



## Some Remarks on the Language of Uzbek Shaman Ceremonies

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**Abstract:** This article talks about the linguistic nature of terms found in the folklore language of Uzbek shaman rituals. Particular attention is paid to the comparative study of some words in the language of modern Uzbek shamans with the materials of the shaman folklore language of the Turkic peoples.

**Keywords:** bakshi, shaman, soothsayer, kushnoch, badikkhan, kinnachi, sorcerer, folklore, ritual.

### I. Introduction

We have published our special research on the folklore of Uzbek shaman rituals. However, there are many issues related to the linguistic nature of the folklore of the Uzbek shaman ceremony that have not yet been resolved. One of such issues is the issue of conducting research on the semantic meaning of words used in the lexicon of Uzbek shaman ritual folklore. In this article, we would like to share some of our observations about the language of Uzbek shaman ritual folklore.

### II. Literature review

Uzbek shamans are called bakhshi, kushnoch, soothsayer, badikkhan, kinnachi, ilgir, porkhan (parikhan), yoyimchi, kokimchi, bakimchi and other terms. Bakhshi is a Sanskrit word that means Buddhist priest<sup>1</sup>. In the current Uzbek language, it means a shaman - one who heals patients with the help of spirits. According to A. Divaev, "bakhshi" is derived from the Chigatay language and means healer, shaman, sorcerer. In Kyrgyz, bakhshi is used for sorcerers who communicate with spirits and fortune-tellers [Divaev, 1894. pp. 180-181]. One of the rituals of modern Uzbek shamans is called *bokim*. Bakhshi is a person who is able to expel evil spirits from the body of patients, who communicates with representatives of the other world. According to Academician T. Mirzaev, "bakhshi is the creator and keeper of epic traditions. It was the Bakhsh who created the oral epic tradition, continued it, developed it in certain socio-economic conditions, and finally came to our time and laid the foundation for modern epic[Mirzaev, 2008. P.21]. V.M. Jirmunsky notes that the word "bakhshi" is used in Uzbek people in two meanings: epos performer and healer shaman, Kyrgyz manaschers also performed manas in treating patients [Jirmunsky, 1974. P.29]. Also, according to folklorists S. Rozimboev and H. Rozmetov, the term "bakhshi" is related to the Sanskrit language and means "teacher". Epic and oral folk art are closely related to the name of Bakhshi.

### III. Analysis

In order to become a Bakhshi, first of all, it is necessary to meet a number of conditions, such as having a high memory, being well-versed in the science of music, having the ability to sing, being able to play a musical instrument, and having a high speech culture. It should also be noted that the term bakhshi is also used to refer to a person who performs sorcery and fortune-telling among the people. In the past, both of these roles may have been performed by the same person. In Kazakh and Kyrgyz, even now, the term bakhshi is used in the meaning of prayer, soothsayer" [Ro'zimboev, Rozmetov 2007. p.9]. V. M. Jirmunsky noted that the unnatural birth of the hero in the family of

<sup>1</sup> An explanatory dictionary of the Uzbek language. Tashkent, Encyclopedia of Uzbekistan, 2006. - p.180. (300 p.)

childless parents in the epics and fairy tales of the peoples of the East has a very ancient basis and is related to the ancient beliefs of primitive people [Jirmunsky, 1962, p. 13]. The motif of the birth of a child through the mediation of spirits goes back to ancient shamanic mythology. According to Ingyong O, the historical basis of the epic is related to shamanism. With the establishment of statehood, the ritual significance of the performance of the archaic epic, which embodies shaman mythology, decreased, and as a result of the increased activity of singers performing epic works related to the creation of the state, a heroic epic emerged [Ing Yong O, 2014. Pp.21-22]. In Uzbeks, shaman is referred to by a number of terms, such as bakhshi, kushnoch, fortune teller, porkhan.

**Bokim** - the name of the shamanic ceremony, which means guardianship. In Baku, the shaman conducts treatment using the blood of a sacrificed animal to expel evil spirits from the patient's body, and a demon lamp lit in honor of the spirits.

