign." According to Savan-Setzen after these conquests and victories he gathered people and made a huge feat. He appointed gifts for his army leaders and gave out presents to people saying: "By the will of the highest ruler Tangri-Hormuzda, who is my father I subordinated 12 kingdoms in the earth, I made to obey me numerous small kingdoms and huge number of people who were wandering in the grip of poverty and starved. I gathered them all together in one and did the main part of which was requested from me. Now, I want to let my body and soul have a rest" (Erenjen 1992: 65).

In spite the fact that in the legends about Genghis Khan elements of Zoroastrian religion were reflected, the image of Ahura Mazda could not be found in the Kazakh folklore. This was related with the condition that the belief to the Blue Heaven was very strong and later this belief was replaced with the Islamic traditions. After the conversion to the Islam previous religious customs and traditions were highly criticized, even though not all the elements of Shamanism could be eliminated from the Kazakh culture. This was due to the strong belief in the Blue Heaven and ancestors' spirits who were supposed to care about their descendants. Kazakhs up to these days believe that shamans have mystical contact with the mystic world and that they can cure any illness and that they can chase the devil away.

In the time of Uzbek Khan during the Golden Horde age shamans and the fortune-tellers were exiled and Shariah laws were strengthened. As a result of such strict measures from the age of the Golden Horde the nomadic Turkic people started to forget legends based on Buddhism. In the other regions where Buddhism saved its domination, such as Mongolia, Altai region and Siberia, the image of Ahura Mazda preserved in the character of Hormusta-Tangri. However, since

Shamanism had a high influence on the Altaic people, many elements of Buddhism were not accepted amongst them. It would be wrong to state that all the belief and teachings written in "Avesta" spread amongst the Turkic Mongolian people through Buddhism were delivered in its initial forms. Not all gods were known as positive gods. Many Gods from Zoroastrian religion lost their initial forms and functions and were known as negative personages in the Turkic culture. It showed that during Shamanic belief period people tried to resist any other religions.

### IMPACT OF RELIGIONS ON WRITTEN LITERATURE

Turkic people were influenced by the diverse religious streams. They accepted some of them. As a proof of that the researchers point to a few old religious scripts, and folklore items including some preaches and prayers of different religious teachings. Transformed versions of old religions were especially reflected in the fantasy fairy-tales. Since Turkic tribes lived a nomadic style of life they had tight relationships with the western and the eastern cultures. Nomads learned their religious teachings, culture and established contacts with them. In the sedentary cultures written literature developed and monotheistic religions appeared. Later those books were spread amongst the Turkic people. The researchers can see it from some survived religious texts and some preached rituals well-known amongst the people and reflected in the oral folklore. Turkic people had their own written literature, its culture had great influences on other cultures and had an equal political level with the other empires which existed in Eurasia. It had its own systematized State construction. Surveying Turkic written artifacts, the researchers may conclude that the creation of Runic scripts and the establishment of the written literature culture was developed over a long period in several stages.

Turkic people used Runic scripts before the establishment of the Turkic khanate, in the period of the Turkic khanate Turkic writing system was used in the time of Uyghur khanate till the Arabic alphabet was introduced and it applied the writing system known as "Uyghur writing system". Aiming to spread Manichean religion, texts were spread, such as "Huastuanif" in Turkic, but with the Uyghur writing system. This

type of writing system was used till the 15<sup>th</sup> century. This type of writing system is categorized under the Old Turkic language. Professor Rahmonov (2002: 17) stated: "Golden Light Sutra" can be categorized to the Old Turkic age (5-8<sup>th</sup> centuries) which was prior to the categorization period of the Turkic languages. Considering the language of the written artifacts, especially the Turkic-Uyghur literature, the researchers referred to the text "Golden Light Sutra", to the period when Old Turkic language became the language of the written literature. Along with "Golden Light Sutra", the existence of other documents written in the Turkic-Uyghur on Manichean religion such as the documents on legacy, human rights, text "Maitri Smit" on Buddhism and other genre texts proved that Turkic language could be established as a written literature language."

