

KALMYKS' IDEAS ABOUT THE OTHER WORLD

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Abstract: This article examines the ideas about the otherworld in the culture of the Kalmyks from an ethnolinguistic point of view. Such ideas about the otherworld often find parallels and have much in common with other peoples of Central Asia and Siberia. These ideas about the otherworld have a pronounced national and cultural characteristic as they are a reflection of the ethnolinguistic picture of the world. Attention, therefore, is focused on the interaction of language and culture, which makes it possible to reconstruct a linguistic picture of the world. This paper presents the main characteristics of the afterlife as perceived by the Kalmyks, reflecting the most common images represented in the Kalmyk culture. Important symbols of the Kalmyks' worldview are considered, such as a road, a door, a threshold, which are related to the journey to the world of the dead.

Keywords: the otherworld, that world, the afterlife, funeral rites, road, door, threshold, Kalmyks, Kalmyk culture.

1 Introduction

This article is devoted to the study of ideas about the otherworld as seen in the Kalmyks' culture from an ethnolinguistic point of view. Ideas about the otherworld have existed in the human consciousness since ancient times and are central as they are connected with the persistence of a person's soul after death, including the place where the souls of the deceased go and where the souls of their ancestors are located. The location of this world is very interesting, i.e. the topographic location, e.g. above (in the sky, on a mountain), below (underground), it can be located on different sides of the world. As a rule, among Central Asian and northern peoples, the otherworld can be located in the west or in the north¹. However, various models of the otherworld exist and are no exception, where the afterlife may appear like the earthly world, or its opposite, i.e. everything happens the other way around². All this is closely connected with funeral and memorial rites. This paper presents the main characteristics of the otherworld, reflecting the most common images in the Kalmyks' representations. Attention is also paid to entering the otherworld. The journey from life to the otherworld is associated with the concept of a road or a sendoff.

2 Problem statement

Ideas about the otherworld are important because they occupy an important place in traditional culture. They belong to interdisciplinary research and are at the junction of different fields of science, such as: ethnology, psychology, cultural studies, and linguistics. The study of this issue from the perspective of ethnolinguistics is relevant as the idea of the "otherworld" in a people's culture belongs to the most ancient complex of mythology. They are closely related to the funeral and funeral rites as they are directly related to the sendoff of the soul to the world of the dead. The key roles in the funeral rites are played by the road, a door, and a threshold. These elements perform important sacral and ritual functions, because they are symbols of borders, and their closure or destruction prevent the soul of the deceased from returning. Ideas about the otherworld, its location, and the road to the afterlife are among the most important sources for the reconstruction of the ethnic picture of the world. The relevance of this study lies in the fact that this issue has extremely low illumination, although it seems to be an

important component of religious views and funeral rites of the pre-Buddhist era.

Ideas about the otherworld have a pronounced national and cultural characteristic as they are a reflection of the ethnolinguistic picture of the world. In this regard, it is necessary to focus attention on the fact that these ideas are influenced by religious beliefs and mythological stereotypes that exist in society. The ideas adequately and clearly convey stable forms of thinking and behavioral patterns of an ethnic group. Archaic myths about the ethnic structure of the world are projected in the ideas of the otherworld, which require correct interpretation that is done in accordance with established traditions.

3 Research Questions

The otherworld in the ideas of the Kalmyk people finds parallels and has much in common with other peoples of Central Asia and Siberia. Ideas about the afterlife are closely related to the mythology of the ethnos, which is "characterized by a multitude of ideas about the same object or phenomenon, which in modern logical thinking are perceived as figurative or metaphorical"³.

The present work is devoted to the ethnolinguistic study of representations and funeral rites, which are based on the ideas of death as a transition to the otherworld. Moreover, the idea that the otherworld is located in a remote place, where it can only be entered after overcoming various obstacles. These representations are associated with the posthumous existence of the soul. Thus, it can be assumed that the path to the otherworld is a kind of liminal space and to overcome this space it is necessary to perform a correct number of ritual actions leading to the achievement of the goal, as well as to take certain measures in this earthly world. At the later stages of the development of the funeral and burial rites, the original meanings were lost, they began to weaken or be reconsidered, which led to the reduction of some representations about the afterlife and the road to the otherworld. There is currently no complete picture of the transition to the afterlife, and the full range of views of this process is blurred and only exists in fragments.