It is known that Turkic peoples used to call shamans *Qams* [Koshgari, 1963. P.172]. "*Qam*" is used in its original form in the language of Altai Turkic peoples. Even the verb "to cover" is widely used in Russian folklore in the form of "*kamlania*" as an international scientific term. This term is often used in the works of Russian scientists who researched the shamanism of Turkic peoples [Chistov, 1975. P. 27]. To possess means to subjugate a person to spirits and communicate with them. A person who communicates with spirits and submits to their judgment is considered to have accepted shamanism.

Among the tools and items that help Uzbek shamans to perform their activities, the subject of "**whip**" is also important. A whip is actually a wooden stick used by a shaman to expel evil spirits from a sick person's body.

Currently, this item is also used to control animals such as horses and donkeys. Originally, it is a made-up word formed by adding the formative suffix *-chi* to the root word "*qam*" - shaman (*qam+chi=qamchi-shamanit'*). According to the Kazakh folklorist S. Qondibay, Kazakh bakhshis chase away the pain and demon that landed on a person's face with a whip. This subject is referred to as a reed in Kazakhs [Qondibay, 2008. P. 38]. The words *qamlamoq* and *qamchi* are cognate words and were formed as a result of adding formative suffixes to the base word *qam*.

So, *Qam* is a purely Turkic word [Etymological Cheskix, 1997. - p. 240], a person who worships spirits, communicates with spirits, is a person chosen by spirits - a shaman. Bakhshi in modern Uzbek literary language is equivalent to shaman. Among the ancient Turks, Qamlar also performed the role of a divinely powerful chief who propagated faith and ruled the tribe.

**Qamchi** is a pure Turkic word - a word formed by adding the formative suffix *-chi* to the root of *qam*. It is a shaman's tool that is attached to a wooden handle and has a one-and-a-half-inch-long woven leather pilik, which is intended for beating. It has kept its meaning even in the modern Uzbek literary language.

**Folbin** (*fortune-teller*)-telling is derived from the combination of the Arabic *fol*+Persian-Tajik word *bin-ko'rmoq* (*see*) and means a person who has the ability to predict something or an event. Fortune tellers are a type of shamans who make predictions with the help of spirits. In the work of Mahmud Koshgari, it is mentioned in the style of fortune-telling with a stone [Koshgari, 1963. P.410].

#### IV. Discussion

**Kushnoch** is derived from the Persian word **kush** - *killer*, and means a shaman who destroys evil spirits. **Qora kushnoch** is a type of shaman, a person who has the right to carry out the practice of vaccinating children only. Usually, blackbirds do not use an accented instrument such as a shaman's bell. They use knives and lights. In the language of the Altai Turkic peoples, **qora qam** means a shaman who worships underground spirits and controls evil spirits, uses their power for evil purposes [Potapov, 1991. P.85].

**Porxon** - **parixon** Persian-Tajik- **pari**- *patli* + **xon** (the verb *to read*) is a compound word formed by joining as a noun-forming suffix. Khorezm people call it **po'rxon**. "This term is actually derived

from the word 'parixon', which means a person who heals the sick by asking the fairies for help. They refer to special sayings accompanied by percussion instruments:

*Simyon pari sunib kel,*

*Ola pari anglab kel,*

*Qora pari qarab kel,*

*Sori pari sayrab kel.*

*Chinor pari chidab kel,*

*Barakalla shovvozim,*

[Simeon the fairy, come

Ola fairy, come to understand

Come see the black fairy

Sori fairy come dancing.

Bear with the maple fairy

Hello, my dear,

I ask you for help" [Rozimboev, Rozmetov, 2007, p. 36].

**Kinnachi** is derived from the word "*kinnachi*" in the imagination of the ancient Turkic peoples, which means an evil spirit that summons illness [Potapov, 1991. P.136], and by adding the suffix "*kin*" + "*chi*" to it, adding the suffix "*kin*" Kinnachi is a term that describes a type of shaman who casts out evil spirits.

In the language of the Uzbeks of the **Ilgir-Zarafshan** oasis, a shaman who receives a spell placed by evil spirits from a patient's throat is understood as a shaman. An ancient Turkic word, shaman is a shaman whose ancestors were shaman and who studied shamanism himself. Shaman is called *ilchi* by the Yellow Uighurs [Malov, 1957. P. 31]. **Badikxon** is an artificial word formed by adding **-ik** meaning diminutive to the Persian, Tajik word **bad-bad**, and **-xon** (the verb to read) as a noun-forming suffix. *lib*, a type of shaman who heals the skin diseases of patients with rashes on the body with spells.