It is obvious that those scriptures were written for religious purposes, but they can be considered as a valuable Turkic written literature heritage. However, it is true that majority of the literature in Uyghur has not yet been thoroughly investigated. They should be elaborately investigated from linguistic approach taking into account its stylistic peculiarities. The same can be said about the Manichean religion's influence on the Kazakh folklore.

Along with the Manichean teachings, Mani brought its writing system and art to the Turkic culture. The influence of Manicheanism on the Turkic people was made by the Sogdian settled people. Sogdian traders in Central Asia were the main religious people and the official language of Oriental Churches was Sogdian. In those times, the Turkic people were partially settled and partially nomadic. It is known from history that in the period of the Turkic khanate several cities existed, along with it social structure of Turkic people developed from "primitive" structure to feudal form. "Bernshtam described this period as the period when the Old Turks started to adapt to feudalism, whereas Gumilev described them as, the military democratic construction which is in the last stage of barbarism. This period is synonymous with the discovery of iron, establishment of writing system, rise of heroic spirit, creation of epic legends, privatization of lands, and strengthening of the military leaders. According to history of social sciences in the 6<sup>th</sup> century polygamy and later monogamy came into practice" (Qonyratbayev 2004: 17).

Uyghur state which entered into feudal society became a religious state with one official re-

ligion. Wide penetration of Mani's teachings led to the development of art painting in the Uyghur khanate and in China. Their art-works were highly popular amongst the cities situated in the Silk Way. In mediaeval prose, works with fragments of falling in love with a girl's portrait, Mani was described as the patron of painters.

In the beginning of the Islamic penetration Muslims showed reverence to the Manichean religion as the religion with a holy book and prophet. After evolvment of Islam it was totally banished. In spite of the fact that it stopped its existence as a religious teaching, it was preserved in the legends as a painting art. Due to the strict prohibition of painting art in Islam, this type of art was also persecuted. However legends about Mani as the patron of painters were saved in the memory of people.

Mani was from a wealthy family and traveled a lot. Through his trips to the Central Asia, Iran and India he learned about Christianity, Buddhism and Zoroastrian religions. On the basis of those three religions he created his own teachings. He admitted Buddha, Jesus and Zarathustra and himself as a real prophet and declared himself as the last prophet. He perceived from Zoroastrian its dualistic mythological esñhatological belief, from Buddhism he accepted continual repetitive cycle of life and birth and rules of Karma, from the image of Jesus he took the concept of resistance to sins.

In all Buddhism, Zoroastrianism and Christianity teachings prophets were men. As a result the role of women decreased from image state power level to a domestic level. In addition it is known that Manichaeism accepted several traditions from Shamanism, Zoroastrianism, Buddhism and Christianity. Hence the Moon-god in Shamanism also penetrated into Manichaeism. He declared himself as the god Moon which is one of the main Gods in shamanism. He collected diverse traditions from different religions at his time. In Chinese paintings with Mani's picture usually it was painted the picture of the Moon near to his crown. Orientalist Zuev (2002: 194) wrote about it: "In Manichean doctrine Moon had special significance. Medal of Talas Virgin is the anthropomorphic image of Moon. Its god was considered Mani. Bilingual Tukic-Tocharian hymn starts with the words: "Oh, all-Mighty Moon-god who is similar to diadem of Qormuzda, who is alike to the crown of the God Zurvan, my father Mani-Buddha!" Divine dia-

dem of Qormuzda is nimbus in the form of lunar disc around the head of Mani. Crown of the eternal time Zurvan is Mithra Mani."