4 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to investigate the otherworldly space that occupies an important place in the culture of many people, which helps to understand and comprehend the worldview of these peoples. This issue is of interest and requires research as it can expand the existing knowledge and shed light on some little-known points. The relevance lies in the fact that such topics rarely become the object of special research and are on the periphery of scientific research in Mongolian studies. This is due largely to a lack of necessary material. It is also relevant to give the main characteristics of ideas about the otherworld, since they are ancient and are based on folklore and ethnographic elements.

5 Research Methods

The methodological basis of the study was systematic and complex, which involved a comprehensive study of the material related to certain every-day, ethnographic realities, including the study of facts and phenomena in all their diversity. This allows for a comprehensive study of the problem. The collected material was reviewed on the basis of the principle of a systematic approach.

¹ Eliade Mircea. Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy. P. 184.

² Vinogradova L.N., Tolstaya S.M. That light // Slavic antiquities. Ethnolinguistic Dictionary: Volume V. P. 299.

³ Tolstoy N.I. On the reconstruction of semantics and functions of some Slavic pictorial and verbal symbols and motifs // Folklore and Ethnography. Problems of reconstruction of the facts of traditional culture. P. 50.

6 Findings

It is not possible to reconstruct a fully unified idea of the afterlife among the Kalmyks, as well as among other Mongolian peoples because there is no unified set of knowledge about a person's place of residence or his soul after death. In this regard, in order to restore a more complete picture, it is necessary to rely on the ideas of the afterlife of the neighboring Turkic and Tungus-Manchu peoples living next to the Mongols, whose worldview often has similar characteristics and parallels. The otherworld among the peoples of Central Asia and Siberia is often represented as either an underground world or a heaven. Less often there is another representation of the afterlife, that of a parallel existence. Thus, according to some ideas of the Mongolian peoples, which have similarities with the worldview of the Altai Turks, the otherworld or the underground kingdom of the dead is located below, where Erlik-khan is the main one⁴. Also, the afterlife can be located on a certain side of the world. As a rule, the east or the sunrise is associated with the world of the living people, while the west or the sunset is associated with the world of the dead. The Turkic peoples of Siberia may have the kingdom of the dead in the north or in the west in addition, they have a belief that good people ascend to Heaven, and sinners descend into the underworld⁵. According to the ideas of the Mongolian peoples, the north is also "endowed with a spectrum of negative meanings. This side of the sky is the residence of black, evil deities who send people all kinds of misfortune - diseases, bad weather, death"⁶.

The spread of Buddhism among the Mongolian people did not exclude the parallel existence of the former religious ideas of the Kalmyks. For example, according to more archaic ideas, the kingdom of the dead may have nothing to do with the underworld, but is in a "different dimension" in direct proximity to the world of the living, and is its exact copy⁷. Ideas about the otherworld help to reconstruct the material of funeral and funerary rites, which are also an important source for analyzing ideas about the otherworld. Such rites often include certain elements of farewell to the deceased. Such elements can include items that are placed with the deceased as an escort, such as animals, etc.

The localization of the afterlife can be determined by funeral rites, as it can possess a specific character. For example, among the Mongolian peoples, "otherworld" and the road to it were presented quite definitely, "otherworld" can be located behind high mountains, rocks and mountain passes, deep rivers⁸. Among the Mongolian people, life did not end with death, it was perceived as a transition to the otherworld where life or existence could be eternal⁹. The Kalmyks believed that the soul of the deceased could be reborn in another body, or it continues to live in the afterlife. According to the speech etiquette of all Mongolian peoples, death was usually spoken of allegorically, using various paroemias. When a person died, it was usually said «sääyän hääž» 'found the best', «cogcan hääž» 'changed the body', «nasan nasž» 'lived the allotted year'. The Kalmyks believed that only physical death had occurred and said: «ämñ yarčë» 'let out his breath'¹⁰, or «sül ämshlän avh» 'to take his last breath', «nasan avh» 'to take, take his age', «nasan barh» 'to use up his age' (to die of old age, about people who passed away in old age), or, for example, «neg sarin dund gemtäd öngrh» 'to die, having been ill for a month'¹¹, where the word «öngrh» is 'to die (in relation to people)', the basic semantics means 'to pass, to pass by; to hold out, to reach a certain limit'.

