Spiritual Culture of the Kazakh People in Films

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Abstract

Background/Objectives: The objective of this study is to analyze the spiritual world of the Kazakh people, their traditions, ceremonies and rituals as they are represented in the films of Kazakh directors. Methods/Statistical Analysis: When studying and presenting the collected material the scientific description method was applied. Also special methods developed in the culturological object field found their application: methods of socio-cultural observations and reflections, culture genesis method. Empirical studies are based on the methods of generalization, reconstruction and interpretation of unpublished sources, the secondary analysis of the results of research conducted by other authors and published in the scientific literature. Findings: The study considers the body of ideas of spiritual and cultural values of the Kazakh people, including ancient traditions, customs and rituals. Specific features of the Kazakh people’s mentality have been analyzed through the prism of their spiritual culture that has developed in the course of this people’s history. The necessity to uncover the roles of old traditions and ceremonies in developing spiritual life and morality of the people has been identified and justified. Old traditions and rituals of the Kazakh people facilitate correct up-bringing of children and developing a healthy nation in general. Based on the results of the undertaken investigation, the authors suggest that a number of events of vital importance for every Kazakh should be considered in more detail. For example, the ritual of matchmaking and marriage, respect to the family hearth, the so-called “cult of fire”, respect to ancestors, the so called “forefathers’ cult”, purification rite and the ceremony of entertaining guests, a ritual related to the birth of a child, etc. Definitions for all those rituals and rites have been given, their principal characteristics have been studied and their values and significance have been analyzed.

Improvements/Applications: This study enhances the existing knowledge of ancient traditions, rites and customs of the Kazakh people and it will facilitate further investigations in the sphere of spiritual culture and morality.

Keywords: Ceremonies, Culture, Kazakh People, Nomad Tribes, Tengriism, Traditions

1. Introduction

Kazakh cinema that came to life and has been developing for a long time within the framework of Soviet cinema, has imbibed its principal features, ideology, genres, that envisaged the elimination of national boundaries and propagated the values of Soviet society. Upon gaining independency, domestic cinema has gone through a long stage of transformation and acquired new ideological contents, creating the conditions under which the filmmakers gained a unique opportunity to realize their cherished ideas and creative strivings without any ideological pressure or any necessity to preserve the old stereotypes. Within this period, a great number of full-length and short motion films appeared on the screen, giving evident representation of the incipient national cinema, the first daring attempts to make the world community familiar with the rich history, with the original way of life, with century-sanctified traditions and customs of Kazakh people.

The culture of the Turkic-speaking population of the planet is rich and varied; however, as civilization developed, each of those peoples revealed their own outlook on life, their mentality, traditions, manners, customs, laws and rituals, their own oral and written language, etc. The authors of the study will not dwell upon the process of cultural development of those peoples in general. The study will be focused upon the establishment of the film industry, the most mysterious and the most interesting sphere of culture. In European countries, the filmmaking indus-
try started developing in the end of the 19th century, and it was long after that cinema came to Asian states. Today, cinema in Asia is quite on a par with European movies; Asian films win prizes at multiple famous international film festivals and sometimes even succeed in taking Grand Prix. In the authors’ opinion, European films focus on the gross audience, and, therefore, those pictures are shown not only in those countries, but also all over the world, gaining multimillion box sales revenues. Furthermore, for quite a long time, Asian cinema was deprived of the opportunities, lacking professionals, because there has never been a strongly developed cinematography school, the economy was rather instable and no considerable budget funds were allocated for the purposes of filmmaking. Over the long years of independence, it is only now, that the government became interested in developing film industry, as cinema facilitates upbringing and developing people. All Kazakh films show traditions, rituals and customs of this people. However, the major merit of all those films is that they depict the most ancient civilization called nomadic life.

In the first decade of independence of our republic no major works concerning cinema were published. Only in recent years scientific publications in the field of cinematography began to appear. The contribution of one of the leading Kazakh film critics G. O. Abikeeva should be distinguished especially. For example, her monograph published in 2006 “Nation-building in Kazakhstan and other Central Asian countries, and how this process is reflected in cinematography” analyses one of the key problems of contemporary social consciousness – nation-building and formation of national identities in the post-Soviet Central Asia. The critic examines these processes through their reflection in cinematography starting from the 1960s. Also other scientific works above the author are particularly noteworthy: “Two epochs of national self-determination in the cinema of Central Asia: the 60s and 90s”, “Central Asian Cinema (1990-2001)”. In addition, attention should be paid to numerous publications and interviews of G. Abikeeva in scientific journals and mass media which permanently response to all the innovations taking place in the Kazakh cinema art, provide reviews for the new films, focus on the current problems and trends in the development of the national cinema.

