

**EXPRESSION OF ATTITUDE TO COLORS
IN TURKIC NATIONAL RITUAL SONGS**

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Abstract. In this article we can see that symbolism of colors have magic symbolic meaning in ritual songs, but in lyric songs they can have associating aesthetic character, these two meanings of symbolism can be seen in wedding songs. Wedding songs express lyric hero's inner world with the help of associative aesthetic symbols, in situations where ritual cases are depicted leading place is given to magic literary meaning. In folk songs depictions created by colors are main elements. Wide use of different color harmony is an old tradition; they can help more widely understand lyric hero's life. Genesis of color symbolism in ritual songs is connected with magic of color. In funeral songs and in wedding songs each genre is differentiated according demands and attitude of singer to the object. The use of color symbolism in ritual folklore genres is still in their specific feature.

Keywords: folklore; tale; poem; legend; symbol; poetics; colour symbolism; poetic symbols; animism; totemism; symbolic meaning; colour; white; black; blue; red; yellow; green.

In Turkic national ritual and folk songs the harmonic connection of meaning and white, red and black colors symbols can be seen. Exactly, the special attention is paid to color symbolism in traditional wedding ceremonies. For instance, white color has its special place in traditional rituals connected with wedding. White things (symbolic elements connected with white) express happy and shiny future, existence pureness of a young couple. White color is a special element in matchmaking which is the first stage of wedding. Matchmakers were given some white things (white headscarf, white sweets – holva) if the girl's parents agreed to give their daughter. Then groom's side sent white wedding dress and huge white headscarf to bride. In the wedding ceremony both bride and groom wore white clothing. On the clothing sent to the bride before wedding there was put a mirror wrapped to white tissue. This white tissue packet was opened on wedding day, when bride and groom were in "gushanga" (a special place in the corner of the room prepared for bride and groom) there was a ritual of "mirror showing". There is also a custom to put a white fiber equal to groom's height while his wearing "to'n" (caf-

tan) during the wedding ceremony. The longevity of the fiber had to be equal to groom's height, and it was very special. It was a superstition which expressed the long and happy life road of future family. During the wedding day a bride, being sent to groom's house, bows to her father's foot and has his blessing which is called "oq fotiha" and receives his agreement. After wedding a bride brought to groom's house is met with white flour, white tissue spread on her way and white milk. The custom of meeting bride's relatives with smearing flour on their face is still used in all regions of our republic. Some regions a special white yurta is knitted for bride and groom. May be because of this there is mentioning of "white yurta" in yor-yor songs and kelinsalom – traditional bride's greetings her new relatives:

*Оқ ўтовни бор эмиш, Оқ ўтовлар
курисин,*

*Оқ ўтовнинг ичида Айвонингга, ёр-ёр.
Оқ келинчак бор эмиш. Ўғил-қизинг
ўйнасин*

*Оқ келинчак олдида Тўрт ёнингга,
ёр-ёр [1, б. 98].*

Тилла бешик бор эмиш [4, б. 250].

(There is a *white yurta* or: Let's built *white yurtas*

And a white bride in it In your porch,
yor-yor

Before bride in yurta Let your sons and
daughters play

There is a cradle in it. In all your side,
yor-yor)

Symbolic feature of the white color can be seen in putting the bride's hands in the flour and oil in the kitchen of the groom's house, on the side of special white cover for flour. In "Groom calling" ceremony the groom is also met by stepping on the white cover [2, p. 101].

In Muchal ceremonies children, stepping from 12 to 13 are worn white dress. Historical roots of this tradition are connected with Zoroastrianism. In this tradition of Zoroastrians each Zoroastrian, when he is 15, he is worn a white caftan, shirt, put a turban on his head and he had a special belt knitted of 72 strings of white sheep, and it was continued thirteen years. White dress is a symbol of Zoroastrians' religious belief. In "Yasht" and "Mitra ode" it is mentioned that white dress is a symbol of Zoroastrianism [3, p. 66].

The boy who is going on circumcision also wears white dress. During this process the boy's mother must keep her ring finger into the flour. In these rituals white color means purity, virginity and at the same time symbolically shows that the boy is at consent age. A well-known O.Safarov writes: "...truncated boy is in forty-days care and he must wear white shirt and pants" [12, p. 74]. It is an evidence of the boy's being sponsored saint powers in leaving childhood and joining adults.

The signs of understanding the connection of white color with saint powers are still completely kept in Uzbek customs and traditions. For example, Khizir, who had drunk the eternal life water, is widely described as an old man with white beard, white turban, and in white dress. One more evidence is that, there is also belief that if white snake is met somewhere in the house, it was considered as an image of Khidir and owner of the

house put a little flour or milk in order to treat him politely" [12, p. 114–115]. Powdering flour on the snake or giving it some milk keeps some traditions in itself. According the ancient mythological outlook "...white is Gods color and as it is considered as invisible strong powers color" [8, б. 60] and its saint features are seen in the ritual of going all Muslims to "God's house" (Caaba) in special white dress.