Whereas the verb «ükh» 'to die', expressing a specific meaning, is used less often in the Kalmyk language to denote the death of a person, this lexeme is more often used in relation to animals, birds, insects, etc. If it is applied to a person, it has a contemptuous and pejorative character, such as, for example, 'dead' (like a dog).

The existence of the afterlife world in the Kalmyk language is also expressed allegorically: «säni ornd törh» 'to be reborn in a better world', «burhn bolh» 'to become a deity'. Buryats (related people to Kalmyks) are also expressed about the other world indirectly, for example: «hoito türelei tübi/oron/gazar» 'world/place/land of subsequent birth', «daldyn oron tübi/oron/gazar» 'hidden world/place/land', «zayanai gazar» 'the world of spirits', «burhanai tübi/oron» 'the world/place of the gods', «übbe esegedei tübi/oron/gazar» 'the world/place/land of the ancestors', etc.¹² The same thing is observed in the Mongolian language: «nögöö ertönts» 'the afterlife' (literal. other world), «hoiš nas» 'afterlife' (literal. later years), etc.

After death, it is customary not to take out the body of the deceased through the doors, but several people lift the lattice of the yurt where the deceased is, put a basket under it, and through this hole under the lattice take out the deceased. They can also take the deceased out through the opening between the door and the wall of the yurt, in order to prevent the return of the deceased's soul¹³.

The door and the threshold are semantically significant objects of the dwelling in the Kalmyks' ideas. They separate the residential and cultivated space from the surrounding undeveloped and wild space. They are the boundary of the outer and inner worlds. In ritual and ceremonial practice, these border objects are the place of magical actions aimed at protecting the inhabitants of the house and important moments in the life of members of the household (childbirth, wedding, death) and in everyday life. They symbolize the boundary of the living space through which communication with the outside world takes place. Kalmyks often hang amulets on or near the door to protect the yurt from unclean forces¹⁴. The door served as an object of various rituals. Buryats, going hunting, uttered the following words: «oron olzyn üüdiyg ongoigož hairla/Garahad min ganzagatai/Garah gazryn üüdiyghaaž hairla/Orohod min olztoy yavuulž hairla» 'Open the doors of prey for me/When I leave with full toroks (a bag)/Close the doors of loss behind me/When I enter, give me the loot'¹⁵.

An important border locus was the threshold. It was a place of family rituals, like a door it divided the space into "its own" and "someone else's" (due to its location at the exit of the dwelling) because people who come bring, carry away or spread prosperity, happiness, good luck, illness, etc.¹⁶ In some cases, the deceased can be carried out through the door, but then the threshold or its substitute object should be destroyed, for example, a stick is placed on the threshold, which is broken after removal. It symbolizes its destruction and makes it impossible for the soul of the deceased to return¹⁷. Since the soul of the deceased must reach the designated place, it was necessary to organize a long journey for it properly. As the road in the afterlife world is unreal, it was necessary to make sure that the soul left the body. For this, ashes were usually sprinkled at the threshold, this is done in order to understand whether the soul has left the body or not: "the dead man himself does not realize," say the Kalmyks, "that he is dead, and to make sure whether he is alive or dead, he steps into the ashes of the hearth, and if there is no trace on the ashes, it means that he died"¹⁸.

⁴ Neklyudov S.Y. Movement and the road in folklore // Die Welt der Slaven: internationale Halbjahresschrift für Slavistik. P. 174.

⁵ Eliade Mircea. Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy. P. 183.

⁶ Sodnompilova M.M. World in the traditional worldview and practical activities of the Mongolian peoples. P. 50.

⁷ Neklyudov S.Y. Mongol peoples' mythology // Myths of the peoples of the world. Vol. 2. P. 174.

⁸ Sodnompilova M.M. The way to next world in the mythological tradition of the Mongolian peoples // Siberian collection 1. Funeral rite of the peoples of Siberia and adjacent territories. Book 1. Pp. 77-78.

⁹ Galdanova G.R. Pre-Lamaism beliefs of the Buryats. P. 54.

¹⁰ Bordzhanova T.G. Magical poetry of the Kalmyks: Research and materials. P. 93.

¹¹ Todaeva B.H. Dictionary of the Oirat language of Xinjiang (according to the versions of the songs "Dzhangara" and the field notes of the author). P. 272.

¹² Tsydenova D.Ts. Journey to the other world in the traditional beliefs of the Buryats // Bulletin of the Novosibirsk State University. P. 280.

