

The Ethnic Composition of Tofalar

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Abstract: The article deals with the problem of ethnic composition of Tofalar, one of the numerically insignificant Turkic-language nations of Sayan Mountains, involved in hunting and breeding of domestic deer. Their ethnic composition was formed from fragments of different ethnic groups, dating back to ancient Uigur and Oguz, Ket and Samoyed, as well as to the latest Tuvinian, Khakas-Kachin and Buryat. As per indications of phonetics, morphology and lexicology, the origin of Tofalar language is connected with ancient Turcomen-Uigur and Oguz, from whom the Turkic language was adopted by the groups of Sayan Samoyed and Ket, joined with Tofalar. The origin of ethnonym *мофа (tofa)* itself is connected with the ancient ethnos *dybo (dubo)*, inhabited the Sayan and Altai early C.E. 1 millenium.

Key words: Ethnonym • Ethnic composition • Ethnogeny • Generic composition • Patronym • Ancient Turcomen • Samoyed tribes • Ket tribes • Khakas-Kachin • Tuvinian • Western Buryat

INTRODUCTION

The self-designation of Tofalar itself-*tofa*-is recorded in scientific literature of the XIX century [1]. It dates back to ancient tribal name *dubo*, found in Chinese chronicles of Veyskaya (V c.) and Tanskaya (VII-X c.) dynasties [2-4] and refers to one of the generations of Uigur-Tele, who were under the ferule of Turcomen-Tugyu (Oguz) [5]. The investigations of historians testify about indisputable antiquity of displacement of this ethnos in Sayan. For instance, the researcher of ethnography and ethnogeny of Sayan Turcomen S.I. Vainshtein writes: "...the Turkic-language Tuba, ethnically close to Uigur, coming to the territory of Sayan in the C.E. 1st millennium, found themselves in foreign, mainly Samoyed and Ket-language, ethnic environment and gradually adapted their household to new conditions" [5].

In the form of tuba (*tuba*) this ethnonym is met in the chronicle "Cryptic Saga of Mongolians" (1240) in § 239, as applied to one of Sayan nations; it was preserved as *Tyva, dyva, tuba, tuha*. The specialists on ethnogeny of Sayan Turcomen identify this ethnonym with the forest Uryankat, mentioned by Rashid-Ad-Din in the "Collection of Chronicles". S.I. Vainshtein writes about it in the following way: "Obviously, the Persian historian named

this nation as the forest Uryanat, because of their ethnic connection with steppe Uryankat, who, judging by his description, were Turkic-language and ethnically close to Uigur" [5]. The neighboring Low-Udinsk Buryat call the Tofalar uriankad-uryankhaitsy, Okinsk Buryat call them either uriankhad-uryankhaitsy, or uygar-uygur, or uygar khelten language-uygur-language, or zugde-as per the name of one of the Tofalar generations dyogdi ~ chogdi, previously roaming directly near the Okinsk Buryat and contacting with them. Besides, the Okinsk Buryat apply the names uriankhad, uygar, uygar khelten to the Tuvinian as well. It testifies about those distant times, when the Mongolian-language ancestors, coming to the Baikal region in the IX century, faced in Sayan with Uigur-language tribes, later joining with the Tuvinian and Tolafar, as well as Khakas, Shorts and North Altaian.

L.P. Potapov [6] states, that the Turkic-language Tofalar were formed as a result of turcization on the part of the Tuvinian of Samoyed tribes and generations, inhabited the Sayan. The Turcologist-linguist N.A. Baskakov [7], supported by the materials of N.F. Katanov, referred the Tofalar language to the dialects of the Tuvinian language. The author of these lines [8], as a result of his comparative-historical analysis of the Tofalar language, came to the conclusion that this

language was formed as a result of turcization of Ket-language generations in Old Turkic time in VI-VIII century by Orkhonsk Turcomen and Uigur. The Samoyed generations, joining later to the Turkic-language ancestors of the Tofalar, adopted the Turkic language from them, but not from the Tuvinian.

The works of various native and foreign investigators are devoted to the problem of study of small nations [9-18]. In scientific literature and official sources, Tofalar were called *Karagas* up to 1934. The name Tofalar was officially removed in 1934 and the nationality *Tofa* started to appear in private papers.