Shamanic beliefs were well preserved amongst the Kazakh people. Hence there are many beliefs and legends about the Moon, retaining the superstitions about the Sun. Particularly, people were afraid of the Moon, made a wish when they saw the New Moon and so on. Valikhanov (1985: 57-58) mentioned in his work that Moon god had a significant role in the nomadic period of the Turkic people during shamanism: "The moon was probably a deity. When a Kirghiz sees the new moon, he does prostrations and in summer they gather herbs from the place where they bowed to the moon, bring that herb home and threw it into fire." Kirghiz people say that the moon is an old woman (probably due to its round form and stains which look alike to parts of the face). Kirghiz people do not stare at the moon, fearing that the old woman can count the lashes, if it happens, a person dies.

It is known that the Moon god penetrated into Manichaeism. However in the folklore plots that penetrated from Manichaeism can be found as well. One of them is falling in love with a girl seeing her portrait. Since Mani was highly talented in art of painting in all the regions with Manichean religion the art of painting, architecture were highly developed. Especially, the plot of falling in love with a girl seeing her portrait was popular in the medieval Turkic and Persian folklore. In well-known Arabian "One thousand and one nights" this fragment can be found several times. It is worth to mention that this tradition influenced both Christian and Buddhist cultures. As one of the well-known fragments derived from Manicheanism the fragment of falling in love with a girl's portrait can be mentioned.

In many Oriental tales and legends the son of khan or vizier falls in love with a beautiful girl's picture and suffers from love. Unable to resist this feeling he goes for a trip with his friend aiming to find the girl. This plot is typical to many love stories, medieval Persian and Turkic prose such as "One thousand and one nights", "Four dervishes" and so on. Most Kazakh fairy-tales are based on the oriental plot also use this fragment. In those fairy-tales, usually the patron of painter is not mentioned. However, in well-known epico-historical poems such as "Khusaw and Shirin", "Farhad and Shirin" the patron of the painter is written as Mani: "Khusaw's friend was

Shapur who knew Lohore and Maghrib and travelled all over the world.” (Nizami 1985: 51). In these lines, paintings of Shapur are evaluated as the highest masterpiece which could be even better than Mani’s pictures. Khusaw falls in love with Shirin after seeing her portrait. The author always praises the patron of painters, Mani in similar lines: “Shapur praised the Creator: “Oh my Creator! When my pen creates any pattern I divide this pattern with Mani” (Nizami 1985: 58).

In the epic, Farhad is described as a person who learnt painting and engraving in China in order to be presented as the main character of the story. This epic legend was also narrated by Firdousi in “Shahnameh”. However in this plot, Firdousi did not aim to narrate about the love between Shirin and Khusaw, he showed Khusaw’s last periods of life. In his work Khusaw falls in love with Shirin in his youth and gets married to her, but later when he becomes a ruler he forgets Shirin and marries the Byzantine emperor’s daughter Mariam. In this marriage, he has a son named Shirue.

Being heart sore that she was forgotten by her husband she tries to return to him. Once she gets on the top of the house where Khusaw usually went hunting. Khusaw sees his ex-wife and decides to get married to her again. Admired with her true devotion to him he intends to announce her as the queen of Persia. In spite of the fact that all aristocracy and inferiors were against it, he marries her again. Once Shirin finds the right moment and makes Mariam to drink the poison, Shirue becomes furious with this and organizes a riot and forces his father to leave his throne. Later he kills his father. He intends to marry his father’s widow. Shirin says that she would agree to this marriage if all her property would belong to her alone. Shirue accepts this condition. Shirin relieves her slaves and gives out her property to the poor people. After that she goes to her husband’s grave and drinks poison. Soon after that Shirue dies from illness.

