

# Study on the "Taboo" Factors in "Chin Tömür, Warrior"

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## ABSTRACT

The Uyghur folk Dastan is a long narrative poem with a long history. Its length is longer, and the content is spoken and sung. It is a narrative literary work formed by the combination of folk poetic language and prose language. There are a lot of folk taboos in the folk literature "Chin Tömür, Warrior". These taboos come from the "law of similarity" in witchcraft and the concept of animism in all things, which contain rich cultural and psychological factors. This thesis uses James George Frazer's view of witchcraft and Lévy-Bruhl's "collective fantasy" thinking and theories to analyze the formation, destruction and consequences of these taboos.

**Keywords:** "Chin Tömür, Warrior", magical stories, folk taboos

## I. INTRODUCTION

In the international academic field, the cultural phenomenon of "禁忌" is called "taboo". According to Freud's book "Totem and Taboo", "taboo" refers to "sacred", "inviolable", "mystery", "dangerous", "prohibited", "unclean", etc.<sup>1</sup> When human beings consider their souls, there will always be things that make them feel frustrated. They will be careful of this thing, be afraid of it, and taboo it. If they don't observe the law of using it, they feel that they will be hurt by it. Psychoanalytic researcher Freud's "Totem and Taboo" and anthropology and folklore researcher Frazer's "Golden Bough" two books put forward the view of "taboo". Uyghur Dastan "Chin Tömür, Warrior" not only retains a large number of cultural customs and life etiquette that existed during the hunting period, but also contains many "taboo factors", such as the worship of nature and animals. Many taboos were produced at this stage, and these taboos have been preserved and passed down in various genres of Uyghur folk literature. From the perspective of anthropology and folklore, the researchers study these taboos passed down through literary genres such as myths, epics, and magic fairy tales. As a magical fairy tale, "Chin Tömür, Warrior" in Uyghur folk literature contains

the taboo of merging the spirit of all things.

## II. FOLK LITERATURE FACTORS IN "CHIN TÖMÜR, WARRIOR"

In the fairy tale of "Chin Tömür, Warrior", before going hunting for the first time, Chin Tömür would order his sister like this: you can't put out the fire at home, can't go on the roof, don't spill water, don't drive away cats and chickens, and if the fire is out, don't look for the fire in the direction of blowing smoke. Before going hunting for the second time, he ordered again: Don't leave the house, don't sit by the water and comb your hair. These are taboos that continue in myths and epics and are a unique form of thinking in the continuation of the story. Although taboos are considered to be superstitious and custom studies, there is still a certain logical connection in human primitive thinking.

In the book "Golden Bough", the magic principle is divided into two types: the principle of similarity and the principle of contact (principle of infection).<sup>2</sup> The first principle refers to "coming from things of the same kind" or the same cause that gives the same result; the second principle refers to "through objects contact each other", the broken things affect each other at a long distance after contact. According to the principles mentioned above, the former can be called the "principle of similarity", and the latter can be called the

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<sup>1</sup> Freud, Totem & Taboo [M]. Beijing: The Commercial Press, January, 2015, p2.

<sup>2</sup> James George Frazer, The Golden Bough [M]. Beijing: The Commercial Press, 2006, p24.

"principle of contact" or the "principle of infection". The magician adopts the first principle, that is, the "principle of similarity", through simulation, anything he wants to do becomes reality. The second principle is that the magician uses an object to affect a person as long as the object has been in contact with the person, and whether the object is part of the person's body or not. From this perspective, taboo itself belongs to magic, which is divided into simulation magic and contact magic. Simulation magic, that is, a certain part of ordinary people is made by magic to achieve similar results, or the same result is brought about by doing the same thing. So the taboo is simulation magic.

It can be seen in the system of "mutual intimacy and conjure" that it includes not only positive rules but also a large number of negatives and taboos. It not only tells people what they should do, it also tells people what they cannot do. Positive rules are called spells, negative rules are called taboos.<sup>3</sup> Chin Tömür is a heroic hunter, he will remind his sister of the above taboos before going hunting. Taboos can be divided into hunting taboos, agricultural taboos, and daily life taboos. Regarding hunting taboos, hunters will remind their wives or those who stay at home before going hunting. If the people staying at home obey the taboos, then hunting will be ideal. If the taboos are not observed, the hunter will be life-threatening or the hunting will be not ideal.

