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THE FUNCTIONAL PECULIARITIES OF EPIC ONYMS

Abstract. The relationship between language and culture is diverse and stable. Ethnoculture manifests itself most clearly in language. In this regard of great interest is the onymic vocabulary found in folklore works and epic including. This layer of vocabulary reflects the folk mentality, history, culture, religious views of a nation, as well as its ethnic contacts.

Among the unique monuments of the national culture of the Buryats is the epic *Geser*, which appeared, according to most researchers, more than two thousand years ago. In the heroic epic, everything is symbolic: nature, time, space, personages, their actions and motifs. Geser's naming system, his antipodes' names, various mythological names, toponyms are no exception in this respect. Epic proper names, which are sometimes the only witnesses of events of past years, reveal a great semantic potential. The semantic system of the language, which includes onymic vocabulary, contributes precisely to the recreation of the archaic picture of the world, to the identification of the features of the epic consciousness of people in the distant past. All this makes the study of epic onyms actual and appealing.

So the article focuses on the Buryat uligers about Geser which are characterized by numerous names of epic heroes. One of the peculiarities of the eponyms is that they are not one nominative unit, but a verbose hierarchically arranged group of words. The main characters, whose relationships determine the development of the uliger's epic plot, are the main character, his wife or bride (as a rule, there are three of them), his enemies (antipodes) represented by the monsters-Mangadhais, other heroes or khans. The epithetics of their names constitutes a single semantic complex.

The article considers the onyms of the Buryat epic *Abai Geser Bogdo khaan* written from a well-known Buryat folklore teller (uligershin) Alfor Vasilyev. Special attention is given to the semantics, structure and functional value of epic names – theonyms, the names of Geser, other personages, toponyms.

The ethnolinguistic analysis based on the structural-semantic, etymological methods allowed concluding that the acsiological content of the epic names is revealed in their ability to perform as unique concepts of the national world picture. No doubt proper names have great potential in revealing the value-aesthetic content of the Buryat epic. They represent spatial-temporal landmarks and symbols of historical, cultural, religious, social, interethnic relations of the Buryats with neighboring ethnic groups over the centuries.

Keywords: folklore mentality; archaic picture of the world; epic onyms; functional potential; ethnic and cultural semantics; uliger traditions; symbolic nature; acsiological content; toponimic names; mythological pantheon.

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ФУНКЦИОНАЛЬНЫЕ ОСОБЕННОСТИ ЭПИЧЕСКИХ ОНИМОВ

Аннотация. Отношения между языком и культурой разнообразны и стабильны. Наиболее ярко этнокультура проявляется в языке. В этом отношении большой интерес представляет онимическая лексика, встречающаяся в фольклорных произведениях и в т. ч. в эпосах. Этот слой словарного запаса отражает народный менталитет, историю, культуру, религиозные взгляды нации, а также ее этнические контакты.

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Среди уникальных памятников национальной культуры бурят – эпос «Гэсэр», возникший, по мнению большинства исследователей, более двух тысяч лет назад. В героическом эпосе символично все: природа, время, пространство, персонажи, их действия и мотивы. Именная система Гэсэра, имена его антиподов, различные мифологические имена, топонимы в этом отношении не являются исключением. Эпические имена собственные, которые иногда являются единственными свидетелями событий прошлых лет, содержат в себе большой смысловой потенциал. Семантическая система языка, включающая онимическую лексику, способствует воссозданию архаической картины мира, выявлению особенностей эпического сознания людей в далеком прошлом. Все это делает актуальным и интересным изучение эпических онимов.

Таким образом, в статье речь идет о бурятских улигерах о Гэсэре, которым свойственны многочисленные имена эпических героев. Одна из особенностей эпонимов состоит в том, что они представляют собой не одну номинативную единицу, а многословную иерархически организованную группу слов. Главные герои, отношения которых определяют развитие эпического сюжета об улигере, – главный герой, его жена или невеста (как правило, их трое), его враги (антиподы) в лице монстров-мангадхаев, другие герои или ханы. Эпитетика их имен составляет единый смысловой комплекс. В статье рассматриваются онимы бурятского эпоса «Абай Гэсэр Богдо хан», записанные от известного бурятского сказителя (улигершина) Альфора Васильева. Особое внимание уделяется семантике, структуре и функциональному значению эпических имен – теонимов, имен Гэсэра, других персонажей, топонимов.