This is the short plot of Khusaw and Shirin narrated in the “Shah-nameh” by Firdousi. The last act of Shirin is very close to the concepts of the Manichean religion, because according to Manichaeism it is considered a sin to collect property which is more than the necessity for one day food and one year cloth. The person who created the image of Farhad was Nizami Bertels (1948: 184) wrote: “Presumably, the image of Farhad was introduced to literature by Nizami. He is

not the right person to evolve the idea. Hence we may conclude that he had some sources (probably folklore items) related to Farhad’s image. The poet did not give information about Farhad’s lineage. When Shirin tried to find a person who could lay the channel in stony places Shapur recommended Farhad. Shapur knew him for a long time. They both studied from the same master in China, who taught Shapur the art of painting and Farhad the art of Minecraft. Therefore, it might be concluded that Farhad was an ordinary craftsman who was not related with aristocracy.”

In Alisher Nauai’s ‘Farhad-Shirin’ life was narrated from his birth till his death. He described Farhad as the son of a Chinese emperor. As such he is represented as the main character of the legend. But unlike other characters in other epic legends he does not aim to achieve his goal through heroism or wealth. He is described as a person who tries to overcome the difficulties with patience and hard work. He struggled hard even for the love of his beloved. He tried to get her love with the help of art that he had mastered in his youth. Consequently, the plot of the legend is similar to that of a novel plot. According to Qasqabasov (1984: 22) novel fairy-tale is: “Heroes of novel fairy-tales are not heroes or hunters. They are usually a king, an artist, a vizier, a poor man, a judge or a craftsman. Regardless of their social status they protect ideas of justice and mercifulness. In some cases they understand their wrong deeds and choose the path of justice and honesty.”

They are unlike fairytales in epic legends which usually can be found in the historical events and historical personages. As an example the image of a painter and craftsman Mani in Nizami and Nauai’s works can be mentioned. In both the epic stories Mani is described as the master of the main character and the patron of painters. In Nauai’s (1963: 23-24) work he is described in the following lines: “There are two famous artists in China. It is difficult to find a person who has not heard about them. It is difficult to find such talented people in the whole world. One of them was called Bani, second was Mani. They both were highly talented and worth to be praised.”

Hence, oriental famous poets knew that the patron of painters was Mani and that he was from the Chinese regions. Oriental poets knew that the plot of falling in love with a girl in a

portrait was derived from the Chinese sources. This plot was initially spread in the interest of the religious belief, later penetrated to love legends and to a medieval prose. Later it entered to Kazakh folklore through the oriental prose works. This plot is peculiar to all the Oriental love stories and later spread in the Western folklore.

Then who was in real that Mani? Mani was born in 216 AD in Babylon in a wealthy family. He traveled a lot from his early age. He was familiar with Buddhism, Zoroastrianism and Christianity. On the basis of those religions he created his own teachings. He declared himself as the last prophet of humanity. Bulutay (2000: 126) describes his religion: "It seems that Mani started his teachings in the times of Antabenes I (262) king of Parthia. Later Sassanid King Shapur I gave him the permission to agitate his teachings. According to the teachings of Mani Jesus is the Creator who came amongst the people as a man. German scholar Haossig wrote that when Muslims invaded the Central Asia and the Near East showed generosity to them because being from Manichean religion they had religious sacred books, such as Christians and Jews. When Zoroastrians tried to preserve their initial dogmas worshipping the fire, Manicheans were very flexible and adapted to their contemporary tendencies and accepted elements of other cultures. As a proof for that can be given accounts written in Chinese, Uigur and Sogdian languages. Even though Christians used strict punishments toward the Manichean religion, they could not escape the Manicheans' influence. For example, Christians were influenced by the Manicheans tradition to decorate the church with paintings."

Mani's teachings had many contradictions to the Zoroastrian religion. Hence, he was persecuted from Iran. In 274, during the Persian king Bahram I rule he was sentenced to death by the leaders of the Zoroastrian religion. He was violently killed. His skin was flayed and filled with grass, and hung at the gate of Gundishpur. This story is very similar to life story of a Sufi Mansur Al-Hallaj. As a result this plot served as the basis of Sufism (Islamic mystical system) for an epic poem about Mansur Al-Hallaj. In this poem in the description of the violent death of Mansur Sufis used some plots which were known before.