Following the results of the research dedicated to the study of traditional rites and rituals as a reflection of the spiritual culture in the Kazakh cinema, the following results have been achieved, representing scientific novelty:

- the basic methodological grounds have been defined for studying cinematography as a cultural product that can exert an impact on the formation of the foundations of philosophical, aesthetic, and other areas of society and the individual;
- structural and functional grounds of the cinematography nature have been found where the cinematic product – the film – ensures availability of tense equilibrium of material and ideal essence having a high level of complexity, in which the developing system (society and person) constantly ‘takes into account’ the anticipatory character of the upcoming changes. That is to say, the world in which this equilibrium is realized and purposefully transformed into a person's world in particular and the Kazakh society as a whole;
- the essence and nature of the genesis and development of the national cinematography have been investigated with regard to the personalized standpoints;
- the development of the Kazakh cinematography of the post-Soviet period has been discussed as an artistic and cultural process, organically bound with the previous national history and contemporary socio-political and cultural conditions of the country's life;
- the peculiarities of history, current state and prospects of the domestic film industry in our country have been analyzed, which transformed into a normative side of the culture, determining the transformation of values of the socio-cultural space of the country.

2. Method

This article is aimed at comprehensive and multifaceted studying of traditional rites and rituals as an integral part of the spiritual culture of the Kazakh people, which is reflected in the national cinematography.

To achieve this goal, we have established the following main tasks to be solved in the course of writing this article:
• to reveal the folklore and traditional, cultural and philosophical nature of Kazakh cinematography, to provide a comparative analysis of the films of the independent period;
• to provide diversified analysis of the specifics of the film adaptation of the national and cultural values of the Soviet and Kazakh cinema;
• to consider the contribution of the national cinema in the promotion and dissemination of knowledge on the history, culture, philosophy, religion and ethnography of the Kazakhs.

The applied methodology of comprehensive research of Kazakh cinematography enabled to analyze its various problems. The research methods are a set of interdisciplinary approaches, including: temporal and interdisciplinary comparative studies; hermeneutical research methods, synchronic and diachronic analysis, methods of structuring and traditionalism, architectonic-functional, typological, semiotic and synergetic methods of ‘non-linear systems’.

An important place in the study is taken by the empirical history of culture: ethnic and religious cross-section, the evolution of components of the traditional culture (folklore, norms and values, rituals and customs, etc.).

The study considers spiritual and cultural values of Kazakh people, including ancient traditions, customs and ceremonies first described by the ancient scientists, though many of their theories, often expounded in the Arabic language, were in need of more substantiated proofs. Scientific works of that period are represented by such sources as Husam Al-Din Al-Syghnaqi, a religious concept, related to the ideas and issues touched upon in the works of Yusuf Khass Hajib Wisdom of Royal Glory, Abai Qunanbaiuli The Book of Words. The information on the manuscripts was taken from Arabic scientific libraries, Turkic scientific centers and from the libraries of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Such works as Husam Al-Din Al-Syghnaqi, Wisdom of Royal Glory by Yusuf Khass Hajib and The Book of Words by Abai Qunanbaiuli were written in Arabic and for a long time remained the most authoritative sources in this sphere. Among other sources, a Soviet period study called Relics of Pre-Islamic Beliefs in Familial Ceremonies of Kazakh People should be noted, where the author T. Toleubayev provides a profound study of the origins and of the significance of traditions, rituals and customs of the Kazakh people exemplified and substantiated by fairy-tales, epics and legends; his research works are now the subject of investigations of other scientists in Kazakhstan.

Other sources are represented by studies of American anthropologist Clifford Geertz The Interpretation of Cultures and Indian anthropology scientist Rafiq Keshavjee Faith and Culture, where the authors reveal and analyze in detail the differences existing between various functional approaches to anthropology. Kazakh scientists provided information on the history of Turkic people of that period, having studied the manuscripts of such scientists as Absattar Derbisali, Ashirbek Muminov, Husam Al-Din Al-Syghnaqi, Yusuf Khass, Abai Qunanbaiuli. Modern Kazakh studies to be noted and paid attention to have been represented by such authors as: A.T. Toleubayev, R.N. Bezertinov, Ye.D. Tursunov, S.A. Kaskabasov, B.D. Kokumbayeva, Kh.A. Arginbayev, S. Kenzheakhmetuly, B.R. Nogerbek, B.Zh. Zhusupova, B. Amanov, A. Mukhambetova, Ye.D. Tursunov, K.Sh. Nurlanova, A. Narymbayeva, M. Karatayev, S. Akatayev, S. Yesenova, Murad Adzhi.

