

Yuilsk Khanty, this act is preceded by *tarnyng ar* songs, but in the Kazym tradition the songs of this genre are not sung within the ceremony. The texts of these songs are more stable. They are characterised by allegories and linguistically marked by invocations of the high goddess of the upperworld of the Kazym Khanty:

<i>Jemang kev,</i>	Holy Stone,
<i>Pasang kev,</i>	Golden Stone,
<i>Sin sh'i nai,</i>	Holy Woman-Goddess.

The manner of performance of *tarnyng ar* resembles that of the sacral songs (Example 5). The songs of the above-mentioned genres render sacral quality to the action at which they are sung. One can also observe desacralisation, which is connected with the inclusion of merry pantomimes as well as erotic scenes and a 'puppet theatre' performed with toes into the structure of a bear feast.

A bear feast undoubtedly includes rich material for a study of folklore and folk customs. A detailed analysis of local styles helps us to present all variabilities in the culture of the Kazym Khanty and in doing so, to stress its individuality.

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CUSTOMS RELATED TO CHILDREN'S INFECTIOUS DISEASES IN GEORGIA

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According to the methods of treatment of diseases in Georgia, one can distinguish between three groups of diseases:

- a) maladies treated basically by the empirical-rational means,
- b) treatment which combines both empirical-rational and magical-religious means,
- c) maladies treated only by magical-religious methods.

Children's infectious diseases can be referred to these last maladies.

General terms designating these diseases in Georgia are the following: *sakhadi* ('a debt, something to be paid'), *batonebi* ('masters, rulers') which is the most widely used term, and *angelozebi* ('angels'); an occasional usage of *batoni angelozebi* is noted.

These group terms comprise smallpox and six children's infectious diseases: measles, scarlet fever, whooping cough, mumps, chicken-pox, and German measles. The last three maladies are sometimes not considered to be *batonebi*.

The beliefs and customs related to children's infectious diseases form a rather complex system, according to which the illness is sent by God, it is a debt owed to God and it is obligatory to suffer at least from one of these diseases. In this regard, the term *ghvtis vali* ('God's debt') spread among the East-Georgian mountaineers, and the term *sakhadi* ('something to be paid') serves as a good proof of this.

Many facts could be cited in corroboration of the divine origin of these diseases, but this will be dealt with later. Here we shall adduce only one example: if a person had not suffered from the *batonebi*, he was considered rejected by God. The physical defects that this illness left were never frowned upon. For instance, pock-marks would seldom stand in the way of a young lady's marriage, though this was not without exceptions, of course.

According to ethnographic evidence, in some parts of Georgia only baptised children fell ill with *batonebi*. These diseases were sent – according to folk beliefs – like kind angels, and one of the synonyms of these diseases *angelozebi* ('angels') emphasises this point. The angels of measles are represented as little children clad all in red, that of smallpox as a young lady or a man dressed in white, riding a horse or a donkey.

Batonebi are considered to be brothers and sisters who have a mother or an aunt (on their father's side). Generally, the aunt is very popular in customs related to these diseases. The sick child is always pleased with the closeness of aunt.

As we know, *batonebi* are sent by God, but they have their own patron, mainly St. Barbara. Only in Khevi (mountainous region of Eastern Georgia) the cult of St. Barbara is replaced with the cult of St. John the Baptist, maybe for the reason that St. John the Baptist is generally considered to be the patron of children, and his protection here seems to be natural.

Among the population of Georgia beliefs about the country of *batonebi* have been recorded. According to these beliefs, the country of *batonebi* is in heaven. Smallpox and measles are brothers, they have a mother who lives on the top of a high rock at the seaside, with a beautiful field below and with a swift, clear spring¹. Sometimes it is a beautiful garden on an island with rivers of honey and springs of milk. The blue sea 'kisses' its coasts and the bright sun sends its shining rays, everything is very pleasant to look at, because it is a real paradise. Trees blossom with flowers and their branches diffuse their charming fragrance around. Here, one can also find splendid palaces and pearls are falling like rain.²

According to the legend, a fisherman who found himself in this 'Earthly garden of Eden' met his dead neighbour who had been taken to heaven by batonebi.³

The eminent Georgian ethnographer Vera Bardavelidze studied all the aspects of the beliefs related to this disease, linking them to the cult of the Great Mother. She suggested that this garden of batonebi is precisely the mythological realm or garden of the Great Mother.⁴

Surely, this view should be accepted, but here we seem to be dealing with the genetic relation of two cults – the cult of the Great Mother Nana and batonebi.

According to the material accumulated around this assumption we can conclude that the garden of batonebi and the paradise are one and the same thing. It is believed that in case of death, the child is taken to heaven by the angels and thus death is not considered to be a tragedy. Therefore, mourning over a dead child is forbidden. In some cases the funeral is accompanied by music, mainly with lullaby.