One of Mani's disciple's Mar Ammo escaped to Sogdiana and built a Manichean church there. Its centre was in Samarkand. Manicheans spread their writing amongst the Turkic people (Bulutay

2000: 126). As a result Manichaeism spread highly in Central Asia. One of the manuscripts in Turkic which survived from those times to our days is Huastuanift.

In Manichaeism, Mani was accepted as the patron of painters and sculptors. Hence, painting, crafting, sculpture art were perceived as the highest form of worship. Since Uigurs accepted this religion, they highly developed painting and sculpture (Bulutay 126).

It means that when Christianity started to spread in the beginning there was no tradition of painting icons. Presumably, that the tradition of hanging Jesus's pictures on the walls in Churches later came from the Manichean religion. Many scholars urge that the art of painting was founded in ancient Iran and Byzantium. Russian scholar Lubimov (1989: 21) wrote in his work "The ancient Russian art": "In Eastern part of Byzantine empire the influence of Assyrian-Babylonian can be visibly noticed, especially Persian culture in jewelry making, dynamic art and the whole creative artwork."

In the 7<sup>th</sup> century, the art of painting experienced a period of crisis in Byzantine, Iran and Syria. This was influenced by the Islamic culture. After the spread of Islam, painting of a man's portrait was strictly prohibited. In the period when Islam gained power, Manichean religion totally stopped its existence. In Christianity also several strives against icons occurred. Those who were against icons stated that god must not be portrayed as a man and that these portraits lead to the weakening of its dignity. Veneration of icons was tightly established in the consciousness of the people and it was considered as the other form of idolatry and fetishism. However, the group which worshipped icons and aristocracy considered that people will not follow the religion without its natural appearance and image.

Designing art peculiar to the eastern regions of the empire now fell under influence of the Arabic Islamic culture which prohibits portraying art. Military aristocracy of emperor's government which supported this stream banished worshipping icons. As a result, many works with portraits of Jesus Christ and other Christian saints were destroyed. Instead of these portraits, churches started to be decorated with the pictures of gardens and birds. Finally, worshippers of icons won the struggle and they destroyed all the art-works with garden and bird decorations

and mosaics without considering their artistic value (Gumilev 1993: 33).

At the first sight it seemed that strives between iconic supporters and their opponents did not make any impact on the Islamic world. However, during those periods different elements were created in "One thousand and one nights" about mosaics with pictures of garden and birds. At this point, the tale "One thousand and one nights" may be considered as an encyclopedia of plots of all religious streams of those times. Most stories from this tale presents social historical events related with religious beliefs spread in the 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> centuries in the East and West. Since Mani's teachings were widely spread from China to Rome and contradicted with Buddhism, Islam and Christianity they experienced tough pressures from other religious leaders. There occurred conflicts several times between the religious leaders of Buddhism, Nestorian religions and Manichean leaders. In the end those conflicts led to the destruction and vanishing of the Manichean religion. Gumilev (1993: 19) wrote about this: "As such Manicheans considered the peace not as the object of love, but as the result of catastrophe and the object which should be destroyed. This concept brought about discontent everywhere, particularly in Rome, Iran and China. Romans were shocked with Manicheans intolerance and allegedly wise natural philosophy which claimed to make corrections to natural sciences which are already perfect. Persians and Arabs could not tolerate their infidelity and mendacity which was permitted and considered as the most "righteous" method of struggling against the matter. Chinese could not accept Manicheans prohibition to create a family and asceticism by emaciation of the body and collective lascivious in order to appeal one to life. Buddhists felt aversion toward their violence to people and animals which were considered as "evils" by Manicheans if they did not accept their teachings. Only Uyghur converted to Manichean religion and approved it as state religion. As such, for the first time in the history of the great steppe persecutions for religious views started."