Этнолингвистический анализ, основанный на структурно-семантическом, этимологическом методах, позволил сделать вывод, что аксиологическое содержание эпических имен проявляется в их способности выступать в качестве уникальных концептов национальной картины мира. Несомненно, собственные имена имеют большой потенциал в раскрытии ценностно-эстетического содержания бурятского эпоса.

Они представляют собой пространственно-временные ориентиры и символы исторических, культурных, религиозных, социальных, межнациональных отношений бурят с соседними этносами на протяжении веков.

Ключевые слова: фольклорная ментальность; архаичная картина мира; эпические онимы; функциональный потенциал; этнокультурная семантика; улигерные традиции; символическая природа; аксиологическое содержание; топонимические имена; мифологический пантеон.

Introduction

In the context of modern cultural variety of views, ideas, activities people's interest to the national culture, to its ancient nature has increased greatly. While analyzing cultural phenomena one should not ignore concrete historical conditions of their appearance and existence. Moreover, there is a problem of succession in the development of culture. For example, modern music culture of Buryats is based on uligers (Buryat legends), ritual tunes and dance melodies, presented in the Buryat folklore.

The ability of an ethnic group to self-reflection is considered to be its ethnic self-consciousness, which is objectified in the language of this ethnic group, in the system of national customs and traditions, legends, myths and uligers.

Undoubtedly, the ethnic culture is closely connected with language. The interrelation between language and culture is various and inconvertible. All phonetic, morphological, lexical and other language units are analyzed from the point of view of ethnolinguistics. In this regard, onyms (proper names), met in the folklore works, are of great interest and extralinguistic value. These lexical units reflect national mentality, history, culture, religious views and interethnic contacts [1, pp. 90, 92].

Among unique relics of Buryat culture there is the epic *Geser*, which, as most researchers say, appeared more than two thousand years ago. The epic is rich in different classes of proper names. Sometimes being the only witness of past events, proper names preserve great semantic information. In the epic these names appear as some style units which describe the image of the epic world and mentality of ancient Buryats who created this epic to glorify their national hero.

When uliger performers used onyms, skillfully arranging them in the plot, this process was far from being mechanical: according to their narrative outlook and deep creative concept, uliger performers treated onyms in a very subtle way so as to preserve their deep message. For instance, the process of selecting of toponymic names was not accidental. On the contrary, it must have been reasoned in the most profound way as names “depict” an epic event; names are gradually placed throughout the whole epic text. This cannot but promote creative perception of the conflict picture, making it close to listeners' mood, leaving an aesthetic impact on them. Moreover, toponyms reflect the orientation of

native speakers and performers of epic works (olonkho, kais, uligers, bylinas), mainly the orientation in space in those areas where these tribes and ethnic groups lived long ago. It's quite understandable that among these tribes thousand or more years ago there appeared the ancient epic of Geser [1, pp. 103–104]. So that is why a special study of the structure and functions of epic onyms, their specific role the epic is not less important than the study of other traditional means depicting the ancient epic world image. In this respect, the semantic structure of onyms, other extralinguistic facts and factors, deserve special significance.

The most important and interesting extralinguistic information is represented in theophoric onymy in the introductory part of the epic *Geser*. This part contains a description of the world of the heavenly gods – Tengri. Theonyms reflect the sacred level of epic onomastics, which is expressed in the names of the deities that make up the character series of the mythological pantheon. Their names, presented in the onomastic space of the celestial prologue of the Gesariad, are among the main, often the only sources on the characteristics of deities.

Theonyms in the Buryat Gesariad's pantheon

As a rule, the names of Buryat tengriyas are three-member in structure, for example, Esege Malaan tengri, Atai Ulaan tengri, Naran Gerel tengri, etc. Apparently, this theonymic trinity comes from the magical significance of the number three in the numerological characteristics of the world of the gods. It should be born in mind that the structural-semantic model of the nominal formula goes back to cult chants. The threefold nature of the theonymic structure in the epic is also determined by the metric necessity of the Buryat epic verse [2, pp. 26–27].

As all Tengris are located in the Upper World, most of them are personifications of the sky itself, the firmament, certain attributes of the heavenly space, atmospheric and meteorological phenomena. For example, the names of such tengris as Hohe Mungen tengri 'Blue Silver Tengri', Segeen Sebdeg tengri 'Light blue glacial tengri', Oer Sagaan tengri 'White-bottomed celestial' refer to the characteristics of the states of the firmament. They correlate with the names of the supreme deities in the ancient Mongolian pantheon containing various epithets of the sky: Eternal Blue (Hohe Munhe), All-Powerful (Erhetu), Higher (Degers), Mighty (Bagatur), etc. Among these, the best known is Hohe Munhe Tengri – 'Blue Eternal Sky' representing the transcendental deity of the sky. In the Buryat mythology, his hypostasis and personification of the paternal Uranian principle – esege is Esege Malaan tengri, literally 'Father Bald Sky', in a figurative sense 'Father Clear (Cloudless) Sky'. He, as the eldest of the Western Tengriyas, leads the older generation of gods in the epic pantheon of Gesariad.