Since the stated theme is a related problem at the intersection of cultural studies, sociology and cinematography the authors have analyzed the main scientific works on the history of culture, the religious worldview, philosophy, everyday life and traditions of the Kazakh people.

The historiographic base of the research is presented by two large groups of source. The first of these includes the documents and materials stored in the archives of our republic. Archived documents preserved in the holdings of the Central State Archive of the Republic of Kazakhstan allow tracing chronologically the history of the formation and development of Kazakh cinema and identifying legislative documents of the supreme bodies of state power and party organs, which had an impact on the formation of the Kazakh cinema. This type of sources contributes to improved understanding of the mechanisms of state control and regulation in the sphere of culture and art, including the national cinematograph.

The second group of sources comprises domestic movies of different years, which together represent the golden fund of Kazakh cinema. These films, each of which has made an invaluable and essential contribution to the development of Kazakh cinema clearly demonstrate a rich and centuries-long history, the spiritual and material culture; they reflect the everyday life, traditions and beliefs, riots and rituals of the Kazakh people.
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3. Discussion

Matchmaking Here, the authors will consider in more detail the ceremony of marriage brokerage or matchmaking illustrated in sensational film produced by Yermeke Tursunov. Yermeke Tursunov’s picture “Kelin” (daughter-in-law) has been naturally set in the context of Tengriism, an ancient Turkic religion of the Kazakh people. Along with different manifestations of Tengriism, the film presents an integral cultural world of Turkic people comprised of various ceremonies and rituals. The film features the ancient rituals of matchmaking, Levirate marriage, “alastau” (purification), “zherleu” (funeral) and “forefathers’ cult.” Getting familiar with those traditions will help perceiving the whole cosmos of Tengriism presented in film Kelin.

The plot of the picture is quite simple and full of passions. The setting of Kelin takes place in the 2nd century AD, in Altay. The film starts with the scene of the bargaining process, when two bridegrooms are “buying” a bride from her father. The winner is the one who pays more. The girl gives her affections to the Hunter, but he has lost the bargaining bet, and she is taken away by the wealthier rival backed by his patronizing Mother-eñe and his younger brother. The fight for Kelin has not been finished yet; the Hunter wages the battle and wins killing the older son. Then, Mother-eñe gives Kelin in marriage to her younger son. However, the Hunter cannot find peace of mind and so he wants to steal Kelin. In addition, Mother-eñe prays to the Most High and to the powers of nature and sends avalanche killing all the men. Mother-eñe feels like killing her daughter-in-law; however, at this very moment she perceives that there is a new life emerging in her womb and thus she leaves her alive, and, giving the ancestral verge to her daughter-in-law, departs for the mountains to die there.

