

## Artículo de investigación

**Worldview foundations of Yakut ritual dance “bitii”****Мировоззренческие основы якутского ритуального танца битии**

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**Abstract**

The article analyses a ritual dance called “bitii” in the context of mythical, ritual, and worldview ideas of the Yakut people. It studies the semantic of the ritual dance, the symbolic meaning of movements, postures, ritual gestures, all of which are parts a unique language based in the worldview foundations of the people. The article considers the “bitii” dance in its ethnographic and semantic aspects as an inherent part of the ritual complex, and examines the meaning of this dance in the life of the Yakut people. This paper uncovers how a ritual dance is embedded into the inner works of mythological thinking and how this corresponds with religious ideas and worldviews of Eurasian nomads. The topic is relevant as it is necessary to preserve archaic examples of the dance folklore of the Yakut, people with a complex multi-ethnic origin and known as the northernmost Turkic people, for future studies and posterity. The article presents a ritual dance as a specific form of plastic and dance manifestations of spiritual legacy of the ethnos.

**Keywords:** Worldview, religion, spirituality, three worlds, folklore, ideas, rite, ritual, traditions, creativity, dance, image, myth, idea, concept, cult, deities, shaman, blessing, sacred action, movement, structure, semantics

**Аннотация**

В статье проводится анализ ритуального танца битии в контексте мифо- ритуальных и мировоззренческих представлений якутов. Выявляется семантика ритуального танца. Символика движений, ритуальных жестов, поз — особый язык, основанный на мировоззренческих представлениях народа. Рассматриваются функции ритуального танца. Танец битии рассматривается в этнографическом, семантическом аспектах как неотъемлемая часть обрядового комплекса. Рассматривается значение и смысл ритуального танца битии в жизнедеятельности якутов. В статье выявляется «включенность» ритуального танца во внутренний механизм мифологического мышления, его соответствие религиозным и мировоззренческим идеям кочевников Евразии. Статья обусловлена необходимостью сохранения для науки архаичных образцов танцевального фольклора якутов, именуемых самыми северными тюрками — народа со сложным полиэтническим происхождением. В статье ритуальный танец рассматривается как своеобразная форма пластически-танцевального проявления духовного наследия этноса.

**Ключевые слова:** мировоззрение, религия, духовность, три мира, фольклор, идеи, обряд, ритуал, традиции, творчество, пляска, танец, образ, миф, идея, концепция, культ, божества, шаман, благословение, священнодействие, движение, структура, семантика

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## Introduction

The peoples of the North, including the Yakuts, have created a rich dance heritage, which is part of their spiritual activity.

The purpose of the study is to identify the original foundations of the Yakut ritual dance bitii, its connection with the religious and world outlooks and key world outlook ideas of the nomads of Eurasia. The bitii dance is considered as an integral part of the spiritual universe of the Yakuts.

The relevance of the article is due to the need to preserve the traditional dance heritage, the lost samples of the ritual choreography of the peoples of the North as material supplementing with the scientific data domestic and foreign folklore. The relevance of the topic is due to the increased interest in traditional culture, in particular in the traditional dance culture of the peoples of the North and the Arctic. The relevance of the article lies in the introduction into the scientific circulation of plastic - dance symbols, signs that carry valuable information.

The preservation and development of a unique archaic example of the ritual dance bitii in the modern culture of the Yakuts is an urgent task that contributes to the preservation of the cultural diversity of the peoples of the North.

## Methodology

The methodology of the study of the dance culture of ethnic groups includes the study of the semantics of the dance, its meaning at different historical stages. The study of archaic samples of the ritual choreography of peoples involves the study of the morphology of dances, its forms, structure, and basic elements of dance. The methodological basis of the study was the work of domestic researchers of ethnography, folklore, ethnochoreology. Proceedings of the researchers I.G. Gmelin, I.I. Lindenau, A.F. Middendorff, R.K. Maaka, I.A. Khudyakov, V.L. Seroshevsky, E.K. Pekarsky, V.S. Troshchansky and others are the main methodological basis in considering the mechanisms of mythological thinking in traditional dances.

