

Ethnosophical Landscape of Gorny Altai*

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For citation: Alekseev-Apraksin A. M. Ethnosophical Landscape of Gorny Altai. *Vestnik of Saint Petersburg University. Philosophy and Conflict Studies*, 2024, vol. 40, issue 4, pp. 703–713.
<https://doi.org/10.21638/spbu17.2024.411>

The article reconstructs the ethnosophical landscape of the Altai Mountains Republic. The main attention here focuses on the reflexive ethnic self-awareness of the Altai-Kizhi. The methodological basis of the study is the theory of cultural landscape, comparative analytics, and cultural generalization. The analyzed material was collected in the course of the 2023 expedition in the Altai Mountains. The article reveals the specifics of objectivist and subjectivist approaches to the study of cultural landscapes. For the first time, the concept of “ethnosophical landscape” is introduced and justified. It is defined by the author as a space of imagination based on ethnic traditions and religious consciousness when historical memory, creative self-reflection, and practical activity are aimed at preserving and creating cultural identity. The interviews and observations allowed the author to identify traditional, modernist, and metacultural ethnosophical landscapes as well as a number of key factors that determine the regional specifics of the Altai-Kizhi landscapes. The theoretical significance of the study of ethnosophical landscapes is to clarify the mechanisms for preserving ethnic identity and transmitting cultural memory. Its practical significance lies in increasing administrative and managerial efficiency; establishing fruitful forms of interaction with indigenous peoples; eliminating the reasons for their isolation; as well as in making informed decisions to preserve the ethnocultural identity of Russian regions.

Keywords: ethnosophy, Altai-Kizhi, Oirats, Old Believers, Altai Kazakhs, religious landscape, nomadism, sacred places, frontier territories.

Introduction

Mountain Altai (Gorny Altai) is the place where ancient nomadic peoples of Central Asia dwelt outskirts of cultures and civilizations. Being in the zone of influence of Mongolian, Chinese, Tibetan, Turkic, and Slavic cultures, this region has always represented a space for Eurasian cultural synthesis. Indigenous people lived at frontier territories for millennia; they have developed special forms of self-awareness based on the worship of nature, the heritage of their predecessors, ancient mythology, and religious views. In their past, modern Altaians easily included Paleolithic antiquity preserved in petroglyphs, Afa-

* The research was prepared with the grant support of the Russian Science Foundation, project no. 22-18-00018 “Ethnosophy of Altai: ideology and mythology of national consciousness”.

nasiev, and Pazyryk cultures as well as the Scythian period and numerous later layers of ancient civilizations. They are proud that their ancestors first domesticated dogs and horses, and developed effective ways to interact with nature, the sky, and the spirit world. And if modern Arabs living in Egypt would hardly think of themselves as the heirs of Nornmer, Amenhotep, or Cleopatra, then things are different for the Altaians. They do not treat the history of peoples who ever lived in Altai as something alien or past. Everything that becomes known, including scientific, for example, archaeological discoveries — everything is included in the formation of their ethnocultural self-awareness. They recognize their great-grandmother “Princess Ukok” (Ak-Kadyń) in the remains of the Pazyryk mound and sincerely believe that the subsequent natural anomalies are a punishment of their ancestors for her exhumation. This well-known plot characterizes the specifics of the ethnocultural life of Altai-Kizhi expressed in ethnosophical forms¹ of understanding modernity and intertwined with ancient practices of survival, recreation, communication, and self-actualization. The purpose of this study is to try to understand the causes and consequences of the described phenomenon and the cultural factors underlying it, as well as to clarify the specifics of the religious and ethnosophical landscapes of this region. Field and participant observations carried out in Gorny Altai led the author to the conclusion that the use of approaches formed in the theories of cultural landscape, cultural diffusion, and cultural transfers, involving comparative analytics and cultural generalization if necessary, can ensure methodological effectiveness in solving research problems arising after an intended goal is achieved.