The opening scene in the film Kelin is set realistically and lively. Quick bargaining for Kelin between the Hunter and the Herdsman is finished to the benefit of the latter, but the girl, cherishing her last hopes, runs after the Hunter and then he makes a slight incision on her hand and kisses it sucking the blood. This is to show that he takes a part of her spiritual power. Some ethnographic chronicles give evidence that principal matchmakers or the bridegroom and the bride used to make incisions on the inner side of their thumbs or on their wrists pressing the wounded parts together. This rite symbolizes mixing of the blood, a kind of oath, and the one who breaks it should be punished. There are some illustrations given by famous Kazakh ethnographer A. Toleubayev: “There are evidences that sometimes principal matchmakers (usually parents of the bridegroom and the bride) made little incisions on the inner side of the thumb and then those wounded thumbs were pressed to each other. This ritual, on the one hand, used to symbolize the future blood mixing, on the other hand, it was a pledge of punishment for failing to fulfill “ak bata” (oath of purity) which was expressed by a proverb “Ақ қойдық қаны? Ақ бата оқықаны” , i.e. “The blood of a white sheep has been shed; the ‘white’ (full-hearted) prayer has been said.” Inasmuch as the film is wordless, it is possible to assume that this scene symbolizes an oath of love. It is well known that girls used to be bought with “kalym” (a ransom for the bride), and the girl went to the one who paid more. The Kazakhs also have a proverb: “өңгетен алмайды - өңгөрөң адады, мақтаайына жағаны болады” (the one who gets married is not the one who loves, but the one destined by God to do so). Furthermore, in a traditional Kazakh family, the bride is especially cherished. She is treated with respect. She is honored, as she is not only the bearer of the progeny, but also the most important mechanism of inheriting and developing the culture of this particular family. The girls from disadvantaged families were, in most cases, refused at once, as it was believed that the parents with poor familial background were not able to provide good mental and moral upbringing for their children. Thus, this kind of selection was the means to make the kin and the society healthier both physically and morally. People have a lot of proverbs and sayings about brides. The words, pronounced long time ago by sages (“akyns”, “zhiraus”) are still of very much importance and full of sense. For example: “анасына әұрап әл, әтесіне әұрап әл әл” (marry a daughter when you saw her mother, marry off your daughter to a son when you saw his father), “жасысы келін келіп, жаман келін кельсап” (a good wife is strawberry, a bad one is a truncheon), “жасысы келін тәрігге тартар, жаман келін тәрігге тартар” (a good wife will make a man better, a bad wife will make a man worse). Those words are always true; it is naturally advisable to know the relatives of the girl you are going to marry. Information about the family tells a lot. “A girl is well brought up and nice, if she was born in a good nest” (жасысы жерден шыққан, жақсылықты әкеледі). A good wife is not only clever, kind, resourceful, but she also can help her husband, if required, to put his family “on their legs”, meaning moral
and spiritual support. Therefore, all kinsfolk and relatives on both sides took an active part in selecting a future spouse. Here, everything was taken into account that could either help or make obstacles in creating a firm and inseparable family: healthy inheritance, diligence, wealth, moral foundations of the family. Through reliable persons (relatives, neighbors, etc.) people were trying to learn everything about merits and vices of the families who had marriageable girls.

_Tengerism_. Nevertheless, the most important value of the film _Kelin_ is that the producer could bring the audience back to pre-Islamic period when all Turkic people worshiped a common deity Tengri. Tengerism was never put in scriptures. Thanks to the precision and clear nature of the rituals, this religion has come to us through many millennia. Cultural and ethnographic investigations highlight that a distinguishing feature of this religion is the possibility for the people to address the Most High without any intermediaries. In his research Murat Adzhi underlines the following: “Each tier of Heaven reflected dichotomy (i.e. division in two): the light and the dark, the benignant and the demonical. This means that God can be kind and severe, saving and punishing. He sees everything, and then the destiny of people depends upon the people themselves; God’s attitude towards them will depend upon the thoughts and the deeds of the man. Here is the deep wisdom of Tengerism that does not humiliate people but elevates them, making them ready for a move, for a feat. Anyone can make himself happy or miserable. Our woe and our joy emanate from ourselves… God cannot be deceived. He is the Supreme Judge and He gives people their due according to their deserts. Nine was considered the number of Tengri. It had three times by the people their due according to their deserts. Nine was considered the number of Tengri. It had three times by the

_Purification_. Now consider the ritual of purifying the bride before marriage. The use of fire (“май шам”) in this ritual tells that the ancient Turkic people were familiar with the “cult of fire”. The fire helped them conjure away “evil spirits”, black spots of soot put on a girl’s face with the tips of the fingers were supposed to protect the girl from an evil eye and jinx and it also testified of the fact that the girl was chaste. Fumigation was a part of the ritual as well. This rite has been practiced since ancient times. Fumigation was performed with a branch of juniper or with wormwood grass. It was used to clean the girl before marriage in order to eliminate everything bad she could possibly have imbibed and accumulated before marriage; ailing persons and the dwellings used to be fumigated as well. In the film _Kelin_, when Mother-eñe guessed her daughter-in-law’s fornication, she held another rite of purification. Different superstitions of the Kazakh people are well known, for example, adult people use to say that “the power of a woman is in her hair” (әйелдің күші шашында). When the daughter-in-law lost her hair, she became clean as a child, though, for some time, she lost a part of her spiritual power. Mother-eñe, when visiting the Hunter, threw the daughter-in-law’s hair at him and daubed his face with her own blood, thus letting him know that she knew everything about the circumstances and demanding that he should never come to their house again. This was one of the key scenes of the picture. The film features not only the rituals and customs of the Kazakhs. The texture and the environment created by the art director A. Rorokin are also of paramount importance.