¹³ Sodnompilova M.M. The way to next world in the mythological tradition ... P. 73.

¹⁴ Dushan U. D. Selected works. (Manuscript Orientalica). P. 244.

¹⁵ Erdenebold L. Traditional beliefs of the Oirat-Mongols (late 19th - early 20th centuries). P. 107.

¹⁶ Plotnikova A.A. Threshold // Slavic antiquities. Ethnolinguistic dictionary: In 5 vol. Vol. IV. P. 173.

¹⁷ Sodnompilova M.M. The way to next world in the mythological tradition... P. 73.

¹⁸ Zhitetsky I.A. Essays on the life of the Astrakhan Kalmyks (ethnographic observations, 1884-1886). P. 29.

This is due to the fact that relatives are afraid of the return of the deceased as the deceased does not accept his current way of existence and tries to return, for this «the funeral party take another road back from the cemetery to confuse the dead man, they hasten away from the grave and purify themselves as soon as they reach home; means of transportation (sled, cart, etc. — all of which will also serve the dead in their new country) are destroyed in the cemetery; finally the roads to the village are guarded for several nights and fires are lighted»¹⁹.

According to Kalmyk beliefs, as well as other Mongolian and Turkic peoples, people dying, fall into the otherworld. The owner of the otherworld is Erlik, or Erlik Nomin-khan, the lord of the kingdom of the dead and the supreme judge in the afterlife. His possessions are underground, and according to the Kalmyks, his kingdom is located in the west, in another dimension²⁰. Also, he has many assistants, there are clerks, judges, etc. There is a special staff of spirit messengers who go for the souls of the dead, take them to the realm of the dead and pronounce judgment on their souls. The owner of the otherworld can also send severe diseases, epidemics²¹.

The name of the owner of the underworld is mentioned in everyday speech: «Erlg avg čamag» ‘*damn you*’ (literal. let Erlik take you away), also the name of the lord of the other world is used to express death, for example: «Erlgn irž» ‘*death came to him*’ (literal. the lord of the other world Erlik came), «Erlgn elč irvā» ‘*it's time to die*’ (literal. the messenger of Erlik-khan came), «Erlgn elč in ihd beln bāäh» ‘*be ready to death*’ (literal. be ready for the arrival of Erlik-khan's messenger).

After death, the soul can stay near the body for a while, before going to Erlik Nomun-khan for trial²². However, to reach the kingdom of the dead, it is necessary to overcome certain requirements. The Kalmyks' ideas about the afterlife are connected with the sendoff of the soul after death to the otherworld. In order to appear before the court of Erlik Nomin-khan, the lord of the other world, it is necessary to complete the path. The Kalmyks believed that the path of the soul of the deceased to the lord of the kingdom of the dead lasted 49 days.

One of the basic elements and a key symbol of the worldview of many peoples is the “road”. This is due to the fact that the road is closely connected with the entry of the soul into the otherworld and its journey to the “otherworld”. In the mythology of many peoples, the ideas of the road are closely connected with funeral rites. With the help of these images the spheres of life and death are connected²³. For many peoples a road has a sacred and ritual significance, as it is often associated with the path of life in the funeral and memorial rites, with the road in the afterlife, the farewell of the soul to the afterlife, etc. It is guiding or linking unreal objects in the other world. Ideas about the road occupy an important place in the life and culture of the peoples of Central Asia and Siberia. The road is a kind of border between “one's own” and “someone else's” space. In the ideas of many peoples, the road is a place of intersection of different worlds, the world of the living and the world of the dead. It symbolizes the habitable cultural space of a person and someone else's wild uninhabited space²⁴.

Kalmyks tried to ease a person's journey on the road to the afterlife, «nowadays, before burial, old people wear soft shoes, which is regarded as providing convenience on the way, and everyday worn shoes are put next to the coffin, having previously untied or removed the laces and unbuttoned the

fasteners»²⁵. It also says that «it is impossible to put new shoes on a deceased person, because in the world of the dead it will become completely old and fall apart (the ideas of the mirror image of the other world are reflected); ... new shoes will press the feet and hinder progress in the other world»²⁶. To ease the way, «the deceased is dressed in prepared clothes, having previously unbuttoned or cut off all the buttons, untied or removed the laces from the shoes», all this is done so that it would not be difficult for the deceased in the next world and easier to get to the place²⁷.