Cultural landscape study approaches

The concept of cultural landscape is not new. A hundred years ago, it was introduced into scholarly circulation by L. S. Berg, O. Schlüter [1], and K. Sawyer [2] about phenomena arising as a result of the interaction of natural and cultural elements. The appearance of this term should be considered as the result of significant work by predecessors, who, already in the second half of the 19th century, significantly comprehended the influence of nature on culture. Many thinkers built their theories on the understanding of this connection, for example, K. Ritter who described the life, and customs of peoples, and their methods of geoscience; I. Taine who formed one of the cornerstone principles of naturalism “race, environment, moment”; F. Ratzel who created the anthropogeographical school [3]. The dependence of culture on nature — not only in the development of adaptive practices but also in the methods of communication, creativity, and transcendence — convincingly was studied by American anthropologists and representatives of the French *Annales* school. In the second half of the 20th century, in the study of cultural landscapes, there was a turn towards cultural issues. The research began to focus on the influence of culture on nature. Cultural landscapes received figuratively symbolic [4], phenomenological [5], and philosophical [6] descriptions. Currently, thinking about the concept of “cultural landscape” is still determined by two schools of thought: objective (realistic) and subjective (symbolic) landscape studies. The first approach is being developed primarily within the

¹ Ethnosophy is a heterogeneous phenomenon that includes: 1) methods of ethnic groups self-preservation and the practice of returning to cultural roots — authentic ethnosophy; 2) construction of “ethnic localities” and “commodity multiculturalism” in demand on the global market — myth-designer ethnosophy; 3) the direction of cultural philosophical reflection — utopian project of scientific ethnosophy.

framework of natural science and sociology, representatives of philosophical and humanitarian knowledge use the second. In the course of numerous studies, by the beginning of the 21st century, many kinds and types of cultural landscapes were identified: ethnic, ideological, religious, etc. The concept of “cultural landscape” received universal recognition thanks to the World Heritage Agreement adopted by UNESCO. The heuristic potential of the “cultural landscape” has been studied from different angles (geographical, axiological, semantic, phenomenological, ethnic, social, philosophical) and on various research materials and continues to be studied by many Russian scholars: V. V. Abashev [7], Y. A. Vedenin [8], G. A. Isachenko [9], V. L. Kagansky [10], V. N. Kalutskov [11], N. S. Kanatyeva [12], M. E. Kuleshova [13], O. A. Lavrenova [14], V. A. Podorova [15], and many others. Using the example of Gorny Altai, in this article, we will consider the possibilities of objectivist and subjectivist approaches to the study of the cultural landscape and, in addition to existing approaches, we will attempt to identify the specifics of the religious and ethnosophical landscape of the region.

Gorny Altai ethnocultural landscape

From the point of view of the realist (objectivist) approach, the cultural landscape is determined by methods of cultivating nature and people living in a given territory. This approach was very clearly formulated in the Soviet years by Y. G. Saushkin who recognized a cultural landscape only as one “...where the direct application of the human society labor changed the relationship and interaction of objects and natural phenomena that the landscape has acquired new, qualitatively different from its previous, natural state features” [16, p. 289]. UNESCO offers a similar in terms of content definition of cultural landscape as “combined works of nature and of man” [17, p. 74]. Because the cultural landscape of the Altai Mountains is heterogeneous, A. D. Dirin and A. S. Kuskov, representatives of the realistic approach, propose addressing the ethnic specifics of the republic. According to the authors, at the proposed level of ethnocultural generalization, one can distinguish five basic types of natural-cultural ethno-territorial complexes.

The first type is created by the ethnic majority. This is a Russian ethnocultural landscape (~56 % of the RA population). Its formation is most active in Gorno-Altai, Maiminsky, Chemalsky, and Shebalinsky Districts. This cultural landscape is defined by the traces of Soviet industrialization as well as the inexorable deployment of modern urban infrastructure: paved roads, supermarket chains, schools, clinics, and other achievements of civilization, and fully manifests in the only city — the capital of the republic, Gorno-Altai, and in the main tourist centers of the region. In general, this landscape is characterized by a pragmatic-utilitarian attitude towards nature and innovative ways of managing tourism, recreation, forestry, and agriculture.

The second type of Russian, often considered a sub-ethnic, is the Old Believer cultural landscape (~1.5 % of the RA population). The center of its localization is the Ust-Koksinsky District. The landscapes here are formed by traditional types of life activities and old Russian types of housing and settlements that have been preserved since the 18th century. Among the key methods of farming are: arable farming, moral farming, cattle breeding, and beekeeping. Haymaking, picking mushrooms and berries, hunting, fishing, storing supplies: everything is carried out with respect for God-given nature and, accordingly, a low anthropological impact on the area.