Red color, which is symbolically and closely connected with the sun, fire, victory, power, brevity, enthusiasm, war, blood, has its own place in folk rituals and songs. A special attention is paid to red color in Surkhandarya wedding parties. According the data, a mother-in-law, bringing her bride to yurta – black house, in "Kelinsalom" – bride's greeting vests her bride a red dress and says: "Yurta you live in is black, the sky is blue, fields are green, pots are black, your hair is black, and in order to make you individual I dressed you to red, and never wear blue dress, don't get into black, never get ill with measles, let your face be always as red as your dress". Usually a new bride wore red dress until her giving a birth for the first child and this dress was considered her bride-dress. May be some songs have red dressed beloved depictions thanks to this ritual:

Эшик олди қизил жар,
Қизил кийган бизнинг ёр.
Тожихўроз бўйни бор,
Гул сасиган қўйни бор [5, p. 39]
(There is a red whole at the door
My beloved is in red cloth
She has long neck
Flower smelled she is.)

In wedding songs, red color is a symbol of a girl, a white color is a symbol of a boy. W. Turner wrote that in African local people's life white and red has binary features and here also white means man and red means woman. The same feature of binary expression of colors can be found in Uzbek folk traditions and rituals.

In "Alpomysh" poem Barchin's yurta in Kalmik is described in the following way: "Barchin's being apart from people and

building yurta on the hill is shown in the following way: “Leaving ten thousand houses Kungirat, Barchin raised her yurta somewhere on the hill. Barchin lived in this yurta with her forty maids”. We should stop in two points here. The first is Barchin’s yurta built on the hill. Mountains, hills are the places where souls of saint people live and these places are considered to be saint. The second is yurta’s being white and made of velvet material. White and red colors firstly express ancient understandings of two worlds, that’s to say the joining place of man and woman. That’s why these two colors have concrete symbolic meaning both in epos and rituals.

Speaking on shamans’ activity in Khorezm region, G. P. Snesarov gave the following idea: “In order to have a place for couples assistants used white and red materials put on two walls of the building; they had a belief that in the white material on eastern wall man fairies would gather, in the red material on western wall woman fairies would gather”. The scientist also writes: “If we connect the color symbol with young father’s coming in “Groom calling” ceremony, in this meeting the material on which the groom would walk should be done of white material on surface and of red material on the bottom” [13, p. 50].

G. P. Snesarov wrote the following about another wedding ceremony in Gurlan: “...one more interesting custom of Gurlan habitants is that, grooms mother while meeting her daughter-in-law, promises for three times to give her a red cow (the cow must not be of another color). The meaning of this symbolic custom is that, after the wedding party the mother-in-law and the daughter-in-law will live in peace, without arguments” [13, p. 87].

In wedding songs we can see that white flower expresses the groom and the red flower expresses the bride:

Ёр -ёр айтиб келаман, (I am coming singing yor-yor)

Кимнинг тўйи ёр-ёр. (Whose wedding is it, yor-yor)

Оқ гул билан қизил гул – (White and red flower)

Қизнинг тўйи, ёр. (Girl’s wedding, yor-yor)

Куёв поччам отлари, (Brother-in-law’s horse,)

Ўйнаб кишнар, ёр-ёр. (Growl playing, yor-yor)

Устидаги ёпиғи, (And its cover)

Ўтдай яшнар, ёр-ёр [14, p. 34] (Sparkles as fire, yor-yor.)

White color’s expressing a man, red one’s expressing a woman is special by having ancient base proofs and international common meaning among all expressions that they have in folklore. It is especially valuable that white and red colors have common feature in all customs and rituals of world nation’s folklore.

There are some sayings among people as “black food” (“қора ош”), “black meal” (“қора овқат”), “black soup” (“қора шўрва”). “Black meal”, “black soup” is usually met in national songs which satirically used to express poverty, need:

Азон билан қўшга қўшдим аравани,
Бўйнига илдим сомон тўрвани.

Чошкада юборди қора шўрвани,
Ёниб ўлдим хўжайиннинг дардидан [1, p. 192]

(I added the horse to plow

Hang the bag with hay on its neck,

He sent me a cup of *black soup*

I am tired of master’s greed.)

The working class bad conditions, suffering of social inequality are very impressively expressed with the help of “black soup”.