There is fragmentary information about obstacles encountered on the way to the otherworld. For example, recorded by the Western Buryats, the path to Erlik-khan, the lord of the kingdom of the dead, is very distant and dangerous, there are high mountains, deep rivers, the road can be blocked by rocks, the path is not easy, it can be overcome by souls under the protection and accompaniment of their ancestors²⁸. Similar ideas existed among the Kalmyks, so on the way to Erlik-khan, the human soul encounters various obstacles on its way, these may be forests, lakes, seas, wild animals, poisonous snakes, which cause great trouble and difficulties. In order to make the road easier, it is necessary to illuminate it, for which they maintain a fire in the caravan of the deceased every night for a certain period of time, placing a lamp in front of the gods-burkhans. Relatives should not cry, as tears turn into lakes and seas, which complicates the path further²⁹. Among the Mongolian peoples, it is not recommended to mourn a deceased person much. It is believed that the deceased may have certain difficulties (see above), this can be noted among the Buryats: «one Buryat woman, after her husband's death, cried a lot about her late husband, who left her with young children. One day she saw her husband in a dream; both front hems of his coat were wet; the soul of the deceased barely walked under the weight of wet hems. Her husband angrily forbade his wife to cry, because from her tears the hem of his fur coat becomes heavy ‘If you cry, he told her, I will take you to my place’. From that time on, this Buryat woman stopped crying about her dead husband, fearing to die»³⁰.

The Kalmyks have a saying: «haalg deer čolu üzgdhlā tüügäd bā, hōönk haalgčn cagan bolna» [author's field materials] ‘*when you walk along the road, if you see a stone, you need to remove it, then the road will be successful (after death)*’. Such worries are obviously related to the fact that not all souls can reach the king of the dead Erlik Nomin-khan. This can happen for many reasons, according to the Kalmyks, the priests who served the memorial service did not know prayer well and could not properly direct the soul along the right path. According to the clergy, this may be due to the fact that relatives were mercantile and sacrificed poorly to the clergy. Such wandering souls were equated with evil spirits, as they do evil deeds, frighten people, etc.³¹ It is also important to note that the road is the border between the world of the living and the dead, one of the common properties of the road is the specific quality of contact with the characters of the other world, characters with supernatural properties³².

Funeral rites are based on the idea of death as a transition to the otherworld which located in a remote space, where it is necessary to overcome obstacles to reach the destination. The road in the Kalmyks' ideas is a kind of minimal space and to overcome it people should perform certain ritual actions leading to the achievement of the goal, as well as to take measures in the earthly world. Most of the rituals for the transition to the afterlife have not been preserved at present, and this problem is of interest and requires further research.

¹⁹ Eliade Mircea. Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy. P. 207.

²⁰ Neklyudov S.Y. Erlik // Myths of the peoples of the world: Encyclopedia. Pp. 1123-1124.

²¹ Mikhailov T. M. From the history of Buryat shamanism (from ancient times to the XVIII century). P. 168.

²² Dushan U. D. Selected works. P. 224.

²³ Nevskaya L.G. Semantics of the road and related representations in the funeral rite // Text structure. P. 228.

²⁴ Levkieskaya, E.E. The road // Slavic antiquities. Ethnolinguistic Dictionary in five volumes. Vol. 2. P. 124.

²⁵ Sharaeva T.I. Funeral and funerary rites among the Kalmyks: preparation of the deceased for burial. Bulletin of KIGI RAS. P. 46.

²⁶ ibid.

²⁷ ibid. P. 47.

²⁸ Sodnompilova M.M. The way to next world in the mythological tradition... Pp. 77-78.

²⁹ Dushan U. D. Selected works. P. 225.

³⁰ Khangalov M. N. Balagansky collection. Fairy tales, beliefs and some rituals among northern Buryats. P. 237.

³¹ Dushan U. D. Selected works. P. 225.

³² Neklyudov S.Y. Movement and the road in folklore... P. 210.

A cave or a hole in the ground can serve as an entrance to the otherworld: "a certain person got into the underworld through a hole in the ground"³³. Holes for the entrance to the afterlife world could serve as badger or fox holes, which often serve as an entrance to that world³⁴. The hearth was also considered in the legends of the Altai peoples as one of the entrances and exits to the otherworld: "often in the legends the shaman goes to the underworld through the hearth, and returns from the otherworld, descending in the form of a bird through a smoke hole"³⁵. In some cases, the entrance could be trees with a crooked trunk, so once a strongman "servants of Erlen Khan was held under a crooked tree inclined to the northeast, and he, becoming invisible, was able to go to another world to serve the ruler of the world of the dead"³⁶.