The Tofalar historically contacted with different neighboring nations. In the North and North-East area of their displacement, their neighbors were Ket tribes of Assans and Kotts (hodug), in the West-Low Udinsk Buryat (Altii Uda byraat), in the South-East-Okinsk Buryat (Aha byraat) and Soyot (haazuut), in the North-West-the Samoyed tribes of Kamasints (angmashi), Motors, Karagas and also Turkic-language Khakas-Kachin, in the West and South-West-Tuvinian-Todzhyn *choody*. Tofalar knew Russians (*orus*), Mongols (*adai*) and the Chinese (*kitat*). There are familiar some names of the Tofalar, existing in the neighboring nations. Thus, the Tuvinian-Todzhyn call them *khaashtar*, what means "nasal" (because nasalization is the general and typical feature of the Tofalar language), Low Udinsk Buryat call them *uryankad*, Okinsk Buryat call them *uryankha*, *uiga*, *khelten* and *zugde*.

Tofalar are the descendants of population, entering in the XVII century in to five administrative settlements of "Udinsk Land" of Krasnoyarsk district [19]. The population of these settlements consisted of the representatives of different Tofalar generations. The generation involved smaller subdivisions, uniting close relatives, descending from the common ancestor-patronimy, called *aal* in Tofalar. The generation was called in a word *nyon*, but the same generation together with the territory, which it inhabited, bore a name *aymak*. Each *aal* was a part of the definite *nyon* and *aymak*. We managed to fix the names of the following Tofalar generations: *haash*, *sari-haash*, *chogd*, *ak-chogdy*, *kara-chogdy*, *cheptey*. They had one more generation *kaða*- *kara-haash*, which ceased to exist shortly before the revolution as a result of large smallpox epidemic in 1911.

The generations *chogdy*, *ak-chogdy* and *kara-chogdy* were included to one group, called *burunguu aals* ("Eastern aal"), roaming in the catchment of rivers Udy and Kara-Bureni; the generations of *haash*,

sary-haash and former *kara-haash* united to the group, called *songuu aallar* ("Western aal"), roaming in the catchment of rivers Gutary and Biryusy. The group of *aal* localized between them; it was included to the generation *cheptey* and was *ortaa aallar* («Middle aal»). When Tofalar were passing to the settled lifestyle in 1930, the representatives of Western group were settled in the village High Gutara, the ones of Eastern group were settled in the village Alygdzher, the ones of the Middle group-in the village Nerkha. The contemporary Tofalar continue living in these three villages in the territory of Low Udinsk region of Irkutsk district of the Russian Federation. The number of Tofalar here is slightly over 600 people.

The Tofalar has always been a minority. Thus, Y.P. Shtuben-dorf [1] determined their number in 1851 as 543 people. He stated [1] that formerly their number was much more and reached several thousand people, but, because of smallpox, their number reduced significantly. At the same time, the data collection, presented by L.V. Melnikova [20] about the Tofalar number in different years (from 1675 to 1930) shows that their number in these years was relatively stable and averaged slightly over 400 people. The growth of Tofalar number started to be observed from 1950 of the XX century. Thus, the census of 1959 determined their number as 586 people, in 1970-763 people, in 1979-763 people, in 1989-731 people, in 2002- 837 people. In Tofalariya itself the growth of Tofalar number is also observed: in 1979 there were 476 people, in 1985-596 people, in 1989-636 people, in 1993-649 people, in 1995-697 people, in 1998-669 people.

The linguists [7] include the Tofalar language, together with the Tuvinian language, into Uiguro-Tukyuisk subgroup of Uiguro-Oguzsk group of Turkic languages. At the same time, we consider [21] that the Tofalar language, being an independent language, belongs to Sayan subgroup of Turkic languages to its taiga area [22], to which the language of the Tuvinian reindeer herders-Todzhyn can be referred. Great closeness of the languages of this area shows, that they had one language-ancestor. Common features of the languages of these areas testify about ethnic unity of their speakers.