_Funeral_. Consider an episode of Herdsman’s funeral, when we observe a wooden circle placed to resemble the sun. The authors believe that this is a symbol of the cyclical nature of time consisting of cycles, “mushels”, and
The tradition of temporary keeping in when Mother-eñe betrays her son's body to vultures and the world is presented in the film as the rite of burial, is necessary, etc. in gratitude for the sacrifices and other send to people sunny weather, good harvest, rain, when it the stars, the sun, the moon. Sometimes celestial deities (invisible) forever, and the real upper world is the sky, good deeds, get to Paradise and settled in the upper world of the dead holy men, who in their lifetime became famous for (Кқк мәқгі тәқір [Eternal Blue God]); the souls of the upper world, it is the abode of higher forces – High God as an afterworld (invisible) and a real world, that is the lower world. The spatial model of the world appears to earthly and underground worlds, the middle world and the underworld. The original version A. Toleubayev prescribed journey of the deceased, “Rukh Zhan”, does not leave the physical world involves all actors of the film, as well as a she-wolf, buffaloes, the Hunter's horse. The inhabitants of the middle world live by their passions. And when we retell the plot of the picture, this is a visible action of the film. Representatives of the lower (underground) world are all the dark forces – these are genies, devils, Al Basty and many other evil spirits led by the powerful god of the underworld – Erlik. The Kazakh people have a belief that after a man is buried, forty days must pass before his soul (if during his lifetime he performed many good deeds) will get to Paradise to the High God, but if his soul is not pure, sinful, he will remain to serve in the underworld. Every morning the sun defeats darkness, as it was in the first day of creation, and it happens every day. The time between the time of light and darkness is a combination of the beginning and the end, creating the possibility of moving from one to another. We all know that the underworld colors (black magic), of everything negative associated with dirty things (illness, damage, death) are black, dark and gloomy. On the contrary, everything favorable (health, bright mind, good deeds of people, etc.), clean, bright appears white for us – the color of purity and freshness. The Turks and other peoples of the Altai endowed eastern side of the world with positive qualities, as the sun rises here, and then the East is the source of life, the birth of a new life. In contrast, the West was considered to be the motif of departure from life; it was associated with the country of ancestors. Vertically the South opposes to the North, the South is right, the North is left. In the film, the underworld is not shown. There is only a hint in the scene when the Mother-eñe leads Kelin to the cave for the purification process. Although it is known that in the original version A. Toleubayev prescribed journey of Mother-eñe to the lower world: “The Kazakh people's tradition of burying the dead in the family cemetery, exists to this day, and this is one of the oldest ways to store in the “sora” – a wooden construction of two meters tall standing on four poles. A deceased is usually kept in the “sora” only in the winter and up to forty days, while the soul of the deceased, “Rukh Zhan”, does not leave the physical body “Yet Zhan”. The tradition of temporary keeping in the “sora” of the Kazakhs has deep roots and is linked, according to A. Toleubayev (Relics of pre-Islamic belief in
the family rites of the Kazakhs) with all-Turkic national traditions of above-ground burial, which was noted in many shamanic peoples of Siberia.

According to the traditions of that time after the death of her husband, the late wife wore her hair loose and wore her clothes turned inside out, in such a way she went up to forty days, and when meeting strangers or those whom she had not seen since her husband’s death, she began a loud cry which testified about her grief. Up to forty days after the death of the deceased, the wife had no right to wear earrings and rings. Such transformations confirmed wife’s faithfulness, saying that the wife remains faithful to her husband. If the deceased's wife receives gifts from another man, then it indicates her infidelity. It was believed that even after forty days the soul of the deceased visits his home to a year and is a witness to all that is going on in his house. If everything is well, then the soul of the deceased quietly leaves the house, but if not everything is right, then his soul is torn and does not find a place in another world. In the film, after the Herdsman's funeral, there were no scenes of Kelin's weeping and wailing; and in the episode, when a caravan came, and Mother-eñe bargains and acquires things necessary for the household, Kelin gladly takes the Hunter’s gift – red beads which he had bought to her at merchant’s, a small bird gives an evil sign. Because Kelin from the beginning of the film was not faithful to her husband, so it is possible that the soul of the deceased was not calm.