The ideas about the afterlife may differ among different ethnic groups, but often the otherworld in folk representations is a copy of the real world, the deceased live there in villages, work, hunt, marry, the landscape can also copy the realities of this world, "their" world³⁷. According to popular ideas about the "other" world, existence is ordinary, resembles the real world in many ways: "descriptions of the existence of the deceased and their occupations (the latter in most cases is reported that the deceased in the "otherworld" continue to do the same things they did while alive - for example, a chauffeur, educator, stove maker and after death are engaged in their professional activities)" are quite stereotypical³⁸. The otherworld seems similar to the earthly one, people or their souls retain the same needs as in earthly life, food, clothing, etc. So there is a custom to include with the dead things they need, food, greetings and messages about important events in family life. You can also make various offerings or give alms to the poor³⁹.

The Kalmyks believed that offerings should be made regularly, otherwise the souls of deceased ancestors would remind them themselves. Thus: "The souls of the dead need both food and clothing. Therefore, periodically they need to be supplied with everything necessary. If the surviving relatives do not guess, then the souls remind them about themselves. For the most part, souls let their relatives know about their need through dreams". Otherwise, "the souls of the dead may get angry with their living relatives, especially if the relatives are disrespectful to them. In this case, they can even punish them, make them suffer. So, if women disrespect the memory of relatives, they send them difficult childbirth"⁴⁰.

In addition to helping beggars and the poor, Kalmyks have a practice of making offerings through priests or making gifts to Buddhist temples to meet the needs of the deceased, since Kalmyks believe that priests are intermediaries between the souls of the deceased and relatives and, thus, one can achieve the goal. Offerings were made in the form of tiled tea, pretzel, clothing or cloth, as well as in the form of expensive fur coats⁴¹. Animal sacrifices can be made to temples: *sümmnd esklä hurd bärč bolgad*. Er kün *ögrhlä* – mörn ögnä, öngsrn küünä külgñ boltha; emgtä kün *ögrhlä* – hurd bärč bolgad ükr ögnä, ter öngsrn kün saagad üsign uutha [author's field materials] 'if a man died, the temple or monastery offer the oblation. If a man died, then they made an offering in the form of a horse so that he could ride a horse (in the otherworld); if a woman, then they made an offering in the form of a cow so that a woman could milk and drink milk'⁴².

If the offering is made in the temple, then, as a rule, on the day of commemoration, the name of the deceased is written on a piece of paper, i.e. to a specific person: *neg halmg emgn kelžnə üksn küünd, caasnd hot ögdm bičhlä*. Sedklärn hot ögčählä neg küünd bičäd, ter küünd ögdž. Oln küünd iigäd caasnd bičhlä, ter ögsn hot ter küünd kürdgoč. Tiigäd neg kögšn emgn kelnä. Madn bolhla, tiigäd *hɣaragan bēnāvīdn*. Zergledän hörn kün bičäd... neg künd bičh kergtä. Madn *oɕarathu* nern bičnāvīdn. Ter *hɣaradn kīrad uga bääžič*. *Hɣaradn* huvahla neg künd neg zalc, neg kambat kümnä 'one Kalmyk woman said: to dead people - at one time, many people do not need to make offerings of food. If we want to do it, we need to write a name of one person on paper - the one we want. If a lot of people are written on paper, then the offering of food to that person will not get. That's what an old woman said. We're recording everyone. We put twenty people on the list... but he needs to do it personally. And on the memorial day, we begin to list all the other [deceased] there. And, it turns out, it doesn't reach everyone. Well, yes, try to divide, one sip each and one candy goes to everyone'⁴³.