The philosophy of spiritual culture is contained in the works of K. Levy - Strauss, M. Eliade, E.M. Meletinsky, B.N. Putilova, S.E. Malova, V.M. Zhirmunsky, E.A. Jordanian.

Materials on the traditional culture of Yakut researchers A.E. Kulakovsky, P.A. Oyunsky,

G.V. Xenophon, S.I. Bolo, A.A. Savvin, G.U. Ergis, A.N. Alekseev and others are the methodological basis.

In the analysis of the ritual choreography of the Yakuts, the author relies on the works of M.Ya. Zhornitskaya, researcher of the dance culture of the peoples of the North and the Arctic, and materials S.A. Zverev - Kyyl Uola, connoisseur and bearer of the traditional culture of the Yakuts. The author relies on the works of the following modern scholars of the traditional culture of the Yakuts: R.I. Bravina, E.N. Romanova, P.A. Sleptsova, V.M. Nikiforova, A.E. Zakharova and others.

The article uses the method of analysis of the structure, content and vocabulary of the ritual dance bitii in the context of the main ritual action of the Yakuts – Ysyakh.

## Scientific and practical relevance

Theoretical and practical study of ritual choreography patterns will contribute to the preservation of the Yakut dance heritage, the revival of lost forms of dance of spiritual value, and the creation of modern stage interpretations based on it. The research material may be of interest to researchers of traditional dance culture and can be used in scientific research to further study the ritual choreography of the peoples of Russia. Research materials can be used in teaching and can be used in the development of curricula, study guides, textbooks of higher and secondary educational institutions of art and culture. The materials of the article can be used by professional and amateur dance groups in their creative work and in the search for interesting subjects, vocabulary for the stage embodiment of traditional images, symbols.

## Results and discussions

Yakut dance bitii is a classic example of sacred ritual dance. The dance of bitii reflects the ideological and religious representations of the Yakuts. The content, structure, vocabulary of the dance shows the connection of dance with the ideological foundations of the Yakuts. Bitii was involved in all the key rites of the Yakuts. The ideas of the bitii dance are firmly connected with the ideological and religious system of the nomads of Eurasia. In the Hunnic time i.e. in the 3rd century BC, the cult of the sky was the main worldview in Central Asia. The origins of the Yakut dance bitii go back centuries. Yakut

traditional dances, including the bitii ritual dance, are genetically related to the Central Asian worldview and religious systems. In the initial stages of the formation of the sacred dance bitii, of course, totemic performances played a large role. This is the cult of the sacred birds and the cult of the horse, which can be clearly seen in the content, structure and vocabulary of the dance. With the development of religious beliefs, the cult of Urun Aiyy Toyon, the supreme deity of the Yakuts, came to the fore. Requests for the well-being of the clan, the tribe of Aiyy - deities and spirits - masters of nature became the main leitmotif of the dance. Bitiisity i.e. "Singing dancers" are sacred dancers who accompanied the shaman or priest in their rites. Bitiisity were intermediaries between people and deities of the Upper World. The main task of the ritual dancers is to establish communication with the deities, to convey the requests and wishes of people to the deities of the Yakut pantheon. Three worlds is the fundamental concept of spatial representations in the religious and worldview representations of the peoples of Central Asia and South Siberia. The three-part concept of the world is a relic of ancient representations of cattle-breeding peoples of Central Asia and Southern Siberia. The three-part world has arisen on the interweaving of religious and worldviews of cattle-breeding peoples of Central Asia and Southern Siberia.

The three-part model of the world is a strictly expressed vertical, which is fundamental in the mythology of the peoples of Siberia, including the Yakuts. The dance bitii is a dance - a concept that reflects the idea of the interdependence and interconnection of the three worlds. Bitii corresponds to mythical paradigms, is organically integrated into the mythological ritual scenario and models vertical space. The bitii ritual dance is one of the ways to establish communication and appeal to deities with requests for the well-being and prosperity of the people. It embodies the idea of establishing a connection between the three worlds. The symbolic movements, gestures of the ritual dance bitii were designed to protect a person from the troubles and misfortunes of the Middle world, where people live. In the ritual practice of the peoples of the North, many ritual acts and movements are charms and are designed to protect people.