Manichean religion, which was approved as the state religion of Uigur khanate was founded in the 8<sup>th</sup> century, evolved dynamically for about a hundred years till the fall of the khanate. However, in fact Manichean religion was the main reason for the fall of the Uigur khanate which

existed for about 500 years and covered regions from China to Europe. About its fall, Gumilev (1994: 19) described in the following sentences: "Manichean irreconcilability lead Uyghur state to collapse. Uyghur confederation consisted of six tribes with their own leaders. The pressure of the rulers could not be neglected. Tribes' leaders were dependent on the clan leaders which worshipped Heaven-Tangri from the ancient times. They needed the belief in god because only the supreme god could help nomads against the evil spirits, such as iak ichkak, chulmus and albasti, whereas Manichaeism was an atheistic system."

After the fall of the Uyghur khanate many idols and pictures created in the period of Manichaeism were destroyed. One of the main reasons for this was that representatives of other religions were very opposed to it. As soon as Manichaeism lost its supporters' power they experienced severe persecution. After the fall of the Uyghur khanate, Manichaeism was preserved only in Samarkand. After the conversion to Islam, Manichaeism was totally banished. However, in spite of its extinction some elements of it were preserved in the legends and beliefs about the art of painting. Its influence was high even on other teachings.

## CONCLUSION

Surveying the 8<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup> centuries' history it can be concluded that Mani's teaching was not totally banished from the peoples' memory, but its art of painting spread widely to the regions as legends. This plot evolved later to fragments of falling in love with a beautiful girl's portrait. This penetrated into the oriental novel fairy-tales, epic poems in the Persian, Arabic and Turkic literatures. Impact of Mani's teachings spread from China to Europe was noticed even in European epic poems about knights. In spite of the fact that this plot's creation was influenced by Manichaeism, it preserved in relic form as a plot of falling in love with the portrait.

In the historical epic legends of Nizami and Nauai names of historical personalities can be found. Amongst them the names of Persian king Shapur I, who let Mani to spread his teachings, king Khosaw, Anushirvan and his son Shirue are mentioned. Even though events in the epic legend are not exactly according to the historical events chronology, historical personalities in the

story are mentioned. Hence, the researchers conclude that great poets renewed the legends and myths about Farhad and Shirin, about Mani and art of painting which he developed and created new love poems on the basis of those popular legends.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

The study of Turkic culture, art and folklore is one of the least investigated spheres by scholars. This was due to some severe restrictions made in the Soviet times, when studies concerning national peculiarities and features of nations under the Soviet Union were under high control. Along with it there was high difficulty for foreign scholars to get access to conduct any researches related to the nations of former Soviet Union. This could cause serious problems against the ideology agitated at those times. This long gap in the investigation of the Turkic culture led to the loss of many artifacts and misinterpretation of the diverse historical data. Most works dedicated to this theme were written by the Soviet scholars from the same perspectives. But it should be admitted that they are still used as the only works in these themes. Consequently, it is very difficult to conduct researches from new perspectives with new approaches considering the previous works critically. We hope that this paper will be one of the pioneer works trying to interpret previous works from modern perspectives. For modern scholars interested in this theme the researchers would recommend the translation of major Russian scholars' works to English in order to make them available to a wider audience. This paper should be considered as an introductory work to the Turkic folklore which considers religious impacts. Further works should be conducted in cooperation with the religious specialists and historians.