There is also an idea that, being in the other world, dead people will find out who made the offering and on what day they are waiting for commemoration: *Kežänä kökšüd iigäd kelvä*. *Kežänä ämts, kökšüd ashndan kelchädg bilä*. Ednčn *hɣard, öngersn kün keldg bäänä* «Ouch, nand endr hot öglä, nand öglä». Tiigž keldg bäächänä. Tiigčäd mednä kemb öglä. Tiigäd medäldg bääž. Neg negänd kelnä: «nand endr mini kövün hot öglä. Däkäd nand dala elgn-sadn, ah-dü dala bäänä» *gɣyäd keläd bäädm*. Iigäd üksn kün kelnä. Neg negän hoornd iigäd kelnä. Iräd suudžn iigäd, suudchadž *hɣar, kīlänä hot ögsn ämts*. Also, tednčn *külägäd bääžič, hot ögdg ödr*. Zul bolhla, Cagan bolhla, sar kezä yarhla, šin ödr boldžn, macg ödr boldžn, iigäd medäd 'the old people have been talking for a long time. It's been a long time since people, old people, told this in the evenings. They gather, the dead, and say: «Ouch, they made an offering to me today, they gave it to me». That's what they say. They also know who made the offering. That's how they find out. They share: «My son brought me food today. I also have many relatives, many brothers», they say. That's how the dead talk. That's what they say among themselves. They come and sit like this, they sit together, waiting for those who commemorate them. They also wait for the days when they make an offering. When Zul (New Year's holiday) happens, when Tsagan-sar (Spring Festival) comes, when the month begins, when an auspicious day happens, the day of matzg [fasting] happens, everyone knows so'⁴⁴.

Some groups of Slavs have the idea that the rich remain rich in the "otherworld", and the poor remain poor⁴⁵. The same thing is noted among the Mongolian peoples: "the soul of a rich man rides on the good horse on which he was buried, he wears the same elegant attire, he has the same tools, he eats the same dishes, drinks the same wine that was given to the deceased at his funeral. The poor deceased and his second soul will live in a poor environment after his death"⁴⁶.

7. Conclusion

Thus, it is important to note that the ideas about the afterlife and the ways to the otherworld have been transformed, partially lost or reinterpreted. The Kalmyks have preserved only partial ideas about the otherworld and the way there, there is no complete picture of ideas, and only individual fragments are reconstructed that may contradict each other. Nevertheless, this article attempts to restore the ideas of the otherworld among the Kalmyks and other related Mongolian peoples, ideas which are archaic and have been preserved in parallel with the dominant Buddhist religious ideas. In the course of the study, only individual fragments of the Kalmyks' afterlife were described and funeral

³³ Neklyudov S.Y., Novik E.S. Invisible and unwanted guest // Studies in linguistics and semiotics. P. 398.

³⁴ Sodnompilova M.M. World in the traditional worldview and practical activities of the Mongolian peoples. P. 137.

³⁵ Sagalaev A.M. Altai in the mirror of myth. P. 90.

³⁶ Sodnompilova M.M. World in the traditional worldview... P. 103]

³⁷ Petrukhin V.Ya. The afterlife // Myths of the peoples of the world: Encyclopedia. P. 374.

³⁸ Safronov E. "Other world" in stories about dreams and a complex of ideas related to funeral and memorial rites of Russians // Dreams and visions in the Slavic and Jewish cultural tradition. P. 121.

³⁹ Vinogradova L.N., Tolstaya S.M. That light // Slavic antiquities. Ethnolinguistic Dictionary: Volume V. P. 299.

⁴⁰ Dushan U. D. Selected works. P. 229.

⁴¹ ibid.

⁴² Lidzhev A.B. Prophetic dreams of the Kalmyks: images and symbols. P. 25.

⁴³ ibid. P. 26.

⁴⁴ ibid.

⁴⁵ Vinogradova L.N., Tolstaya S.M. That light // Slavic antiquities. Ethnolinguistic Dictionary: Volume V. P. 300.

⁴⁶ Khangalov M. N. Balagansky collection. Fairy tales, beliefs and some rituals among northern Buryats. P. 232.

rites, within which such border symbols as the road, door and threshold, which play an important role in the representations of the Kalmyks with the involvement of data from other Mongolian people were considered. It should be noted that there are no unified ideas about the otherworld, they are contradictory and diverse. Nevertheless, further research will allow us to reconstruct the ideas about the otherworld, identify local features and highlight common features not only among the Mongolian peoples but also among other peoples of Central Asia and Siberia. The commonality of the idea of the otherworld is manifested in the localization of the afterlife and funeral rites have many common features, the presence of common mythological ideas about the otherworld with neighboring peoples. All this testifies that there are deep and archaic ethno-cultural contacts and common views on the existing world. Therefore, research in this direction is of undoubted interest and leaves hope that many questions that remain open will be answered in the future.

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