The Gesariad pantheon also features a group of Tengris associated with thunderstorm, thunder and lightning. Their theonyms connected with atmospheric phenomena reflect various aspects of the stormy sky. The most expressive, connected with the concept of heaven as a higher cosmic principle and the significance of the Uranian factor in the religious and mythological representations of the Turkic-Mongolian peoples, is the semantics of the name of the thunderer god – Khukhedei Mergen.

The first part of the theonym – Khukhedei morphologically decomposes into the root *khukhe* 'sky' and the affix *-dei* (*-day*) ('related to something', 'possessing some property') [3, p. 100]. The original form of the first word of the theonym Khukhedei Mergen tengri was Hohe tengri (compare the ancient Türkic Kok tengri 'Blue sky' and the ancient Mongolian Hekhe Munhe tengri 'Blue Eternal sky', which speaks for the genetic connection of this deity with the sky). Theonym Mergen in Mongolian languages meaning 'shooter, well-aimed', stands for Khukhedei Mergen as a hunting and military deity. Compare: in the mythology of the Buryats of the Ekhirite tribe, which retained the concept of ancient deities, Khukhedei Mergen tengri heads the archaic pantheon of 77 tengris (northern or rear celestial deities) and patronizes hunters [4, p. 92]. In addition, in his theonym, along with the word tengri, the component *baabai* 'father' is used, meaning that he is considered the progenitor of the Buryats [5, p. 216]. It should also be said that in a number of uligers Khukhedei Mergen acts as a hero of heavenly origin, which indicates a semantic dual unity of his images in the Buryat folklore and mythological tradition.

Certain interest in the celestial pantheon represents a group of solar deities with the epithets *altan* 'golden', *shara* 'yellow', *dulete* 'fiery'. Among them, Naran Gerel tengri 'Sun-radiant tengri' stands out due to its importance in the key episodes of the heavenly prologue of Gesariad. The name reveals the sun cult in the mythology of the Buryats. Naran Gerel tengri belongs to the Western celestials and

appears as a male deity. Meanwhile, in ancient shamanic chants and legends, the sun appears to be the bearer of the feminine mother origin – *ekhe naran* ‘mother sun’. In general, the folklore of the Mongol-speaking peoples contains many solar feminine homonyms, testifying to the dual unity of the ‘solar’ and ‘feminine’ [6, pp. 80–81]. Similar parallels with the status of the sun goddesses can be traced in the mythologies of the Indians (Surya – father and daughter), Japanese (Amaterasu), Scandinavians (Sol), as well as Semites and Hittites [7, p. 223].

The chthonic character is revealed by the name of the eastern goddess Hemneg Hara Tengri, found only in the prologue of the epic *Abai Geser Bogdo Khan* and absent in shamanic mythology. This theonym, which can be translated as *The Black Deity of the Mother's Womb*, indicates a connection with the matriarchal past. The word hamneg itself is semantically close in its root basis ham to the concept of *hamte gazar* ‘grave, burial place’, since the grave personifies the bosom of mother earth. The image of the goddess Hemneg can be compared with the ancient Mongolian goddess of the earth Etugen – the source of fertility and everything on earth. The goddess Hemneg is identical to the ancient Turkic goddess Umai, who is functionally and semantically close to the goddess Etugen.

Special attention deserves the name of the head of the 55 western celestials – Khormust (from the Iranian-Sogdian Khurmazt), which penetrated into Mongolian literature through Buddhist writings in the Uighur vertical script. On the one hand, this theonym personifies the evolution of the religious and mythological representations of the Mongolian peoples in a historical context. On the other hand, it testifies to the importance of the Buddhist spiritual factor in the history of Central Asia and the influence of the Indo-Iranian cultural complex. On the other hand, due to contamination with the cult of Khukhe Munkhe Tengri – the Blue Eternal Sky, Khan Khormusta tengri becomes the supreme deity in the shamanistic mythology of steppe nomads and finds himself in the Tengrist pantheon of the Buryat Geseriad. It is noteworthy that in the Buryat versions of the epic *Abai Geser* the name of Khormust is represented by different variants caused by the dialectal features of the language of the storytellers, for example, Khurmuust, Khurmas, Tyurmas, Surmas, Khormos, Hermos, Khirmas, etc. This circumstance clearly demonstrates that the theonym Hormust, being a relatively late borrowed foreign-language name, did not settle down in the oral storytelling tradition.