The shaman calls his dancers saints, and calls the dance sacred - ayyylarga anammyt, i.e. dance dedicated to the deities of the Upper World. This echoes the ancient traditions of the peoples of Central Asia, who had a cult of sacred dancers.

The functional significance of the dancers was that they should become intermediaries between the deities and the shaman (priest), representing the interests of people. Bitiisity are selected dancers who strictly observe all the requirements and recommendations of the shaman. They underwent rigorous selection, in which virginity is one of the main conditions, i.e. "purity". It was believed that only "pure" physically and morally girls and boys could communicate with the gods and could bring to them the requests of a shaman or priest - algyschyst.

In essence, these requirements had traditional roots and were formulated among the people, and the shaman voiced them. The shaman gradually introduced them to ritual practice.

Bitii was performed under the direct supervision of a shaman. Bitiisity are young dancers who not only accompanied the shaman in his actions, but also were active participants in these actions. In special cases, Bitiisity performed the functions of a shaman. The compositional drawing and vocabulary of the dance are dictated by the purpose and objectives of the ceremony. Dance bitii in the past was of great importance for the livelihoods of the people. The performance of bitii was mandatory in key rituals such as the Ysyakh ritual (New Year's Eve), ayyhyty tardyy (soliciting the soul of a child from the goddess Ayyhyt), ynahsyty tardyy (addressing the goddess Ynahsyt, the patroness of cattle and offspring), and Uruu (wedding rite), kotogunuu (revival, resurrection of a shaman), kut kotoguute (raising the soul of the deceased in a funeral - memorial rite), kymys urde (rite of consecration of koumiss), etc.

In most cases, in the Yakut Ysyakh rite, Bitiisity danced under the direction of aiyy oyuun - a white shaman. According to archival materials and respondents, Bitiisity in some cases could accompany a black shaman. The classic combination of bitii consists of nine boys and eight, sometimes seven, girls aged 12 to 14 years. There were a number of requirements, the violation of which precluded the possibility of becoming bitii. The main requirement for bitii - dancers were virginity and purity. According to the belief of the Yakuts, only "immaculate" bitiisity could establish a connection with the deities and convey to them the requests of the shaman or priest - algyschyst. A.E. Kulakovskiy wrote "... they must all be virgin. Cleanliness and integrity are established by the shaman before the ritual; the shaman sees through every man and ruthlessly rejects young men and women unworthy to appear before the

goddess Ayyysyt ...” (Kulakovsky, 1979). In addition, A.E. Kulakovsky wrote that the shaman approached each candidate individually. He noted that “people became bitiisity voluntarily and willingly, since the shaman predicted the fate of each of them at the end of the rite” (Kulakovsky, 1979).

Everyone, except for “people with the dead” who were not allowed to celebrate during the year after the funeral, could participate in osuohai - the traditional Yakut circular dance; only girls and boys of the teenage period, who passed the strictest selection of the shaman, could participate in bitii (Kulakovsky, 1979). In essence, these requirements were moral and ethical norms that were formed among the people, and the shaman presented these requirements for bitiisity - dancers. The requirements for ritual dancers - bitiisity, in fact, were requirements for sacred persons, which were bitiisity dancers.

According to the respondents from Suntarskiy ulus, students of the talented singer-improviser S.A. Zverev - Kyyi Uola (bearer and connoisseur of the traditional Yakut culture, narrator - olonkhosut), Bitiisity should be girls and boys of a “clean” appearance, direct posture and with “light” bones. Bitiisity were active participants in all major ritual activities. They were called the sons and daughters of Yuryung Aiyy Toyon - the Supreme deity of the Yakuts, children of the life-giving Sun (Khudyakov, 1969). Only immaculate, crystal-clear children - Bitiisity could facilitate the communication of a white shaman with spirits. The sacred dancers were the “wings” of the shaman, contributing to the “ascension” in the sacred regions of Heaven.