Thus, the logical line of folk thought is not destroyed. Batonebi, the angels are sent by God and are considered to be the inhabitants of paradise and, naturally, they take their chosen creatures to their abode.

Naturally, the foregoing does not exhaust these beliefs. This will be discussed below in connection with customs.

We shall take the course of measles as an example.

A child is sick with measles for nine days. In the first three days the illness is accompanied by high temperature, but the disease itself is not understood unless there is an epidemic in the area, or someone has dreamed about it. Generally, the foretelling of this disease in dreams is very widespread.

On the fourth day several small red spots appear on the body of the sick child. After another three days spots gradually disappear and the patient begins to recover. Recovery needs three more days. This is the whole process of illness, if there are no complications. Any complications are believed to be caused by a failure to follow the rules of the

These rules actually imply care for the patient and are interpreted as performance of acts that are pleasing to the angels on the one hand, and prohibitions, i.e. abstaining from all actions that will displease batonebi on the other.

When batonebi visit a house, the sick child's room must be cleaned and decked with pleasant things (flowers, etc.). Red cloths must be spread on the bed and hung on the window. In case of smallpox white colour dominates; these two are the favourite colours of the angels.

Spring is a favourable season for batonebi. Rose and violet are their beloved flowers. At the sick child's bedside a table is laid with sweets and some-

times with red eggs. Candles made of crushed or well dried walnuts are lit. Walnut candles may be lit in the corners of the room. The room is filled with very pleasant fragrance to gratify the angels.

Every evening the grandmother, mother or aunt of the sick child tries to amuse him by singing the lullaby. The content of such songs is worship and praise of the angels. The song expresses happiness caused by their visit. The main figure in such songs is the aunt (on the father's side). In some variants the cult of St. Barbara is evident, while in Khevi the cult of St. John the Baptist.

As was mentioned above, the bans connected with this disease play a great role in these customs. The bans refer to the sick child and the members of his family. Thus for instance, the sick child is not allowed to eat bitter and peppery dishes, meals with garlic are also forbidden, for it is said that the angels hate its taste and smell. The sick child is not allowed to scratch the rash or wash himself with cold water. The female members of the household are not allowed to sweep the room, cook meals in the same room, etc., for the dust and steam may burn the eyes of the angels. Women are forbidden to knit and sew, as needles might prick the eyes of the angels. The father is not allowed to drink alcohol, for the angels hate strong drinks.

Lighting wax candles is also forbidden – it is said that the angels' feet are made of wax and they could easily melt if candles are lit. The angels are so chaste that they cannot stand sexual intercourse among the parents of the patient. Quarrel, noise, shooting are forbidden in the family. Thus, quiet and calm are pleasant to the angels.

Failure to follow the above bans may cause irritation of the angels and may have an adverse influence on the condition of the patient, whose temperature may rise, he (she) may lose consciousness and become delirious. It is believed that the delirious patient speaks the language of the angels. At this juncture the ritual of apologising is performed, which differs in various parts of Georgia. Apologising is a kind of request in which the household of the patient entreats the angels to be forgiven and beg them to improve the child's health.

During this ritual the mother, grandmother or the aunt of the child walks around the bed on her knees, making supplications and holding a dish full of various kinds of sweets, sometimes red eggs, flowers, walnut candles. In some parts of Georgia one interesting fact is observable, when the condition of the patient reaches its climax the mother, grandmother or aunt of the child strip themselves and dance around the bed.

The folk explanation of this ritual is the following: the angels like mirth and fun. The appearance of a naked woman amuses them. Very often after such a procedure the child actually turns cheerful, he laughs and his condition begins to improve gradually. At first sight here everything is logical, but this ritual

seems to be deep rooted. In East Georgia (Kartli) I have recorded such a ritual. The mother of the sick child with her naked breasts goes round the bed on her knees. Her breasts touch the ground. She entreats the Mother Earth to help her. I suppose that this is a reflection of an ancient belief and a manifestation of the cult of the Mother Earth.

When the child recovers, the angels are sent off with gratitude. A small table is laid, full of sweets, sometimes it is taken outdoors, mostly to the cross-roads and is left there to be taken by passers-by, and the angels are said to follow them.

In this case some kind of magic belief begins to act. In some parts of Western Georgia (e.g. Racha) such tables are laid under big walnut trees. In general, the notion of walnut is closely linked with batonebi. Nearly in all families, the inhabitants of this part of Georgia have walnut trees in their yards; these trees are engraved with crosses. Selling the walnut fruits is strictly forbidden. Only the members of the family may use the walnuts for their needs. Walnut cakes and candles are made of them.