The third type of ethnocultural landscape bears characteristics of the autochthonous peoples of northern Altai: Chelkans, Kumandins, and Tubalars. These friendly and hospitable people mainly live in the Choy, Turochak, and Maymin Districts and constitute ~2% of the RA population. Close interaction and cohabitation with the Russians largely standardize their life. This traditional type of cultural landscape is determined by the taiga lowlands environment, river valleys, and lakes. Here the northern Altaians carry out hunting, fishing, and forestry activities and try to comply with the traditional rules of communication with spiritualized nature bequeathed by their ancestors: water sources and windbreaks, peaks and passes, plants and animals.

The fourth type of cultural landscape is formed in the spaces of mountain steppes and valleys of Central, Southern, and Eastern Altai. The original inhabitants of these vast lands are the southern Altaians: Telengits, Kipchaks, Naimans, etc. (~34% of the RA population). These are “...original nomadic pastoralists. Their economic specialization consists of sheep, goats, horse breeding, and, to a lesser extent, cattle. Hunting is of great importance in the economy (especially among the Telengits). They preserve the traditional way of semi-nomadic life to this day” [18, p.99]. The once mobile dwelling (felt yurt) in the villages has been expanded into alog-style *ayils*, often hexagonal, with a stove, stylized as yurts. Life is remote from civilization, communication with nature stays on the first-name basis (Martin Buber) [19]; environmentally verified, out-pasturing, pasture-rotational livestock farming are typical. All this allows us to define this type of cultural landscape as agricultural.

The fifth type of ethnocultural landscape is Kazakh. It began to emerge after the resettlement of several dozen families of the Sarykaldyk clan in the second half of the 19th century. Their number today is ~6% of the population of the Altai Republic. They all try to maintain their nomadic Kazakh identity. Slightly displacing the Telengits, in the most difficult natural conditions for life, the Kazakhs live in separate nomadic camps in the valley of the Chuya and Dzhazator Rivers in the Kosh-Agach District, remote from civilization. Among small Kazakh villages and *auls* we should name Jazator, Zhana-aul, Kosh-Agach, Tobeler. Kazakhs breed horses, cattle, camels, and yaks.

An outline of the ethnocultural landscapes of the Altai Republic based on a realistic (objective) approach lets us see its specificity and potential for identifying representative groups of ethno-communities and their inherent economic practices, as well as established environmental management systems. However, even in “advanced studies” based on cross-disciplinary research as in the work of A. D. Dirin and A. S. Kuskov cited above, where spiritual traditions are also discussed, the realistic approach invariably comes down to the objectification of all cultural processes. If we understand culture as a “range of motivated human activity carried out in the first person as a result of free will” [20, p.13], if we accept it as a set of meanings and values born of human creative activity and agree that this is a historically accumulated spiritual experience, then reliance on objective approach will limit the ability to perceive the “cultural landscape” in its entirety, no matter how trans-disciplinary we expand the field of research.

A realistic, in the generally accepted sense, “scientific” approach invariably directs researchers to identify general patterns, collect available data, apply statistical analytics, and further formal procedures for classifying and signifying sociocultural processes. In such studies of the ethnocultural landscape, we see contemplations on how adherence to traditions helps people adapt to natural conditions, if the ethnic community under the survey is smart, and whether customs and rituals that have developed among people harm the envi-

ronment. However, culture, despite the wealth of materially recorded and verified forms of socialization, is a subjective phenomenon. It requires a different approach such as proposed by Tim Ingold who defined the cultural landscape as the world around as it is known to those within it [21]. By accepting this definition, we, while remaining geographically in the Altai Mountains, find ourselves in a different reality, in a different type of cultural landscape.