**Levirate marriage.** In addition to these customs and rituals, it should be noted that the Kazakhs had an ancient custom (a levi rate marriage), which is pronounced in the episode when after the death of the eldest son Mother-eñe marries Kelin off to a younger son. This ancient custom was followed in order not interrupt the kin. Later this ancient right is associated with the ransom for the bride and inheritance of property, i.e. this tradition is closely “intertwined with the whole economic structure”. Kazakh people are saying: “Ақа қлсе жеқге мқра, іні қлсе келін мқра” (If the older brother dies, then his wife passes as a legacy to the younger brother, if the younger brother dies, his wife goes to the older one). Not only his wife, but also his children, movable and immovable property of the deceased are passed as a heritage. In relation to the widow, all the relatives of her husband are considered as “levirates”, that is, the heirs of their brother. According to custom, the “levirate marriage” right applies to all widows without any exception. Depending on various circumstances, this right existed in different ways, especially if a young widow had no children from her late husband, and sometimes she stayed alone (if she had adult sons from her late husband and she was in old age). The “levirate marriage” right is applied not only to widows, but also to the bride in case of the groom's death. A girl must marry someone from his siblings, in the absence thereof, became the wife of a cousin, but if her father agrees. Thus, in this film, Kelin runs after the Hunter, although the ransom is paid by the other, and after her husband's death, according to the custom of “levirate marriage” she belongs to her husband's younger brother.

Except nomadic life in films of Kazakh filmmakers, we can observe the “forefathers’ cult” – a reverence and respect for the soul of the deceased and for his grave.

**Forefathers’ cult.** For example, in several motion pictures, such as Kelin, Kyz Zhibe, Kuna we see attributes similar to contemporary Balbals (i.e. tombstones cut of long rectangular or large oval-shaped sandstones or coarse-grained granite that were installed when a person died in mid-course so that people know that somebody is buried there), which means the worship of “forefathers’ cult”. The word Balbal originates from 'balbaltas' meaning ancient Turkic art of work with stone; it is translated as a 'stone sculpture depicting a human figure’. The Balbals look differently, they mostly depict an upright standing person, a meter or half-meter in height, often with a bowl or weapon in its hands, but some of the sculptures are sitting in cross-legged “Kazakh” position. Some giants have weapons hanging around the belt; others have braids and even clearly carved earrings in the ears – these are signs of a high status. Mostly male figures are chased in stone, but one can meet female balbals as well. According to scientists, usually balbal was erected as a symbol of valor and long memory on the grave of an outstanding person. So these ancient monuments were installed in the memory of a brave commander, wise ruler, talented akyn, - of somebody who was respected and honored by people around. They belong to two main groups – ancient Turkic Balbals that were built in the VI - VIII centuries and Kipchak monuments of the IX - XIV centuries. The Balbals are mostly facing the east. During their erection the steppe-dwellers followed Tengrism traditions, worshiping the Eternal Blue Sky, primordial religion of the Steppe. A new day kindles in the east, the sun returns to the world from that side, banishing darkness and granting warmth and freedom from night fears.

The forefathers’ cult is also traced in one of the worst curses sounding like “aruak atsyn” (Let the spirits of
ancestors send misfortune to you!). Each Kazakh film has scenes showing how people give sacrifices to “aruakhs” (souls of the dead ancestors); they slaughtered the best white horse, or something expensive and valuable, because if they do not sacrifice the best horse, but a kind of a nag, then the souls of the dead aruakhs may become unhappy and angry. Also, a memorial feast – “as” – is arranged in honor of aruakhs (deceased ancestors). Memorial meal is given on the third, seventh, fortieth, in some regions, on the hundredth day, and a big “as” is given on the anniversary of the death of the deceased. During the funeral feast – “as” – noble, rich relatives make races, power contests, singing contests of poets – “aytys” and other various games and competitions. Famous American anthropologist Clifford Geertz in his work The Interpretation of Cultures – identifies and deeply analyzes the differences between the various functional approaches to anthropology. In one chapter of this book, which is titled “Ritual and Social Change: A Javanese example” writes: “After the funeral, in house of the late, funeral “șlametans” (feast) were arranged – on the third, seventh, fortieth, and hundredth days after the death, it depends. The body finally turns to ashes and the brink between life and death becomes absolute22-21. As we can see there are similarities between the funeral rites of the Kazakhs and the communities that live in kompons on the island of Java. During the marriage, the forefathers’ cult is related also to that about what A. Toleubayev writes: “Bridegroom’s father gave the bride one animal (necessarily a male) as a gift (қlі – тірі), besides the ransom, otherwise, according to popular belief the bride will be ill. This gift was intended both for dead and alive ancestors. Upon arriving home, this animal was given to one of the relatives, who slew it in the name of aruakhs and invited aksakals (titled elders) of the family. By this way they appeased ancestral spirits, took their permission to marry”21.