The origin of the dance of bitii is based on the belief that only through a harmonious combination of moral and physical principles, their absolute fusion can a person achieve spiritual heights, spiritual “ascension”. Bitiisity, with its sacred dance, was called to attract the attention of deities - aiyy, in order to convey to them the requests of the inhabitants of the Middle World. Such an understanding of ritual dance was akin to opening the path to self-improvement, spiritual transformation. This is the philosophy of one of the most archaic ritual dances of the Yakuts - bitii.

Bitii was significantly different from other traditional Yakut dances, primarily in its improvisational essence, which, in fact, defined its form as a dance. Despite some canonical features (compositional-spatial drawing, the

presence of the main movement - stamping, etc.), the bitii of each particular rite had its own unique features, the characteristic features of the movements, the compositional drawing corresponding to one or another rite. The content of the dance depended entirely on the purpose and objectives of the rite.

Many researchers of the traditional culture of the Yakuts wrote about bitiisity both in the past and in our days. Information about them is contained in the writings of researchers such as V.L. Seroshevsky, I.A. Khudyakov, E.K. Pekarsky, G.V. Ksenofontov, A.A. Popov, A.A. Savvin, S.I. Bolo, N.A. Alekseev and many others. V.L. Seroshevsky wrote about bitiisity, who participated in the ancient rite Ysyakh. “Nine immaculate youths, young in age and height, stood one after another facing south with glasses of ever decreasing size. A standing (white shaman) at the head sang, and they picked up and thrice raised the chorons to heaven, then poured koumiss onto the ground as a sacrifice, and transferred the rest to the circle” (Archive of the NSC SB RAS).

The most complete description of the bitiisity involved in the Ysyakh rite is given in the work of A.I. Khudyakov “A Brief Description of the Verkhoysk District”. He recorded the full text of the algys - the spells of a white shaman. Description by I.A. Khudyakov is the most complete and reliable material in which the spirit of dancing bitii is preserved (Khudyakov, 1969). I.A. Khudyakov was able to completely restore the structure and words of prayer that accompany the dance of bitii, in its more archaic form.

The main spatial drawing of the bitii dance is a wedge. At the head of the wedge was a shaman. Bitiisity with a shaman was likened to a flock of birds and depicted as “wings” of a white shaman. The very concept of wings is associated with the mythological concept of “flight”, “ascension” ie breakthrough of the levels of the Upper, Middle, Lower Worlds. The image of a bird is a key image in the worldview of the Yakuts. Young men, representing strength of mind, masculinity, solidity and power, stood on the right side. Girls, personifying goodness, beauty, femininity, stood on the left side. Boys and girls in the form of a wedge, creating the image of birds associated with “ascension” or “flight” are the leading idea of the traditional culture of the Yakuts. The Yakut ritual dances, including the bitii ritual dance, in fact, are examples of plastic-dance modeling of the three-part concept of the world, in which the idea of travel” and “flight” is clearly expressed. The dance consists of three parts:

slow, medium and fast. Two images are involved in the dance of bitii: a horse and a bird organically included in the ideology and ecstasy technique associated with the idea of travel.

In the fragment above, I.A. Khudyakov described the main movement of bitii - alternating swings of right and left hands in front of dancers' faces. The palms of their hands are turned to their faces. Carrying out this movement, Bitiisity attracted, "raked" grace, prosperity sent down by deities - aiyy from Heaven. In the distant past the Yakuts called the alternate waving of their hands in front of them uruidaanylyy (attracting goodness sent down by deities) (Archive of the NSC SB RAS). Circular movements of the hands in front of the face meant the request "Uruy", i.e. "Descend, give!", asking for the grace and an imitation of receiving what was asked. It is noteworthy that other Turkic-speaking peoples of Siberia also make circular movements in the face in order to ask the deities for offspring of livestock (Siberian Bulletin, 1818). Alternating waved hands is one of the archaic movements characteristic of other Turkic-speaking peoples of Central Asia, it has the idea of attracting grace, kindness, and offspring of cattle.