The word "**qut**" means "blessing" in Uzbek. However, it is used in pairs as greetings. According to L.P. Potapov, the word *qut-baraka*, which is often found in ancient and medieval Turkish written monuments, means happiness and divine power given by the blue gods [Potapov, 1991. p. 33]. Shaman's blessing is to enter into communication with divine blessings, to use their support, to get the opportunity to influence others. Etymologically, the word **qut**, which is a purely Turkic word, means *divine happiness* [Turksko-Ivritsky.], is also found in Uzbek shaman's greetings. According to L.P. Potapov, in the language of the Teleuts, Kyrgyz and Altai-Sayan peoples, the word "**qut**" is used in its original semantic meaning, and is expressed in their ideas related to shamanism [Potapov, 1991. P.35].

This word is also widely used in the current Kazakh language lexicon. The combination of *qutli bo'lsin, Baraka olib kelsin, yaxshilik olib kelsin, muborak bo'lsin* in the Uzbek language means *Қутты бәлсін, may he be blessed, may he bring blessings, may he bring goodness, may he be blessed*. In the Uzbek dialects of the Samarkand region, the form of this word is found. **Qut**, which is widely used in the language of the Turkic peoples, means the spirits who are the patrons of the shaman. **Qutli** means that he has invisible helpers and is always in communication with helping spirits.

The reception of the shaman's objects inherited by the descendants of the shaman is considered **a ceremony of taking hands (shaman initiation)** among Uzbek shamans, and a **sabl ceremony** among Siberian Turks. **Sabl** is a Turkic word used to mean an object whose owner has died. The same semantic meaning of this word is preserved in the modern Uzbek language. The word **sabl** is one of

the most frequently used words in the lexicon of Samarkands, and it also means regret and unexpectedness. **Hand-holding** is the name of the ceremony, and it is a ceremony in which a shaman surrounds a candidate for shamanism and opens the way for him to communicate with spirits. In Uzbeks, after the death of a shaman, his lost tools: circle, whip, knife, and clothes are chosen by the patron spirits of one of his descendants, and when certain spiritual symptoms develop, a ceremony is held and the shaman's tools are presented.

According to the shamanist views of our people, there is an idea that the guardian spirits of the deceased shaman live in the shaman's tools that have been left behind. The spirits living in the deceased shaman's equipment begin to have a negative effect on the descendants of the deceased shaman. As a result, they make the chosen person sick and begin to suffer, and after the above-mentioned shaman ritual is performed and a sacrifice is made, the guardian spirits are appeased. A new shaman starts his shamanic activity after sitting in a chilla.

While ethnographer L.P. Potapov is interested in the lexicon of Altai shamans, he also investigates the interpretation of words used by shamans. Scientist E.Taube, A.V. Anokhin, N.A. Baskakov's opinions use the term "*shaman's language*" [Potapov, 1991. P.53]. This approach of the scientist shows the need for a special fundamental research of the shaman lexicon of the Turkic peoples in the typological aspect. After all, the lexicon of folklore of shaman rituals of Turkic-speaking peoples provides a wide opportunity to find solutions to interesting issues related to vocabulary composition, stages of development of Turkic languages, semantic field of pure Turkic words, distribution area of Turkic shamanic terms.

Although there are pure Turkish equivalents of Persian-Tajik and Arabic words (**qut-baraka**, **qutlamoq** - *blessed*), which are firmly established in the vocabulary of the current Uzbek literary language, the range of consumption remains limited. It certainly affects the preservation of the purity of our language.

## V. Conclusion

So, checking the content of the folklore dictionary of Uzbek shaman rituals from a linguistic point of view is one of the urgent issues that are waiting for a solution in Uzbek linguistics. Also, it is time to organize the dictionary of sacred words of the Uzbek language. Clarification of the semantic meaning of words with divine meaning widely used in our language serves to positively change our relationship to our language, to enrich the vocabulary of our language at the expense of not losing sacred words, and to preserve the purity of our literary language. In addition to doing this, it is important to determine the essence of the intangible cultural monuments of the Uzbek people, to clarify the mysterious concepts related to the mythological imagination of our ancient ancestors, and to check the gradual improvement of artistic thinking.

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