The theonym of the head of the 44 eastern celestials – Atay Ulaan Tengri reveals its symbolic nature as well. It is associated with the phenomenon of the Turkic-Mongolian ethnocultural and linguistic community, which arose on the basis of a long historical closeness of the Turks and Mongols, originating from the Khunnu times. The first component of this theonym – Atai (from the Turkic *ata* ‘father, elder’) received a sacred coloring as the name of the highest deity among the Mongol tribes during the period of their active Turkic-Mongolian bilingualism during the rule of the Turkic kaganates in Central Asia. The second – ulaan (from the Mongol-Buryat – *ulaan* ‘red’) indicates the features of a solar deity, as red has always been associated with the sun, sunrise and, in general, with the eastern side. Both of these onyms reveal the dual status of this deity as the main eastern celestial dweller. It should be noted that in the archaic Ekhirit-Bulagat version of the Geseriad there is Galta Ulaan tengri ‘Fiery Red Tengri’, whose color epithet designates him as the predecessor of Atai Ulan on the solar line in the Buryat mythology [2, pp. 34–38, 56].

In general, the analysis of the theonym of the head of the eastern celestials reveals its deep roots in the ancient mythological views of the Turkic-Mongolian nomads. Atay Ulaan certainly belongs to the category of sacred names, determined by the nature of the character himself and thus acquiring semantically expressive significance.

Thus, the theonyms considered above, are most characteristic of the Geseriad pantheon, they convey the sacred message of epic onomastics. Undoubtedly, they belong to the most ancient and essential elements in the Tengrist mythological system, and many of them, “represent the shortest formulated legend, tradition, myth” [8, p. 17]. The etymology and semantics of the theonym serve as an irreplaceable source giving an idea of the deity, its essence and Uranian parallels.

Epic toponyms

Epic toponyms represented by different types of names perform a definite function in the text. On the whole, in most cases time and space in Buryat uligers are presented not by means of concrete geographical names, but with the help of mythological units. For example, hydronyms *Munkhe Manzan dalai*, *Emeelyn gol*, *Nomotyn gol*, *Shaazhagain gol*, *Kherein gol*, *Eligen khara bulag*,

Gasaada (Dosoodo) ekhe gol... The wide use of hydronyms and other classes of toponyms is obviously connected with early animistic outlook of people, peculiarities of their mythological consciousness, which was characterized by syncretism that is entirely inseparable from the outer world [1, p. 211].

Interactions of a human being and nature are specifically reflected in the names of water bodies, because chaos and darkness were always identified with water. First attempts to explain, regulate somehow this chaos are shown in the epic in the artistically generalized form. We find the evidence of this fact in Alfor Vasilyev's uliger version *Abai Geser Bogdo khan* [9]. In this version the creation of all living beings on the earth and in the universe is described in details. The peculiar role is given to the woman, symbolizing mother's nature. So *Эхэ эхэ бүрхан* ("The Great Mother-Goddess") appears as the demiurge and creator of all living beings. The attitude of ancient people towards the two-faced character of water is vividly observed in the epic. On the one hand, this is a pure, creative phenomenon, something which builds everything around (for instance, the image of all-embracing holy *Milk Lake* "нун далай").

Among other water bodies, which are associated with positive, good principles and notions and situated not far from the hero's warm, native land are the names of real objects: *Khatan gol*, *Naizhan gol*, *Onnu gol*, *Angara*, *Zulkhe*, *Khukhe nur*, *Baikal*. These hydronyms are certainly the latest beddings {strata} in the epic. Peculiar epic antipodes of light, pure water objects are dark, gloomy seas – abode of *Mangadkhai-monsters*, *enemy of Geser* (*Shara ekhe dalai*, *En'in shara nurkhan*, *Khara buruun dalai*).