As writes A.I. Gogolev, "among the modern Sarai of the Uigurs associated with the ancient Uigurs of the Selenga group of Tokuz - Oguzes, S.E. Malov found the custom according to which young guys took part in a prayer and sang along with the shaman. This ancient Uigur ritual custom is well preserved among the Khakasses and Yakuts; 9 immaculate guys and as many girls - bitiisity stood behind the shaman" (Gogolev, 1993).

At the end of the algys spell, the shaman proclaimed, in essence, the main idea of the sacred dance bitii: "Here I read the prayer of eight saints, standing with seven girls - women, waving my arms to me, standing with nine young men, invoking grace with my movements (dancing)" (Khudyakov, 1969).

It is said in the Yakut epic olonkho "Descendants of the milk-white Yuryung Aiyy Toyon" that Yuryung Aiyy Toyon and his wife had "nine sons like cranes, eight daughters like white sterkh". The classic number nine among the Yakuts traditionally symbolized the masculine beginning, and the number eight means the feminine. The white shaman called his bitiisity - young men cranes, and girls - sterkh (Siberian Cranes).

All this testifies to the sacred nature of the dance bitii. The obligatory moment was the achievement of is turuk i.e. special, ecstatic state. In our opinion, it is precisely the special state of the soul (isturuk) that is characteristic of traditional types of creativity that bitii did, as defined by E.K. Pekarsky, the "sacred dance", which in the past occupied a special place among other ritual Yakut dances (Pekarsky, 1959).

In addition to the Ysyakh rite, the bitii dance was performed while asking the goddess Aiyyysyt for the soul of a child, the goddess Ynahsyt for offspring of cattle, in the wedding ceremony and in the rites of initiation of the shaman.

In the rite of petition for the soul of the child, the goddess Aiyyysyt was attended by seven immaculate boys and girls who sat down to the right and left of the spouses. The shaman traveled to the goddess Aiyyysyt accompanied by these bitiisity (Khudyakov, 1969). The rite is described by A.E. Kulakovsky: "The shaman stood between the ends of the ranks of bitiisity and hooked the cord for himself, embracing all the latter, he faced the east, where the goddess Aiyyysyt lives" (Kulakovsky, 1979). The shaman goes to heaven to the goddess who gives the child, accompanied by the bitiisity. "Over time, the cult of the black shaman replaced the cult of white, the execution of the described functions was assigned to black shamans as necessary. But heavenly deities did not accept black shamans. How to get out of this situation? The resourcefulness of the black shamans suggested the following outcome. Having reached the place beyond which one cannot go to the servant of the black god, i.e., probably, to the border of the gods' possessions, the black shaman sends farther away his bitiisity, having previously taught them how to act and what to say. Thus, bitiisity played the role of a white shaman before the gods" (Kulakovsky, 1979).

A.E. Kulakovsky described the ritual of attracting the offspring of cattle that the white shaman performed. "To ask for fecundity for cattle, a white shaman ... went to the goddess Isegei Ieiekhsit hotun, giving people cattle" (Kulakovsky, 1979). At the same time, Bitiisity followed him, accompanying the shaman in his journey to Kyuryuyo Dzhyosyogyoyu - deity of horse breeding. The southern Yakuts required the obligatory participation of the singing dancers - bitiisity (9 "pure" young men, 8 "pure" girls) when they were sent to the good goddess Unahsyt, the patroness of cattle. A significant stage of the dance was their descent (landing) back to earth, to the Middle World. Their path

was made vertically: Earth - Sky - Earth. Only in this case the dance achieved completeness.

