

The Ritual of Khekhujoba in Samegrelo

Georgian folklore contains many important texts performed with suitable rituals and ceremonies. The subject of this article is one of these folk rituals - „khekhujoba” based on Mengrelians’s (the western region of the country) beliefs.

After analyzing the main details and reviewing recordings, it can be said, that this ritual was special ceremony to worship the guardian patron (saint) of blacksmith’s work. It is said to have taken place on 31th of December night, which was proved to be the blacksmiths’ night by the traditional Mengrelian society.

The place of worship was in smithy, where only the male members of the family gathered and prayed for healthful and powerful ‘arms’. The texts of ritual show the development of this syncretic ceremony. On the one hand, we have got texts, which contain the beliefs in special god (called „solomoni”) and, on the other hand, the texts without any elements of worship.

This contrast is a good evidence of different beliefs as well. The blacksmith was a necessary person for society and their work was considered as a sacral job. But, later, it became the secret knowledge of devils and giants and main struggles between heroes (saints) and devils are mostly shown in this context.

As a conclusion we can say, that the „khekhujoba” ritual kept beliefs about patron of blacksmith’s work, but beliefs are always changing and as a result, the ritual lost its first sacral function and remained as an ordinary ceremony for healthful life.