



THE THOUGHTS RELATED TO THE CULT OF WATER IN ZOROASTRIANISM

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ANNOTATION

The article discusses the views and customs associated related to water elements of the Zoroastrian religion in the Fergana Valley today as a manifestation of common culture in lifestyle and ceremonial life, as well as the syncretization of these rituals and religious views shown.

KEYWORDS: Zoroastrianism, Zoroaster (Zarathustra), Angramano, "Avesta", goddess, Anahita, water resources.

INTRODUCTION

In the works of the ancient Greek scholar in the V-IV centuries BC the name of Zoroaster (Zarathustra) was first met. The Greeks called him Zoroaster, and the religion he founded "Zoroastrianism"¹. The religion of Zoroastrianism was spread in the Middle East and Central Asia two thousand and seven hundred years before now.

THE CONTENT OF THE ISSUE

According to Zoroastrianism, as the beginning of this world exists the end of it exists too, that is the universe is not unlimited in the dimensions

of time and period. Life consists of constant disagreeable struggles between good and bad, true and false, light and dark. The forces of light, goodness, and kindness were ruled by Ahura-Mazda and the sacred spirit "Spenta-Mine", the dark and evil forces were ruled by the instigator spirit Angramano (later was called Archiman – A. A.). The army of Archiman included giants, gods, personalized evil concepts like envy, indolence, deception, evil forces, and witches, they tried to harm fire, land, water, and livestock.

Archiman created death, winter, cold, hot, harmful animals, and insects. Ahura-Mazda was the god of kindness, health, and happiness. Zoroaster said: "We honor Ahura-Mazda, he created live-stock, water, plants, and light". Ahura-Mazda was thought to have created life and the first Man.

GODS RELATED TO WATER IN ZOROASTRIANISM

According to the cosmogony of Zoroastrianism, the earth was round. It stood on water, moisture, water was the base of everything, the earth was surrounded by the ocean, it was honored and valued as if wood in the water and even more than fire. In Zoroastrianism, the first of the six substances (goddess) surrounded the earth was Apam-Napat². It was said to have a life power that

¹ Koster W. Le myth de Platon, de Zarathustra et des chaldéens. – Leiden, 1951; Carnoy A. J. Lumières iraniennes et anatoliennes sur l'hieronymie grecque // Proceedings of the Twenty Third International Congress of Orientalists. – London, 1954. – P. 171–172; Duchesne-Guillemin J. The Western Response to Zoroaster. – Oxford, 1958; Afnan R. Zoroaster's Influence on Greek Thought. – New York, 1965; Conti R. Cosmogonie orientali e Filosofia presocratica. – Roma, 1967. – P. 292–293, 408; Biesterfeld W. Der Platonische Mythos des Er (Politeia 614b-621d). – Münster, 1970; West M. L. Early Greek Philosophy and the Orient. – Oxford, 1971; Schmeja H. Iranisches und Griechisches in den Mithramysterien. – Innsbruck, 1975; Pyankov I. V. Central Asia in the news of antique history of Ktesia. – Dushanbe, 1975.

² See Apam Napat's descriptions of other religions: Mythological dictionary. – M.: Soviet Encyclopedia, 1990. – P. 672.



the life power in the water should be enriched with the juice of plants.

In Zoroastrianism water was a sacred element, first of all, its clearness was cared about. The water resources – rivers, lakes, or wells were strictly protected from any kind of dirt. If it was necessary to wash any ceremonial dirty thing, the water was gathered in a special place, but the dirty thing was not washed directly with the water. The dirty thing was firstly washed with the urine of a cow, dried in the sun or the sand, and then finally washed with water. Also, it was banned to go out when it was raining, because it was believed to make the water and the earth “dirty” by this. In Zoroastrianism water was valued as the most necessary element for the human and in "Avesta" was noted the followings: “The punishment of the one, who witnessed before the clean water and fire, in the hell is worse than all the suffering of this world”³.

In “Avesta” there are many texts about Ardvi Sura – the goddess of water and high yield. The attitude to water was reflected in the second name of the fifth section– “Aban yashta” too and it means “Eulogy for water”⁴.