In general, seas, lakes, which bar hero's road, are often mentioned in the heroic epic. Among them one can point out both really existing and some mythical water bodies. For instance: *Khatan gol* (in the versions of Peokhon Petrov, Paramon Dmitriev, Papa Tushemilov Geser lives on the bank of this river); *Naizhan gol* (in the river's valley Geser's and his kinsfolk's roams stretch); *Onnu gol* (*Oonyn*, *Yuninn nur*); *Angara*, *Zulkhe* (*Lena*), *Baikal*, *Khara Dalai*, *Mul'hete dalai*. These names have a ring of historical facts. So, according to some legends, the ancestors of Kuda Buryats lived in *Kukunor* and *Khotan* areas. In eastern Turkmenistan there flows the *Khotan-dar'ya river*.

As for mythical ponds (reservoir), they are usually situated somewhere in outskirts, in the remote areas of the uliger world, in strange, cold lands. All kinds of "black", "bloody", "yellow", "bottomless" seas and lakes are considered to be "echoes" of the mythical ocean. They are located very far and present a certain barrier for the heroes. Many things in the uliger happen as if in real life. On the one hand, water (river or lake) plays an important role in the life of a cattle-breeder or a hunter; first of all, it is a watering and slaking in heat place. On the other hand, this is a kind of an obstacle for a pedestrian or a rider.

Peculiar antipodes of pure, clean seas (for example Milk Sea) are dark and gloomy ones met in different versions of uligers. The ones that belong to such objects are: *Shara ekhe dalai* or *En'in shara nurkhan*, *Khara buruun dalai*, 'dark gloomy sea', *Shara buruun dalai* 'dark yellow sea or ocean'. The latter two can be translated as "hazily yellow sea", "sinisterly yellow sea" and "murky yellow sea". These seas and lakes are as some borders, lines, separating the native land of the hero and his relatives from the hostile world of *Mangadkhai-monsters*.

The definition "shara" – 'yellow', met in the epithet "shara buruun", is used in the epic with negative meaning to the word "dalai", also to the word-combination "shara manan", bringing illnesses, – 'black' or 'poisonous haze'. The word "buruun" was formed from Buryat "burenkhy", meaning 'dull, gloomy, dim, unclear'. That is why, one of the negative epic personages 108-headed yellow biting mangadkhai lives right close to the dark yellow sea [10].

The epithet "khara", consisting of "khara buruun dalai", is also used with the negative meaning. "Gloomy dark sea" is understood as something hostile, alien, sinister, unpredictable. This is also an abode of evil mangadkhais and their souls.

Anyhow we should note that the epithet "khara" – 'black' is not always a synonym to the word "bad, gloomy". The word can be used in other meanings in the epic. This is connected with the polysemantic character of the term "khara" not only in the Buryat language, but also in other Turkic-Mongolian languages. Parallel to the color symbol, the word is often used for the qualitative characteristic of items, objects. For example, the word-combination "eligen khara":

*Abai Geser khubuun geshe
Khulegei nege zogsoogui
Eligen khara bulag deeree
Zogsono beleil daa.*

[10, p. 398]

Abai Geser khubuun
halted by the spring
with black clear water
where even a fast horse has never stopped.

[The author's translation]

This combination is translated literally as '[as] black, as liver, spring'. In general, the word "eligen" ("el'gen") is a polysemantic word in the Buryat language. Apart from its primary meaning 'liver', it means fine, thin leather, usually black. The combination "el'gen khara" means 'very black'; 'very smooth'. As epic researchers D. A. Burhcina and A. B. Soktoev consider, a dull luster of fine, thin leather is associated with liver by outward sign: it (liver) is also dark and smooth (in some folklore works of Buryats we can find a combination "el'gen khara shuluun" – 'as black, as liver, stone; black smooth stone'). So we can speak here about the figurative, metaphoric use of the word-combination.

As for the phrase "el'gen khara bulag", it means in the uliger 'very clear, clean with blackness tint', not black water. In this case, we can mean, probably, a spring, flowing onto smooth, black stones or a source, welling out from the black, bottomless depth. It is remarkable to know that Buryats call non-freezing wells, standing out against a background of white snow as "khara uhan" – 'black water'. In reference to water the epithet "khara" is traditionally used in Buryat folklore works. We can also find the phrase "munkhein khara uhan", meaning 'clear, clean; powerful strong water providing eternity, the spring of life, life-enhancing and reviving' (compare – in Russian folklore 'alive water').

Being used together, the epithets "munkhein" ("munkhyn") and "khara" form a new notion ('eternally alive water'), intensifying the meaning of one another. The phrase is associated with mythological imaginations in the uliger and can be interpreted as something unreal, difficult to get, to find. This source is located on the peak of the highest mythical mountain (the symbol of the centre of the universe) – *Tebkhein under khada* (in the version of Manshut Imegenov). Only celestials (heaven wives, cuckoo-sisters, progenitress of 55 western tengris Manzan Gurmee toodei, heroes...) use this eternally alive water.