### REFERENCES

- Bertels EE 1948. *Navoi*. Moscow: Leningrad.
- Bulutay ZhM 2000. *Ancestors' Religion. Why Did Turkic People Convert to Islam? (Ata-Baba Dini? Turkiler Nege Musilman Boldi?)*. Almaty: Bilim.
- Erenjen H 1992. *Genghis Khan as Military Leader and His Heritage (Genghis Khan-Kak Polkovodets I Ego Nasledia)*. Alma-ata: Oner.
- Frankopan P 2016. *The Silk Roads: A New History of the World*. New York: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group.
- Gumilev NL 1993. *Centuries near the Caspian Sea (Tisiachaletia vokrug Kaspia)*. Moscow: Mishel and Co.
- Gumilev NL 1994. *Ancient Turks: Edition for Non-specialist Readers (Kone Turikter: Kopshilik Oqirman Qauimgha Arnalghan)*. Almaty: Bilim.
- Khashem-e R 2001. *Zoroaster: Ancient Persian Prophet*. Tehran: Baghdad.
- Korugly Kh 1976. *Oguz Heroic Epic (Oguzskii Gericheski Epos)*. Moscow: Nauka.
- Losev FA 1991. *Philosophy. Mythology: Culture. (Filosofia. Mifologiya: Kultura)*. Moscow: Politizdat.
- Lubimov L 1989. *Ancient Russian Art: Text-book. (Ezhelgi Oris Oneri)*. Almaty: Oner.
- Nizami G 1985. *Collection of Works in Five Volumes. (Sobranie Sochinenii v Piaty Tomah)*. Moscow. Khudozhestvennaia Literatura.
- Navoi A 1963. *Hamsa. Farhad va Shirin. Tanqidi Tekst*. UzSSR. Tashkent: Fanlar Akademiasi.
- Paul Kh, Woodman FC 1998. *The Secret History of the Mongols: The Origin of Chinghiz Khan (Expanded Edition): An Adaption of the Yuan Ch'ao Pi Shih*. New York: Cheng & Tsui.
- Qasqabasov S 1984. *Kazakh Folklore Prose (Qazaqtin Khaliq Prozasi)*. Almaty: Gylym.
- Qonyratbayev A 1987. *Kazakh Epos and Turkology (Qazaq Eposi Zhane Turkologia)*. Almaty: Gylym.
- Qonyratbayev A 2004. *Collection of Treatises: Issues on Turkology and Orientology. V. 2*. Almaty: MerSal.
- Rahmonov N 2002. *Rukhaniatdagi Nur Murodi*. Tashkent: Fan.
- Rahmonov N, Baltabayev Kh 2003. *Uzbek Mumtoz Adabietini Namunalari. 1-Zhild*. Tashkent: Fan.
- Rose J 2014. *Zoroastrianism: An Introduction*. London: I.B. Tauris.
- Sagalayev AM 1984. *Mythology and Beliefs of Altay People. (Influence of Central Asia. (Mifologiya I Verovaniya Altayev. Tsentralno-aziatskoe Vlianie)*. Novosibirsk: Nauka.
- Sartqozhauy Q 2003. *Orkhon Heritage. V. 1. Historical, Educational, Ethnographic Book. (Orhon Murallari. 1-Kitap. Tarihi-tanimdigi EtZnographialik Adebiet)*. Astana: Bilim.
- Sattarov Q 2004. *Farhad-Shirin*. Tashkent: Fan.
- Stausberg M, Vevaina YS 2015. *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Zoroastrianism*. New Jersey: John Wiley & Son.
- Valihanov ChCh 1985. *Collection of Treatises in Five Volumes (Sobranie v Piaty Tomah)*. V. 4. Alma-ata: Glavnaia Redaktsia Kazakhskoi Sovetskoi Entsiklopedii.
- Zharmuhamedov M 1986. *Oguz-nameh, Muhabbat-nameh*. Almaty: Gylym.
- Zholdasbayuli S 2010. *Ancient and Medieval Kazakh History: Textbook for Students (Ezhelgi Zhane Orta Gasyrdagi Qazaq Elinin Tarihi)*. Almaty: Kitap.
- Zuev UA 2002. *Early Turks: Essay on History and Ideology (Rannie Turki: Ocherki Istorii Ideologii)*. Almaty: Dike Press.

Paper received for publication on September 2015  
 Paper accepted for publication on November 2016