January 28, 1925, G.V. Ksenofontov wrote from the words of Nikolai Shadrin from the Khatyng-Ary island a rare case of the participation of the bitiiisity in the ritual of initiation into shamans: "When the shaman's body is dissected, he lies unconscious for seven days, eats and drinks nothing; ... when the shaman lies dead (olo syttagyna), then his naked, without any clothes, put on freshly stripped birch bark. Before dying, the shaman says: "When the time comes for my resurrection ("revival"), having gathered clean, immaculate virgins and youths, make them perform the ceremony of my uplifting" " (Xenophon, 1992). Bitiisity, performing the rite of "uplift", i.e. the resurrection of the shaman, were to revive him with their dance and singing. In this case, a sacrificial rope, twisted from horsehair (aiyy sitime - a divine thread), was tied around the belt of an unconscious shaman, and the other end of the rope was attached to the cross of a shaman's tambourine. Bitiisity had to dance and sing, holding on to this rope. They had to "revive" the shaman with an emotional, ecstatic dance, bringing him to life. The ancient Yakuts called it koguter, i.e. arouse the desire for life.

The rite described above is probably the rare case where bitiisity, usually accompanying the white shaman, was involved in the main rite of the black shaman. In our opinion, the participation of the Bitiisity in this rite is a later phenomenon.

Much of the dance of bitii is associated with animistic representations of the Yakuts. The horse, according to the beliefs and views of the Yakuts, has a divine essence. "Undoubtedly, the Yakuts have owned only cattle since ancient times; only cattle was from time immemorial "happiness — grace, long wealth" (uigu byiany, usun kehiini) of a Yakut man" (Khudyakov, 1969). In bitii, both the shaman and his Bitiisity portrayed horses. The image of a white horse is the main one in the dance. This is evidenced by the main movements of the dance, imitating neighing, snoring, exclamations like hai-hat! hat-hat! - traditional signals that drive cattle and horse (Khudyakov, 1969). All the plastic of the bitii performers, robes sewn from the skin of a white foal, the presence of a makhalka (deibiir) made of white horse hair in their hands as a mandatory attribute suggested that the bitiisity represented themselves in the form of divine horses. The light tone of clothing, the abundance of white horsehair on both clothing and attributes gave the dance a solemnity and emphasized its sacred character. In the traditional perception, the

horse has "silver wings for flying", is able to cross all three worlds. According to D.S. Dugarov, dark spots on the horse's shoulder blades, are called Dyagyl near the Yakuts and symbolize the horse's wings (Dugarov, 1988).

Emphasizing the connection of the Sun with a horse, A.I. Gogolev notes that according to the materials of the olonkho, he was called Kyun Dzhyosyogyoi Toion 'the Sun Dzhyosyogyoi toion' in antiquity, and sees "the connection of this horse breeding cartridge with the cult of the sun" (Gogolev, 1993). The likening of the bitiisity to horses was connected with their desire to be like epic winged horses capable of flying to Heaven. The main movement of the dance - minor trampling - meant the clatter of the hooves of running horses. This is also indicated by the place of performance of the dance bitii, described in detail by I.A. Khudyakov, where a shaman with bithisites pronounces algys - a spell in the pen for stallions (Khudyakov, 1969).

E.N. Romanova, analyzing the ritual and mythological ideas of the Yakuts about the horse, notes that "the connection of the Sun with the horse can be traced in the ethics of all Indo-European peoples. The ancient Indian ashvins were presented as servants of the daughter of the Sun riding a chariot" (Xenophon, 1992). "... Ashvins in Vedic and Indian mythology are twin brothers, dancers. They are the youngest of the heavenly deities, they are fast, agile" (Romanova, 1994).

The bitiisity were also called the sons and daughters of the life-giving Sun, the White deity Yuryung Aiyy Toion. It is no coincidence that bitiisity was likened to beautiful stallions in the prime of life - aygyr silik.

There is a description of the movements of bitiisity imitating the habits of a horse in eyewitness materials. The main movements of the dance are shallow trampling with the feet and tanalai, i.e. treading feet. The trampling meant not only the stamping of running horses, but also the "trampling" of the road to the celestial spheres, that is, to the Upper World. Stomp with feet is a symbolic movement of the legs that simulates the climb of a staircase leading to heaven. In bitii, heavenly symbolism is visible, which means climbing up an imaginary staircase up to the Upper World. This movement of the legs meant "trampling the path to the deities of Aiyy." In the bitii dance, the motive for trampling the road to the Upper World is clearly traced.