Shamanism. It should be noted that in addition to the daughter-in-law and her two bridegrooms, Mother-eñe plays one of the key roles, because she is a link between the human world and afterworld. Shamanism of the Turkic peoples has deep roots. The nomadic way of life, getting used to the harsh climatic conditions, constant close contact with nature, have developed people’s unique capabilities, such as advanced intuition, clear hearing, sensitive smelling, etc. The fact that shamans had supernatural powers is common knowledge. Kams [shamans] were revered as the people in the patronage of the sky and the spirits. It was believed that Kams were chosen by spirits, and possessed a special gift, magic power of which they were awarded by the Highest, so people thought that they knew everything and can predict not only the future, but that had once happened to their ancestors, and therefore, they can heal people from all sorts of diseases, damage and curse. Ordinary Kams played an important role in the lives of their countrymen and were highly respected. Their knowledge about past and future played a special role, so nobody could say badly about them, because of fear of retaliation and damnation. Kams took part in the resolution of any dispute: Khan’s hunting, battle with enemy, funerals, matchmaking, sacrifice, etc. It was believed that the features of communication with otherworldly forces and spirits of the ancestors, passed to Kams by ancestral line and had ancestral roots. L. Gumilev26 writes in his book: “Presence of shamanism is stated also by Plano Carpini and Rubruk, but they call the shaman Kam. This word is Altai and Turkic, shamanism was already well developed in 13th century in Altai, cohabiting there with Nestorianism. For example, Rashid ad-Din said that once Naiman Khan allegedly had such power over the jinn that stripped their milk, and made kumis. But as for the Mongols, we are forced to give up the traditional point of view and agree with Mönge Khan, who told Rubruck that through the prophets (but not wizards – L. Gumilev) Mongolians will learn the will of One God”. Thus at the end of the film there is a scene of avalanches, when the Hunter steals the daughter-in-law and Mother-eñe encourages nature spirits to help her saying that people came into close contact with otherworldly powers and were able to call for help the spirits of nature. In the film Mother-eñe is the shaman. She-wolf, which occasionally appears in several pictures simultaneously with occurring events, that little episode where Mother-eñe knowing the animal’s tongue, howls and calls the she-wolf, asking for its help, reminds us of the ancient legend of the origin of the Turkic people fed by the mother wolf.

One of the legends about the ancestor she-wolf told us that the “ashine” tribe of the “khuna” genus was attacked by countless enemies from outside, the whole tribe was killed except the boy, whose hands were cut off; he was left in a swamp, doomed to a slow and painful death. There, in the swamp, he was found by the she-wolf; licking and healing his wounds she nursed him with her milk, and saved him from an agonizing death. When realizing that the child is alive, enemies tried to find and kill the boy, but the she-wolf runs away with the boy across the steppe to the east and saves the boy for the second time.
Then, in a cave she-wolf gave birth to ten children, and the race of “ashine” tribe originates from them and continues. The Turks knew that wolves are not trainable, they value freedom. In the battle with the enemy they flock, knowing that they cannot defeat the enemy alone. Wolves are smart, determined and dedicated. They are different from servicemen dogs by their psychology. Worship to this animal was the veneration of the ancestors. Even now, in our time, in many Kazakh families we can see a wolf skin hanging on the wall, teenage boys wearing the wolf fang or claw around the neck, which indicates common hereditary and genetic origins. Therefore, Mother-eñe for some reason called the wolf and drank baby with the wolf milk. This indicates common hereditary and genetic origins. As we already noted, the main advantage of the film is the relationship between a human and nature, and intermediary between nature and the Divine is the image of Mother-eñe with her supernatural powers. Thus, in the last episode, where Mother-eñe realized that a new life was emerging in Kelin’s womb, left her stick to Kelin and went to the other world; the director showed us once again the cycling of time and the change of generation. Here, Mother-eñe has lived her life, she is ready to die with dignity and leave her family to the future generation, her daughter-in-law and grandson. Also an old Kazakh proverb can be applied here: “жаксы адам өйінізін кәрсетпейді – жаксы іл қлгенін кәрсетпейді [A good man will not show his anguish and pain – a good dog will not show its death]. Turks worshiped not only to the High God “Көк мәкі тәқір”, but also to other heavenly bodies, to spirits of nature, also they respected those regions where they had to stay for a long time and live, calling these places “Paradise”. This sense of nostalgia still lives in the Kazakh people’s minds, because in their songs and poems our writers and composers praise their native land, remember the smell of “wormwood” grass, etc. Thus, for example, Doctor of Anthropology at Harvard University Rafique Keshavjee in his work “Faith and Culture” wrote: “Last year, in the summer I was in southern Kyrgyzstan on business, where one of the local elders told us about the tree which had the power to heal people and that he himself had recovered from an incurable illness, repeatedly coming here, and that, finally, he decided to stay and live here, as this tree gave him a new life, he decided to take care of it and protect. While he talked about his attachment to the tree, his eyes were shining with gratitude. I asked him: “Have any Muslims said that this place is not Islamic?” He said: “God created this place long time before humanity origin, so it does not belong to any peoples and to any particular faith. It belongs to all the people”. Thus, being a Muslim he venerates it because he was cured by the mercies of God”. Thus, Mother-eñe leaving a generic stick for Kelin goes to die, knowing that the spirits of the deities of nature and native land will not let her die a long and painful death. Here the art researcher K. Nurlanova’s words are appropriate: “A deep and heartfelt description of contemplation as a way to express the relationship to the world is that it expresses the relationship of a man and the world as the original organically interconnected integrity. The Kazaks say: “бал дүние – биртутас” – a man and the world are completely interrelated. In this context, understanding of the basic, fundamental grounds of traditional culture seems to be the most fruitful to us if patterns that underlie in the traditional attitude to the world are developed”.15 “The grand picture of the universe, facing the visible and spiritual vision of a man, in its entire infinity did not suppress people, due to the experience of spiritual and practical communication with them, which includes communication as a mutual need”20. Thanks to E. Tursynov’s film Kelin, we were able to uncover a small part of “tengriism” religion with its spiritual origin for ourselves, as well as the close relationship between man and nature. In some interesting episodes we learned part of the genetic origin of the Kazaks, their ancient culture, which includes the rites and rituals such as “levirate marriage”(a wedding rite); “alastau” (purification, which meant shaman’s smudging with fire and smoke); “zher-leu” (funeral tradition); “Kelin tusuru”(the rite when the daughter-in-law is brought to the house for the first time, it is separate from the wedding ceremony, as has its own peculiarities), etc., and also got acquainted with the “forefathers’ cult”, “cult of fire” (the rites and rituals relating to the worship of fire as fire is a symbol of family for the Kazakhs.