### **III. THE MAIN TABOOS IN "CHIN TÖMÜR, WARRIOR"**

"Chin Tömür" belongs to the study of these three parent fairy tales. He proposed taboos: Don't put out the fire, don't drive away cats and chickens, and don't comb the hair near the water. Then there will be a question of "what if the sister broke the taboos and what would be the consequences of breaking the taboos?" When the sister drove the cat away, the cat poured the water from the kettle on the stove and the fire went out. The sister restored the fire when she went to an old man in the distance to borrow the fire. But the old man who gave the fire was a seven-headed demon. In order to find Makhtumsula by himself, the demon gave her millet, and then walked along the road where millet had been dropped. He saw the smoking house and found her. This demon, every time he came to her and sucked her blood, she became more and more vulnerable. After Chin Tömür came back, he fought with the seven-headed demon and finally won. The sister's first break of the taboo caused Chin Tömür to fight with the seven-headed demon. The second time Chin Tömür's sister broke the taboo and

combed her hair by the river, one of her hair fell into the water. The Mongolian prince fished out this hair and became obsessed with the owner of the hair. The prince started the journey in order to find the owner of the hair. The second break of the taboo by the younger sister led to the war between Chin Tömür and the Mongolian army. Qin Tiemur lost in the battle with the Mongolian army. The breaking of the taboo of Makhtumsula led to two wars and disasters.

So why does Chin Tömür's sister broke the taboo? Had her destruction of taboo affected Chin Tömür's hunting? Why are these taboos related to fire and hair?

Makhtumsula missed his elder brother, so he went out of the house, went upstairs to look into the distance, and looked sadly at water combing his hair. The reason she broke the taboo was because she missed her brother. Based on the theory of principle of similarity of James George Frazer, the sister's break of taboo will affect Chin Tömür's hunting. The elephant hunter's wife cuts her hair, and the elephant will struggle to get rid of the net. In the story, it is not clearly stated that the younger sister combing her hair by the river will affect the older brother's hunting, but he had no prey in his hand when he returned from hunting. It can be seen that after the sister broke the taboo, hunting was affected. She also put out the fire. The extinguishing of the fire may be one of the reasons why he could not hunt the animals and came back empty-handed. The sister broke the taboo, and the hunter could not hunt the animals. The sister's break of taboo caused two wars and the long separation between the brother and sister. The same reason came to the same result. Breaking the taboo to comb the hair may cause the prey to escape, and the extinguishment of the fire may lead to unsuccessful hunting. Why did Chin Tömür warn his sister not to comb her hair by the river and don't let the fire go out? James George Frazer put forward three elements: the subject of the taboo, the object of the taboo, and the purpose of the taboo.

The subject of the taboo is considered sacred and untouchable, which means that when touching, people and things, activities and behaviors will be evil. The purpose of blocking taboos is to prevent the subject of the taboo from suffering serious consequences and to prevent the appearance of the taboo. In this way, the basic elements of taboos can focus on the sacred and inviolable things, restrictions and punishments. From this point of view, Chin Tömür avoided the taboos of hair and fire. He believed that if the hair in the human body leaves the human body, it will bring risks to people, so he asked his sister not to comb her hair by the river and asked her to not let the fire go out because he takes it very sacred. In the consciousness of the

<sup>3</sup> James George Frazer, *The Golden Bough* [M]. Beijing: The Commercial Press, 2006, p39.

warrior Chin Tömür, failure to observe the subject of the taboo will lead to undesirable consequences. Therefore, in order to save his sister from the imminent disaster, he told her sister about the taboo before going hunting. However, his sister touched the sacred rules, broke the taboo and was punished.

In addition, ancient people also believed in the maternal view that "all things have a soul". They believed that everything in the body had a soul, so they were worried that they would be unsafe if they left the body. Chin Tömür's reason for telling his sister may also be because she was afraid that her hair would leave her body and bring disaster. Taboo simulation is a negative rule of witchcraft. Although it continues as a superstitious concept, it can still be studied from the perspective of primitive thinking. From the perspective of primitive thinking, this can be said to be the "collective fantasy" thinking mode of the predecessors. So how can we think about "collective fantasy"?

#### IV. CONCLUSION

In the book "Primitive Mentality" by Lévy-Bruhl, the concept of "collective fantasy" thinking is proposed. He believes that this kind of fantasy comes from the collective. This kind of fantasy leaves a deep impression on each member of the team. At the same time, according to different situations, each member of this group arouses all kinds of feelings, such as respect, fear, worship and so on.<sup>4</sup> The mode of collective fantasy thinking is not determined by individual labor but by the collective thinking mode. People form taboos when they are afraid of something and fear. These taboos are by no means formed by one person but by a team, and become the principles that the collective should follow. For the Uyghur ancestors, they regarded fire as sacred and taboo fire. The belief that the hair on the body has a soul and that hair is very important is by no means a person's point of view, but is imprinted by the "collective fantasy" thinking form. In the fairy tale of "Warrior, Chin Tömür", the instructions he made to his sister about taboos not only belonged to him, but belonged to part of the collective thinking of that group of people at that time. Sister combing her hair by the river to break the taboo has no logical relationship with Chin Tömür's unsuccessful hunting. In the "collective fantasy" thinking form, people do not pay attention to logical relationships, so they treat what they consider sacred based on the same principles. Taboos are not a simple superstition phenomenon, but involve the primitive way of thinking and magical views of the ancestors. So they hide rich cultural phenomena and

psychological aspects. The fairy tale of "Chin Tömür" has a rich cultural and psychological level because of its own taboos.

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