ANAHITA

In “Avesta” “Anahita” was interpreted as the god of the earth, water, and fertility. In many cases, Anahita was connected with Ardvi by the researchers. The divine river mentioned in “Avesta” was connected with rain and fertility. The etymology of the word “Ardvi” means “wet” and “moisture” to⁵.

Among the ancient people there was a belief of fertility, the goddess of this belief, according to the traditions of "Avesta", was Anahita-Ardisura. Anahita was the goddess of water, fertility, and fertility too. It was interpreted that Anahita was wearing clothes knitted from the skin of 30 otters and the otters were the symbol of fertility. One big chapter of the “Yasht”(section/book) was devoted to this goddess that Anahita was the holy goddess of waters. She lived among the stars and rode the cart ridden by four horses and struggled against the giants.

The image of Anahita found its reflection in the stone and clay sculptures made in ancient times too. The Zoroastrians kept such sculptures of the goddess of water and fertility in their houses and

temples. During the ceremonies, they worshipped to her and prayed for the sake of Anahita and held sacrificing ceremonies.

During the archeological excavations carried out at the ancient monuments in the different regions of Central Asia, many sculptures of this goddess decorated with jewels were found. Particularly, in the castle of Qo'yqirilgan in Khorezm the sculpture of Ardvi-Sura Anahita and many other sculptures were found⁶. Besides, in the middle flow of the Sirdarya, there was a complex of temples related to a female goddess in the middle ages. The Arsubanuket city, which was built in honor of the goddess of the Banukent river in Choch and the Aris river, can be an example of it.

In the ancient people's imagination "first of all water and then other things appeared". Water was the purifying element like fire. As proof of the cult of water the temple of Saks, which was built in the II thousand years BC in honor of fire and water valued as holy elements in Zoroastrianism, can be mentioned. In the yard of the temple, there was a sacred well under the tent⁷Also, in the mourning ceremonies of the Zoroastrian wavy lines were drawn on the special dishes which the deceased's bones were put in and on the thresholds too. These lines denoted water.

For the ancient tribes in Central Asia, the source of all the waters on the earth was lake Vorukash. This lake was connected with the Sirdarya. The water of this river was valuable for the Saky tribes that lived on the bank of the river. In the low flow of the Sirdarya, the cities (Uygarak, Tagiskent, Yettisuv) belonging to the culture of Sakys were studied by the researchers. While studying the architecture of these cities and other findings, the specialists concluded that these constructions built by Sakys had a religious meaning and were connected with worshipping to the Sirdarya. But in some cases such interpretation is quite discussable and arguable⁸.

The tradition of considering water as a source of life and a symbol of purity has survived in Central Asia until the present day. In particular, G. P. Snesarov writes that Ardvi Sura - Anahita faced to transformation in the Khorezm region and remained under the name of Mother Anbar⁹.

Momoi Hurbibi, the shrine of Chashma spring in Sukh district of Fergana region, must also

³ Avesta. Historical-literary monument / Translation by Askar Mahkam. – Tashkent: Shark, 2001. – P. 122.

⁴ Rak I.V. Myths of ancient and early Medieval Iran. – 1998.; Rahimov N. The cult of water of ancient Iranian tribes of Central Asia / Scientific records of Khujand state university. Khujand, 2009. – p. 66.

⁵ Rahimov N. The cult of water of ancient Iranian tribes of Central Asia... – P. 67.

⁶ Tolstov R.P. About ancient Ox and Yaksart deltas. – M., 1962. – P. 210.

⁷ Rahimov N. The cult of water of ancient Iranian tribes of Central Asia... – P. 66.

⁸ Rahimov N. The cult of water of ancient Iranian tribes of Central Asia... – P. 66–67.