In eastern European countries black color also expresses the power against light, it means fog, cruelty, anger, sadness, sin and lack of faith. And also black symbolizes not only death (in all ways), but it means a reject from world luxuries, killing greed and devoting himself to pray. That’s why priests and monarchs wore black mantle. People in this dress were those who confessed death as a main and symbolized those who rejected world luxuries. Scientists considered that “color trio” of white, black and red are the most ancient symbols that was created by

mankind. The most important thing is that symbolic expression coming out from these three colors has harmonic features almost in all nationalities of the world. In common, examples given above prove that there is gradual changes in meaning depictions of colors that happen in life because of social relationships.

In the system of rituals and folklore examples there is a contrast, contrary meaning between the unity of white and red and black colors. The bright example of it can be the saint book "Avesta" the world is divided into two poles. These poles expressed two meanings contrary to each other. They are meanings of kindness and cruelty, and symbolized in the characters of Ahura Mazda and Ahri-man. Cruelty and death are described in invisible point, in black; the world of alive, all natural goods are described in white [3, p. 171].

In the ancient times people believed that some concrete things, animals can have magical power to defend people, they paid a special attention to color magic. That's why primitive people usually painted their bodies to different colors [15]. Red and white colors were widely used in this case. The head of the tribe or family was considered as a representative of God on the earth, that's why their faces and bodies were painted with special white lines. Ordinary representatives of the tribe painted their bodies with red color. And also they had jewelry of this color and had red feather on their head. During war and battle periods warriors painted their body with black color. They pretended to be the God Ahriman who usually believed to bring death, trouble [6, p. 107]. There is still a tradition to paint soldiers face with black color.

The rudiments of belief are seen in various superstitions and customs in the magic of color. P. G. Bogatirev writes: "Red color is the most widespread element of putting an evil eye on people" [17]. Really, there are some rituals, ceremonies and superstitions among our people. For example, women's putting a flower on their ear, or traditions of knitting some flowers on clothing is the element of ancient outlook concerning traditions

connected with color. There is also superstition that red clothing defends its owner from having an evil eye on. Such belief has also found its expression in folk songs:

Туймажон туя бойлаб тунда юрсанг,
Оқ бетингга кўз тегар, қора кийма,
Тол бўйингга кўз тегса, мандан кўрма.

(Tuymajon, when you ride on camel in the night

Don't wear black, you'll have an evil eye
If you have an evil eye, don't blame me.)

[9, p. 75].

Totemic beliefs of our predecessors show that white colored trees were saint at that time. For instance, some Turkic tribes living in Siberia considered white birch as their sponsor and defender. But the red rose bush in ancient Turkic people, especially in Uzbek folklore is interpreted as an element calling bad powered souls, and hurts alive creatures, especially, people around it [11, p. 445].

According to national acceptance, the handmade thing sewed from different-shaped various tissues' connection – "quroq" also considered to be an element which saved people from having an evil eye on them. That's why everything sewed for bride and groom including a curtain surrounding their corner – "gushanga", all mattresses and pillows were made of the pieces of different tissues. It is well known that different shaped tissue pieces are placed according the harmony of colors. This process which is for the preparing "quroq" has its own value also. Base of the colors in it are white, red or sometimes white and black. A new born baby's dresses and cradle accessories also include such different tissue pieces as a main part of his clothing. This tradition means that they wish young couple happy life, and pieces in cradle mean more children in the family, and at the same time they prevent evil eyes both on parents and on baby.

Primitive people spent some rituals preventing them from outer forces, invisible powers, which was based on their religious beliefs, primitive understandings. That's why social life of people, their existence was closely connected with bearing, getting mar-

ried, and death, at the same time colors played leading role in all those processes.

There is a special ritual-holiday “Holly” in India, which is connected with colors. In this holiday, based on belief of colors’ magic power, people throw to each other powder of different colors and by this wish each other peaceful, happy and lucky life. Holly is usually ritual-holiday of joy and fun [16].

As in other countries of the world in history of Turkic tribes people also were eager to symbolize every event and situation. Especially, they had a tradition to express symbolically by each color their dreams, aims, ambitions, imaginations about life in different colors. This tradition finds its expression in our people’s customs, rituals, traditions and oral literary creations. A great attention is paid to color and ritual relationship, because color began to have a value in various national rituals, holidays and festivities. For example, red color expresses festival and majesty, black color means sadness, white shows freedom and virginity, green is a symbol of wish and dream.

Symbolic images connected with colors have their individual interpretation in all branches of folklore, literature and art which is developed by time, and formed system of specific meanings.

In Turkic rituals we can see two cases in symbolic image depiction, the first is connected with humanism, and the second is layer of meaning connected with the lifestyle of a concrete nation. Ethnic layer of Uzbek people, historical events happened in the life of our nation, social economical changes found their expression in color symbolism of ritual folklore. In this meaning the history of color symbolism is a history of nation, and also can be classified as biography of its cultural life.

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