Religious and ethnosophical cultural landscapes

The definition proposed by T. Ingold and other representatives of the humanistic approach [22] turns us to the subjective symbolic landscape which is associated not only with the type of economic activity and cultural influence on the natural environment. Being a system of producing meanings through representations, it is created by the imagination of the peoples living in a particular location. Turning to this resource significantly deepens the possibilities of cultural landscape research. We cannot reduce culture to its symbolic reality just as we cannot reduce its objective-material component. It seems quite logical that, for example, V.N. Kalutskov, as a result of his lengthy studies of the Russian North, concluded that it was necessary to take into account such components of the cultural landscape as the mythology of the place, spiritual landmarks, folklore, perception of one's traditions, and religious views [23].

A person's desire for freedom, self-actualization, and transcendence, directed and mediated by a religious worldview, undoubtedly changes the perception of reality. This obvious observation drew a number of researchers' attention to the study of religious landscapes. Leaving the discourse that flared around this topic aside, we present N. S. Kanatieva's definition that adequately represents the situation in Gorny Altai: *"A religious landscape is a cultural-geographical and historical contextual complex of manifestations of spiritually emotional concepts and intellectual ideas presented currently or during another historical period in a certain territory. It is based on faith in the transcendent origin of the world and the system of universal meanings that determine worldview, cognitive, moral, and social practices of human communities"* [12, p. 20].

Based on this definition, we can easily see that the dominant Russian landscape of the Altai Mountains is secular and, despite the presence of Orthodox churches, monasteries, and worship crosses, today is determined by the values of secular culture. The person who creates this landscape has faith in science and progress, a passion for global trends, a love for technical devices and technology, and, according to modern trends, a common desire to expand one's consumption areas as well as to achieve personal success and comfort. The Old Believer religious landscape, on the contrary, is built on the "purity of the Orthodox faith" and the principles of non-covetousness. The traditions of the "desert living" are intertwined here with adopted and reinterpreted local practices of sacralization of nature. In turn, the Kazakh landscape is built according to the canons of nomadic Kazakh Islam. Curiously quite many mosques in Altai have Sunni symbols but when surveyed, believers claim: "I profess Islam but I am neither a Sunni nor a Shiite". The specificity of the religious landscape of the northern Altai-Kizhi community despite the general secular realities of the 20th century and the adoption of Orthodoxy manifests in the continuous orientation towards epic tales, animistic ideas, and Tengrism. The southern community of Altai-Kizhi in building religious landscapes relies to a greater extent on the synthesis of the traditional faith of their ancestors, Turkic folklore and Mongolian mythology, Shamanism, Tengrism,

and Tibeto-Mongolian Buddhist views. With this rough statement about Altai inhabitants' religious dispositions wide perspectives of further research open up: unfolding of religious landscapes, tracing lines of canonical foundations transmission and historical transformation of ideas and practices which always occur at each specific place of large religious teachings "grounding". Here, as in other regions, following one or another religious conversion, local views were influenced by external (natural, geopolitical, migration, globalist) and internal factors (ethnic, ideological, philosophical, and personally creative).

Ethnosophical and religious landscape in its practical and theoretical-reflexive hypostasis may at first glance seem similar to the point of indistinguishability but this is not true. The religious landscape always sets a clear picture of the world. In addition, this clear, refined over centuries symbolic cartography is given to man in ready-made form. It only needs to be mastered and subsequently designed to provide the follower with confident navigation on the path to God or, in the case of Buddhism, to Liberation and Awakening. In the ethnosophical landscape, everything is not so certain. This picture of the world despite the reference to traditions does not come to a person in a ready-made form. It is collected as a result of enculturation and socialization: from the system of taboos, norms, and rewards perceived from childhood; of the ethnocultural codes transmitted by relatives; from the fairy tales and myths heard, songs sung dances danced; from adopted beliefs and observed customs. This ethnocultural originality since Soviet times also went through mandatory formatting applied via educational programs, and then at home, in the family, corrected by religious electives. In other words, the ethnosophical landscape of the Altaians coincides only partially with the known world religious pictures; in terms of content, they are very variable and eclectic [24].