December 17 is St. Barbara's Day. On that day, in some regions of Georgia the recovered child is dressed all in white or red and taken to St. Barbara's church with lit candles and special offerings, especially hens. The child and his mother or grandmother must circumambulate the church three times. The hen is let free in the church yard and the candles, cakes, as well as an article of the child's clothes are left in the church.

Thus, it can be concluded that in Georgia, with the exception of some regions, St. Barbara is considered to be the patroness of children's infectious diseases.

V. Bardavidze suggests that the cult of Barbara must be connected with the ancient cult of the Sun Goddess⁵. Genetically, this can be true, but in Georgian everyday life Barbara is considered to be a Christian saint.

In some Georgian published sources describing the life of St. Barbara, she is at the same time considered to be patroness of those stricken with plague and smallpox⁶. The above mentioned function of St. Barbara is confirmed in one of the oldest variants of her biography By John of Damascus.⁷

One of the churches built in Tbilisi in honour of St. Barbara was erected in the 18th century during the plague epidemic spread in Tbilisi. It was built specially to halt the disease.⁸

Thus, among the functions of St. Barbara, the function of plague treatment is pronounced and appears to be connected with other epidemic diseases as well, especially smallpox and measles.

According to the above materials, it can be concluded that in the beliefs related to children's infectious diseases various religious layers can be clearly

distinguished. Presumably, Christianity, which became the state religion in Georgia in the 4th century, exerted considerable influence on the cult of batonebi (children's infectious diseases). And this cult was reinterpreted in terms of the Christian religion. The scheme of the Christian version of this cult can be represented in the following way: the illness is sent by God (Father) and it is obligatory to suffer at least one of these diseases once in one's life (for it is a debt owed to God). These diseases are caused by the angels. Only baptised children fall ill. St. Barbara and St. John the Baptist are considered to be the patrons of these diseases. In the case of death the child is taken to paradise by the angles and, therefore, mourning over the dead child is forbidden.

Thus, batonebi is an ancient disease spread in Georgia. Elements of ancient religions are clearly visible in their cult. Based upon Christianity this cult is reinterpreted into a definitive model of beliefs – into a single logical system.

The nature and character of the diseases play one of the leading roles in the origin of the beliefs and customs related to batonebi, and it is clear that the belief in a debt owed to God was actually determined by the immune character of these diseases.

The various customs related to the above diseases are largely results of folk empirical observations and imply a rational mode of care and treatment. The conditions created to please 'the angels' – dim light, pleasant scent, music and calm atmosphere in the family, and light diet are beneficial for the sick child and his nervous system. It is known that the nervous system of a patient is out of order, and calm and pleasant surroundings exert a salutary effect on him.

But, undoubtedly, empirical observations are not sufficient for the right interpretation of these diseases, and the applied methods of treatment are not radical. It is common knowledge that in modern medicine, where prophylactics of these diseases is at a high level, their treatment is not radical either and still has symptomatic features.

With the facts given above we can conclude that when folk empirical knowledge fails to grasp the essence of the real given disease, the sense of reality is lost and the disease is perceived as a supernatural phenomenon. Thus maladies, existing in reality, form a basis for the development of irreal and irrational conceptions. So, in folk medicine the real and the irreal, the rational and the irrational form a whole that may be quite difficult to analyse and define.

Literature

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⁶See *The Hagiographies*. Tiflisi, 1859, pp. 305-307 (in Georgian).

⁷P.C, 96 col 782-814. Tarhoat (Belgium), 1976.

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EATING OF BEESTINGS AS AN ORIGINAL CALENDAR RITE OF THE BASHKIRIAN UDMURTS

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The problem of the typology of the ethnic communities is still one of the main problems in ethnology. Here we are to underline the questions dealing with difficulties in studying the phenomena of the small ethnic formations. That problem has attracted the attention of the scientists lately, because of the activating of the national movements in the USSR,¹ suddenly it was discovered that small ethnic formations, linguistic groups, dispersed parts of large ethnoses, have not been studied as well as they should be. According to that, we will try to give a glance at the mechanism of the connection between the main massive of the ethnos and its dispersed parts. It is well known that the ethnic groups because of different reasons (social-economic, political), finding themselves in the different ethno-geographical conditions, continue to preserve the main qualities of the motherland-ethnos. At the same time, finding itself in new conditions, the ethnic group has naturally fallen under the influence of a different culture, traditions, language, and probably has to adapt to a new ecological condition - in any case, it effects the culture of this group, making it borrow a lot of elements. Such a transformation is not chaotic or a blind imitation, but, interpreted through the ethnos's mind, incarnates into new forms of economy, develops new traditions, peculiarities of the language. So, in the course of time, such a group, on the one side, becomes a specific unity, having adapted itself in