E.K. Pekarsky wrote that bitiiity repeated the words, singing and movements of the shaman (Pekarsky, 1959).

### Conclusion

This topic is of interest from the point of view of revealing the worldviews of the Yakuts associated with the worldviews of the ancient nomads of Eurasia. The analysis of the structure and vocabulary of ritual dance revealed a strong connection between the bitii ritual dance and the worldviews of not only the Yakuts, but also the peoples of Eurasia. As a result of studying the content, structure, vocabulary of the ritual dance bitii, it is revealed that the origins of the sacred dance bitii go back centuries. The ideas of the dance of bitii are firmly connected with the ideological and religious system of the nomads of Eurasia, with the cult of heaven that developed in the Hunnic time, i.e. in the 3rd century BC, the main worldview of the peoples of Central Asia, the Vedic tradition with its sacralization of the image of a horse. In the dance-plastic form, the cult of the Sun and the cult of the Horse are reflected (Struchkova, 2005). Youth, the flowering of vitality for the ancient Yakuts has always been associated with purity, harmony of mind and body, therefore, "pure" boys and girls were involved in the sacred dance of bitii. In the Yakut ritual dance bitii, echoes of the ancient traditions of the Turkic-Mongolian peoples of Southern Siberia and Central Asia are traced, in which there was a cult of sacred dancers. This cult is an integral part of the worldview of the Turkic peoples of Eurasia, based on the veneration of Heaven (Nikolaev, 2000). The bitii ritual dance is organically included in the system of the three-part concept of the world and reflects its key ideas. Therefore, the dance of bitii is an integral part of the cult, key holiday of the Yakuts - Ysyakh, a ceremony of the revival of nature, whose roots go back to the Hunnic times (Gogolev and Struchkova, 2014). In science, it was recognized that the Hunnic culture had a significant impact on the formation of the foundations of the Yakut culture. The Yakuts preserved the ideological foundations of the early nomads of Eurasia in their own and traditional culture, including ritual choreography, in particular, in the original version of the bitii ritual dance.

The bitii ritual dance is an archaic example of the dance-plastic interpretation of the worldview foundations. The significance of the bitii ritual dance lies in the dance-plastic reflection of the traditional worldviews of the Yakuts.

At this time, the bitii ritual dance naturally undergoes some transformations, but as a whole retains its traditional structure and basic movements. Changes are associated with the acceleration of the tempo - rhythm of the dance, emotional characteristics. The transformation concerned mainly the composition of the dance. The part reflecting prayers has almost lost in antiquity, having a religious character. However, the essence of the ritual dance bitii has been preserved, personifying purity and integrity, as a guarantee of the well-being and prosperity of the people, the preservation of traditions. The main idea of the dance is to achieve harmony and balance, interconnection with Nature and the Cosmos. As in many ritual dances of different nations, the dance function initially dominated the practical function. It was believed that coherence in ritual activities and in the performance of singing and dancing contribute to the fulfillment of the desires of the algyschyt - the priest and dancers about the welfare of the clan and tribe. Currently, the bitii ritual dance is performed during the Yakut ritual festival Ysyakh - the Yakut New Year, in the month of June. The bitii ritual dance is an integral part of the Ysyakh ritual performance and reflects its main ideas. Dance has not lost its relevance and significance in the modern world, attracting people's attention with the idea of achieving harmony between man and nature, beauty as an acting force that can ennoble a person. In our time, professional and amateur choreographers are creating stage versions of the ritual dance of bitii. The ideas of the ritual dance of bitii, based on the ideological ideas of the Yakuts, find an original interpretation in the stage dances of modern choreographers - directors. Plots and motives of bitii dance are widely involved in the repertoire of amateur and professional groups of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia).

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