A comparison in general-Turkic plane [4] showed, that the Tofalar language, sometimes itself and sometimes together with the other Turkic languages of Sayan-Altai and Yakutsk, preserves a number of archaic features, some of which are comparable both to Old Oguz and to Old Uigur languages. This language is an independent Turkic language, but not a dialect of the Tuvinian language. The Tofalar language is subdivided into

Alygdzhersk and Gutarinsk dialects [4], at that, the Alygdzhersk dialect is closer to the Tuvian language and the Gutarinsk dialect to the Khakas one.

The former name of the Tofalar *karagasy* was recorded for the first time in the scientific literature of the XVIII century in the works of P.S. Pallas [23] and I. Georgy [24]. At that, both of them stated that it was a Samoyed tribe with pure Samoyed language. The linguistic material, presented by them, proves this statement rather persuasively. At the same time the sources of the XIX century speak about the Karagas and about Turcomen. Their Turkic language, recorded by Y.P. Shtubendorf and M.A. Kastren, almost does not differ from the contemporary Tofalar language [25]. Their self-designation *tofa*, as was mentioned before, was recorded by Y.P. Shtubendorf in the middle of the XIX century, as well as their subdivision into five generations: *khash*, *ssarykh khash*, *akdyauda*, *karadyauda*, (*depty*), who distributed within the boundaries of five settlements: 1) karagas-*ssarykh khash* generation; 2) shelbegorsk or silpagursk-*akdyauda* generation; 3) kangassk or kangatsk-*khash* generation; 4) udinsk or sudinsk-*karadyauda* generation; 5) mallersk or manzhursk-*depty* generation [1].

M.A. Kastren [26] gave the name of almost the same generations, adding *irge*, *tarak*, *bogozhy* to them. At that, he derived the ethnonim *karagas* from the ethnonym *kara kash* (i.e. "black kash"). M.A. Kastren considered the generations *kash*, *saryg kash kaða kaø* (*kara kash*) to be the Turkic ones, the generations *tyogdy*, *kara tyogdy* - the Mongolian ones, the generation *tepty* - the native of Tunki and the generations *irge*, *tarak*, *bogozhy* - the Samoyed ones. He came to the conclusion, that Karagas, Koybal and Soyot have the common origin and their languages were developed supposedly from Kachin language. P.S. Pallas and I. Georgy, visited Karagas 50 years before M.A. Kastren, state, that Karagas are "samoyed" (*samodijtsy*). Kastren and the following authors from the middle of the XIX century with one voice testify about their Turkic language. The lack of consistency in ethnic and language connection of Karagas speaks about the difficulty of their ethnogeny.

V.V. Radlov also studied the Tofalar (Karagas) apart from the other Turkic nations. Using the materials of M.A. Kastren, he writes, that the Karagas are divided into five generations: *kash*, *saryg kash*, *tyogdy*, *kara tyogdy* and *tepty*. The territory, where the Karagas roam with their reindeer herds, is located between the rivers Oka, Uda, Biryusa and Kan. V.V. Radlov, supported M.A. Kastren in his supposition, that the name *karagas* is

derived from the name of generation *kara kash* and the ethnonym *kash* in the names of Karagas generations testifies about their Kachin origin, i.e. the part of Karagas is represented by the migrated Kachin (one of the Khakas tribes). V.V. Radlov, executing the analysis of linguistic materials on the Karagas language, collected by M.A. Kastren, came to the conclusion, that this language is close not only to Kachin and Soyot languages, but also to Yakutsk and Old Uigursk ones [27].

L.P. Potapov [6] states, that the Turkic-language Tofalar emerged because of turcization on the part of Tuvian of Samoyed tribes and generations, inhabited the Sayan. The turcologist-linguist N.A. Baskakov [7], supported by the materials of N.F. Katanov, referred the Tofalar language to the dialects of the Tuvian one. The opinion, that the Tofalar are the Tuvian Samoyed, became permanent in the science for a long time. However, the comparative investigation of the contemporary Tofalar language, carried out by the author of these lines [21], showed that the Tofalar language is an independent language, referred to the taiga area of Sayan Turkic languages and it is not a dialect of the Tuvian language.

An appeal to the ethnic Tofalar history showed that their contemporary self-designation *tofa*, the names of contemporary Tofalar generations stayed the same from the times of Y.P. Shtubendorf and M.A. Kastren. Consequently, it is possible to assume, that this generic composition emerged long before Y.P. Shtubendorf and M.A. Kastren, as they see it as fully developed, as well as the language.