4. Conclusions

Thus, as exemplified by the film of Kazakhstani cinematographers, we had the opportunity to learn the whole world of nomadic culture, their spiritual and moral integrity, social practices, rituals and traditions. We learned that with the advent of independence, the national cinema has passed a difficult phase of transformation and deideologization, under conditions of which the filmmakers had a unique opportunity to realize their dreams and
creative aspirations without ideological pressure and the need to preserve the old stereotypes. During this period, a considerable number of full and short films came out, in which the national cinema sources of origin are evident, the first bold attempts to familiarize the international community with a rich history, a specified household, age-old traditions and customs of the Kazakh people are presented. Characteristic features of the mentality of the Kazakh people were analyzed through their spiritual culture, which were formed together with the history of this nation. We identified and justified the value of the ancient traditions of rites and rituals in the future spiritual and moral development of the nation. We studied and learned deeply the rite of courtship and marriage, veneration of the family hearth – the “cult of fire”, veneration of ancestors – the “forefathers’ cult”, the purification ritual, and the ritual of taking guests properly, associated with the child’s birth, etc. We learned the definition of each of these rites and rituals, formulating their main characteristics, their importance and value.

The scientific novelty of the research is in the following:

- For the first time in the national historiography of cinema studies sources and scientific literature relating the research of riots and customs in cinema have been examined, a large factual material was collected and subjected to a thorough review and analysis;
- understanding of the “Kazakh cinema” has been substantiated as a special socio-cultural space in the context of holistic characterization of this cultural phenomenon in the national cinematography;
- structural and functional grounds of the cinematography nature have been found where the cinematic product – the film – ensures availability of tense equilibrium of material and ideal essence having a high level of complexity, in which the developing system (society and person) constantly ‘takes into account’ the anticipatory character of the upcoming changes. That is to say, the world in which this equilibrium is realized and purposefully transformed into a person’s world in particular and the Kazakh society as a whole;
- the area of national transformations of the material and ideal entities has been designated as a socio-cultural space, beyond which the world is represented for a person as a kind of topological constant. Immersed in the culture as into the natural environment of being, people are subject to the effects of universal laws, acting as objective determinations of the human world, and stimulated by them to create the multi-scale world of sense-making meanings and subjectivities of film existence;
- the multi-functionality of the national cinematography in the period under study has been identified, reflecting to the full extent the means of film expressivity which became leading in the 90s of XX century: director’s and actor’s skill, film editing, sound and color, wing to new technologies production of equipment, film strips, etc.

5. References

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