

CONCLUSION

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This study, based on field data collected by the author as well as the syntheses of published data, compiled the representation of the traditional culture of the *Altai Uriankhains* from the late XIX to the early XX centuries.

From the foregoing it follows that the *Altai Uriankhains* spoke the oirat dialect of the Mongolian language and all of their traditional culture is well fit into the overall context of the Mongolian culture. However, at the same time, it must be admitted that the *Altai Uriankhains* have already emerged as an ethnic group by this time, with its stable ethno-cultural differences from the other nomads of the western Mongolia. Indeed, the process of formation of their traditional culture was a complex process; it has proceeded not only within their territorial location in the period of the Qing domination but it also has covered a much wider area. Owing to the historical reasons, since the mid-XVII century, they were in the vicinities of the Tuvinians, Kirgiz, Altains and the other peoples of the Sayan-*Altai* region, which could not have influence on their culture. Researchers have noted the existence of the special historical, cultural and economic area of the Sayan-*Altai* highlands related to the so-called forest peoples, being referred to under this name in written sources of the XIII century. These people were characterized by common forms of farming as well as significant similarity of culture and life, despite the differences in the genesis of ethnicity and language

By the beginning of XX century, the main traditional occupation of the *Altai Uriankhains* remained extensive nomadic pastoralism with perennial pasture cattle. It was under the strong influence of natural – geographical conditions, and it has been in the general similarity with respect to the being of the nomadic pastoralists of the Mongols. Hunting and gathering do not play a big role in their economic activities, and these economic activities had had only an auxiliary character. Overall, the economy of the *Altai Uriankhains* was of a complex one, which makes it a viable and relatively stable.

In the late XIX – the early XX century, most of the *Altai Uriankhains* wandered not alone, not by individual households and small groups of a few yurts. They, like other Mongolians, had a kind of nomadic groups – small communities, which was called “*khoton*”, or “*Khot Ail*.” It has played an extremely important role in their lives.

The socio-economic composition of *khotons* was not uniform. Often within it lived and roamed families together with the different levels of material prosperity.

Among them were both the rich and the poor. Some *khotons* in fact were no longer *khoton* community, but a mere nomad settlement of the wealthy, which included, besides his family, dependent relatives and the poor in-law, who worked on it for free, and operated them under the guise of kinship care.

The ordinary representatives of the nomadic herders and hunters did not have ownership to the land on any nomadic plots of pasture. They only use those lands on which they lived, roamed, grazed their cattle, sowed grain, or hunted, and enjoyed, as a rule, not alone but together with other nomads, as long as it wished *khoshun* ruler, who was uncontested master of the *khoshun*. The basic economic structure – nomadic pastoralism – has left its imprint on all of the material culture among the *Altai Uriankhains*. Type of their dwellings, utensils, vehicles, clothes and food were determined by the necessity of frequent migrations over long distances. Felted yurt was simple to manufacture, portable, and readily-made, adapted to the conditions of the nomadic life. The yurt was convenient as a round shape made it possible to use all the space. This home and its quality of felt covering well-kept sharp changes of climatic conditions during the hot summer months as it was cool, but it protected people from the cold winds, frost, and snow in winter and but from rainfall in summer.

In the spiritual life of the *Altai Uriankhains* the huge role played Buddhism, and its acceptance in the middle of the XVII century. Everyone knows that alongside with traditional shamanism, Buddhism came from India via Tibet, and then gradually spread across virtually the entire of the Central Asian region, and down to the southern Siberia, has had a powerful influence on the spiritual life of the peoples of the region. Rulers of *khoshuns* of the *Altai Uriankhains* – *Amban Noyon* owing to the historical circumstances have served to the decrees and orders of the Qing court. Each of them in their possessions had built monasteries-*khuree* thus have facilitated the broad penetration of Buddhism in all spheres of the *Altai Uriankhains*. Both Buddhism and shamanism retained their influence in the region of Mongolia until the middle of the XX century. At the beginning of the XXI century, began their gradual revival.

Summarizing the above research, it is possible to say with an enough justification that the *Uriankhains* living in *Mongolia's Altai*, having the general Mongolian cultural complex, nevertheless, their material and spiritual culture, the nature of social organization have the specific characteristics which bring them closer with the culture of neighboring both Turks (Tuva, *Altaic*) and the Western Mongolians (descendants of the medieval *Oirats*).