In the Ekhirit-Bulagat version of Geser, the hero's house is surrounded by enemies: in the north in the armlet of the Black sea, at the foot of the Khatan Mountain he fights against 108-headed Zuudag Shara mangadkhai and wins a victory over him, seizes the souls of mangadkhais, kept by his great-grandmother, 97-years old Ekhe Kholkhi toodei, who also lives in the armlet of the Black sea, at the foot of that mountain; in the south there is the Milk yellow sea, where mangadkhais live; in the west – the Yellow sea Uniin, where in the stomach of a giant toad the souls of mangadkhais are kept; in the east on the peak of the world mountain *Tebkhee Under khada* grows a world tree – a gold-silver asp. In its roots and branches there were kept the souls of monsters in the nest of the *Khan Kherdeg bird* [11, p. 167]. In the other versions we meet the following symbols of the world mountain: *Sumber Uula*, *the Agyn Uula* (Paramon Dmitriev), *the Sukhete-Sumbor Uula*, *the Ulustu/Eleste* (Papa Tushemilov), *the Sakhidag Uula* (Peokhon Petrov), *the Tebkheen Under khada* (Manshut Imegenov). All these mountains form one synonymic group in the epic of Mongolian peoples.

We also find another class of toponymic names in the epic – oronyms (the names of relief elements and its forms). Their appearance in the Buryat uligers is probably explained by the views of ancient people on the surroundings, when everything was attributed by soul. Mountains, rivers, valleys appeared as people, gradually became their masters. Since ancient times a mountain played an important role in the life of our ancestors. This universal symbol of the universe centre is reflected in the epic in the image of the mythical mountain *Sumer* (*Sumber*, *Sumeru*). It can be referred to the active elements of the Buryat uligers. In different versions of Geseriad there are different names of the world mountain. We can add such oronyms to this synonymic line as the *Sakhidag uula*, *the Tebkhee under Uula*, *the Agyn Uula*, and *the Eleste uula*.

In general, we should point out that in the Buryat epic spatial borders are not clearly marked. Single objects of the epic landscape appear only for the plot's sake. Their meaning, images of mountains, hills, valleys and rivers are visible and vivid only with the development of a particular episode. In spite of the symbolic implicational nature of spatial guiding lines of the epic and obvious absence of their distinguished boundaries, only according to toponymic data we can conclude that the geographical

placement of epic toponyms let us think that epic events (conflicts) develop in the direction from the heads of the *Hwang Ho*, the *Amdo*, the *Kukunor* – the cradle of Geseriad formation, where there rose togony/tugukhuni (compare – *Khatan gol*, *Naidgin gol*) to *Altai* and *Khukhei*, then along the steppe *Tamshiin Sagaan tala Tashaganma Dobuun*, across the *Baikal*, right up to the river *Zulkhe* (the *Lena*) – the culmination of its steady development and perfection on the lands of *bide*, *toba*, *bayats* and other tribes.

It should be noted that the epic *Geser* is also rich in oikonyms (place names) and elements close to them in form and meaning: *Tugud* (*Tebid*), *Khonin khoto*, *Tama*, *Doodo Tubeeshen uran*, *Baabgaityn oron*, *Zakhabai tubi* and others. In most cases, they are not real, but mythical names. It is typical of epic oikonyms as in case with other toponymic classes to be verbose. So, uligers are rich in such names as *Dokholoni gazar*, *Tulee ugei gazar*, *Ukhelengi gazari saada bii* [10]; *Khabtagar delkhei*, *khuiten khomkhoi oron*, *harabai uidkhartai n'utag* [9]; *Naraboi buudei daida*, *Nogooboi khubkhai daida*, *Burtag balai daida* [5].

Conclusion

In all languages onyms, as a class of lexical units, contain various, sometimes unique country studies information, since this is one of the most important components of the culture development of any tribes and nations. To understand the content and message of proper names in the epic work it is important to imagine pristine picture of the universe, which an ancient man depicted in his mind.

Thus, the analysis revealed the symbolic nature of proper names used in the Buryat Geseriad. Interacting in one esthetic space epic onyms add special elation, lofty spirit and ethnic coloring to the Buryat uligers. Material culture, religious, social views of ancient people are reflected in proper names. Every new era had brought new interpretation of these names, inherited from previous eras in accordance with the spiritual and social code of the time.

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