We [8], as a result of our comparative-historical analysis of the Tofalar language, came to the conclusion, that this language was formed as a result of turcization in Old Turkic time, in VI-VIII centuries, of initially Ket-language generations by Orkhonsk Turcomen and Uigur. The Sayan Samoyed generations, joined later the Turkic-language ancestors of the Tofalar, adopted Turkic language from them, but not from the Tuvian. Thus, the main part of the Karagas (Tofalar) was Turkic-language long before P.S. Pallas and I. Georgy. The separate small groups remained Samoyed-language; at that time they were uniting with the Karagas, but did not manage to become Turkic. That is why P.S. Pallas and I. Georgy met them with Samoyed language. S.I. Vainshtein [28] also wrote, that different groups of Sayan Samoyeds were included to the Turkic-language tribes of Sayan: " In the end of the 19th-beginning of the 20th centuries, the mainly the Tofalar and less the Tuvian-reindeer herders (Todzhyn) preserved the

peculiarities, typical of the Samoyed culture of Sayan, after their turcization and mixing with the neighboring nations".

M.I. Borgoyakov speaks about the fact, that M.A. Kastren was sure is his supposition about the origin of the Tofalar' part from Kachin: "Apparently, Kangat (khaashtar) is a dissenting small group of "Krasnoyarsk" Kachin (Khaas or Khaastar)" [29]. Then he states:

...the ethnic composition of contemporary Tofalar comprised the group of Khakassk Kachin (Khaas) and, separating from their kin, it gradually assimilated in the environment of the other generic groups, called by the common name "Karagas" (now "Tofa"). Hence, some approximation of the contemporary Tofalar language with the Khakassk, Shorsk languages... is a natural phenomenon" [29]. It is necessary to remember, that the name of one Karagas settlements was Kangassk or Kangatsk, with the self-designation *khaashtar*, described by Y.P. Shtubendorf [1] and also the abovementioned supposition of M.A. Kastren about the origin of Karagas part from the Kachin.

The Karagas settlement with the self-designation *cheptey* in the XIX century had the name "Mallersk or Manzhursk" [26]. Kastren connected the origin of the generation *cheptey* with Buryat. The Low Udinsk Buryat comprise the generation *maan-jirag ~ maal-jirag* [30]. Apparently, the name of this Karagas settlement was derived from this Buryat ethnonym. As per Kastren, the generations *chogdy* and *kara-chogdy* came from Mongolia. The ethnonym *chogdy* itself is associated with the ethnonym *choody*, the name of one Tuvinian tribe (the territory of their habitation in the times of M.A. Kastren was within the Mongolian boundaries) and, apparently, has the common origin with it. It was convincingly proved by S.I. Vainshtein [3], who marked, that the other Turkic nations of Sayan-Altai have the generations with similar names [31].

The ethnonym *dzoot* (the Mongolian interpretation of the Turkic ethnonym *choody-czhoody tsaatanov*) is written by S. Badamkhatanom [32]. This ethnonym is widely spread in Sayan-Altai and adjacent territories and it is associated with the ethnos, whose origin is connected with the Old Uigur. The Tofalar call all Tuvinian with the word *choodu -choody*. S.I. Vainshtein assumed that the Tofalar, Tuvinian and other generations with this name have the Samoyed origin, the same, as the generations *khaash-khaas*, the name of which is derived from the Samoyed ethnonym *kasa* [3].

The contemporary Tofalar do not have the Samoyed generations *irge, tarak, bogoshy*, mentioned by M.A. Kastren [34]. The names of generations are derived from so-called teasers, given by the members of different generations to each other. Thus, *tyryk khaash* is translated indeed from the Tofalar language as "khaash, belly-bound" and *tenek khaash*- "silly khaash".

A brief analysis of the ethnogeny problem of Tofalar showed its complexity. It is possible to solve it only in complex with the study of data of history, ethnography, language and folklore. At that it is necessary to study not the Tofalar ethnos in general, but each generation, each patronym independently, as the Tofalar ethnos was formed as a result of unification during long evolution of fragments of different ethnic groups, inhabited Sayan and Pre-Sayan.

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