⁹ Snesarov G.P. Relicts of pre-Muslim beliefs... – P. 240–251.



have a transformed, localized name given to Ardivi Cura - Anahita, the goddess of blessing and prosperity in the "Avesta"¹⁰. According to legends, water was extremely scarce in Sukh in ancient times. The place of the present Chashma was a dry place where the "haft yoron", that's "seven brothers" and their only sister, Hurbibi, lived. Hurbibi was a beautiful, virgin girl, the beauty of her face was like a fourteen-day-old moon, and she was a tall, wealthy girl with long and constantly combed hair touching the ground. She did not get married and devoted all her life to praying to Allah. Therefore, by the will of Allah there appeared Chashma spring here. It is believed that if anyone goes to the head of the spring with good intentions and clean body and remembers the patron of the spring Hurbibi giving charity to her spirit and makes her spirit happy, their wishes will come to true¹¹.

In "Avesta" Ardivi-Sura – Anahita was one of the seven goddesses created by Ahuramazda, according to Sukh-Tajik legends, Momoi Hurbibi was the only sister of seven brothers (haft yorons). The following qualities were given to her: her beautiful statue like a cypress, her shining face like the moon, she constantly combed long hair, and her virginity for a lifetime without marriage repeat the qualities of Ardivi-Sura-Anahita¹².

In Central Asia the water goddess is depicted in two appearances: a mirror in her hand, snakes or dragons next to her (for example, the temples of Erkurgan and Dalvarzintepa); the second - the four-armed goddess - the senmurvs, and the two-armed one - sitting on a throne on a dragon, was depicted with a lily on the crown. The first of these is related to the ancient beliefs in the country, the second is a combination of images.

In verse 4 of the third chapter of the "Videvdad", Zoroaster asks Ahura Mazda, "Where is the third place in the world where the land is the happiest of all?" Ahura Mazda replied, "Hey, Spiytmán, Zoroaster! Such a place is a land where Ashavan planted more wheat, oil, and fruit trees than anyone else, people brought water to drylands and plowed the watery lands."

In Zoroastrianism, Anahita's companions were snakes and fish. The snake was connected with fertility, one of the main functions of the water goddess. The fish was given special respect because it was food for the people near the river.

According to legends, until the twentieth century, the image of a snake was a symbol of fertility and performed one of the main functions of the water goddess. In the myths of many ancient peoples, from the Greeks and Romans in the West to India and China in the East, the snake or dragon was considered as the guardian of moisture. On the wall pictures in Varakhsha and Panjikent, a dragon erupting a fountain out of its mouth was depicted.

To regulate the rainfall and ensure the development of the country the ruler's union with the dragon, which retains moisture through a mysterious marriage with the god of celestial moisture was the main topic in Sak-Sugdian mythology. As the archaeologist R. Suleymanov wrote, this topic is not related to the mythology of "Avesta", but its roots go back to the archaic common-Indo-European mythological series. There is no information about Rustam, the hero of the Sak-Sogdians, in "Avesta". In "Shahnama", he is portrayed as the grandson of the dragon Zakhok from his mother and as a pagan, the enemy of Zoroastrianism.

It should be noted that in the Uzbek folklore, the snake was a mythological symbol of water and rain. In particular, in Uzbek folk tales, the image of a snake is interpreted in connection with the water of life, springs, wells, rivers, and ponds¹³. Particularly, when the hero of the Uzbek folk tale "Suv Bola" (Water boy) was talking to a fish in the spring, the sky suddenly darkened. Suddenly the wind blew, the storm rose and it began to rain. The boy wondered what it was, and a dragon came down from the sky and landed at the head of the spring¹⁴.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, although the religious beliefs and various cults of Zoroastrianism related to water have not been preserved in the valley today, the views and customs associated with some of its elements continue as local views and a manifestation of common culture in the lifestyle and ceremonial life of the people. It shows the syncretism of religious views in ceremonial life.

¹⁰ Sufiev U.M. The customs and habits of Sukh-Tajiks related to water / History of Fergana valley in new researches. – Fergana, 2014. – P. 119.

¹¹ Sufiev U.M. The customs and habits of Sukh-Tajiks related to water.... – P. 119.

¹² Sufiev U.M. The customs and habits of Sukh-Tajiks related to water.... – P. 119–120.

¹³ Fayzieva D. The image of a snake in the Uzbek folklores. – Tashkent: Fan, 2010. – P. 15.

¹⁴ "Dragon on the Moon" – Dragon on the Moon. Uzbek folk science fiction. Book 1. – Tashkent, 1983. – P. 133.