In contrast to the religious landscape, the goal of acquiring an ethnosophical landscape is not to achieve Holiness, Enlightenment, or Deification but to maintain a connection with the place of residence with its *genius loci* and to nurture one's cultural authenticity. Today, in Gorny Altai, the achievement of this goal is realized in three basic modes: metacultural, modernist, and traditional. An example of the first is the artistic village of Askat. Along with transnational Buddhist, Vedanta, and other centers with corresponding confessional extra- and supra-ethnic landscapes, some famous Altai artists live here, art workshops are located, ethnic festivals and home concerts of classical music are held, galleries selling handicraft products operate, and eco-friendly culture flourishes along with ethnic tourism. Despite the modest size and unpretentiousness of rural architecture, Askat is located at the picturesque bank of the Katun River so the landscape in its spirit is quite consistent with the capital's creative and healthy lifestyle clusters with a good assortment of handmade and craft articles and current proposals for personal self-improvement. Inclusion in the global world is felt here to an even greater extent than in the only city of the republic, Gorno-Altaysk, the center of state institutions, administrations, infrastructure, and other functional attributes of service-budget metropolitan life. The ethnosophical landscape of Askat, like any metacultural space [25], is built on cultural *ostraneniye* (*distancing*, V. Shklovsky) and global communication connections, which, of course, deprives the indigenous Altaians who adapted this life, of their traditional ethnic innocence. On the other hand, the creative Altai intelligentsia (usually trained at capital universities) has many opportunities here for integration into the global world for worthy presentation of their disappearing ethnocultural locality to the interested transcultural community.

An example of the second mode of ethnosophical landscape is the village of Verkh-Uimon, Ust-Koksinsky District, where Old Believers settled from the end of the 18th century and in the 20th century N. Roerich stayed and worked. The ethnosophical world that has developed here is well visualized in the works of A. P. Veselev and V. N. Likhachev. In 2009, they created a new style of Altai decorative and applied art known as “Uimon painting”. Their expressive stone and wooden picturesque panels in terms of content represent a solid mythological design, although inspired not by the New Age but by the spiritual searches of the Silver Age, theosophy, Living Ethics, Agni Yoga expositions, and tales of Belovodye and Shambhala. In their works, local masters actualize the main dominants of their fantasy esoteric landscape: traditional ornaments, petroglyphs from the neighboring rocks, images of the Pazyryk mounds, local Scythian style, and figures of ancient Turkic warriors *kezer-tash* (petrified ancestors). Having become a refuge for many seekers of spirituality in Soviet times when religion was not in favor, this ethnosophical landscape has not only been preserved as a naive neo-romantic spiritual impulse of the modern era but is developing, finding sympathetic audiences and adequate ways to correlate with the contemporary world to protect themselves from oblivion.

The third, traditional mode of the ethnosophical landscape is formed by representatives of small ethnic communities. For them, the struggle for self-preservation is even more relevant. Creators of this landscape are the folk thinkers; they develop their world by relying on a rich ethnic heritage: well-considered stereotypes of relatives' behavior, knowledge and veneration of power places, national calendar and associated signs and holidays, familiarity with the rituals of national etiquette and crafts, national pastimes, crafts and arts such as of patterned felt. Nomadic and semi-nomadic way of life is closely related to ethnosophical landscapes of a significant part of the Altai-Kizhi are formed in the basin of the Ursul, Char-ysh, Koksa, Kan Rivers and at the middle reaches of Katun. The Telengits are located in the basins of the Chuya, Argut, Chulyshman, and Bashkaus Rivers; the Teleuts live in the valleys of the Maima and Cherga Rivers, etc. Each people in their places of traditional *habitat* also has its cult dominants: Ak Tru, Altyn-Kel, Ak-Kem, Babyrgan, Karakol Lakes, Red Gate, Kyzyl Chin, Uch Sumer, Katu Yaryk, Uchar, Ukok Plateau and many others.

Field observations and interviews show that the three identified modes of the ethnosophical landscape intersect, have a greater or lesser influence on each other, and are very variable and adaptive phenomena that in any of their forms of existence are very vulnerable to criticism. Perhaps, it is not appropriate to apply it to indigenous peoples for whom this is not a fad but a matter of self-preservation. The traditions they broadcast are alive, that's already a lot. It is also obvious that the bearers of traditions have every right to be selective about inheritance: to complement it, expand the context, find new connections, rethink something, and sink into oblivion. So, let us summarize. An ethnosophical landscape is a space of imagination founded on ethnic traditions and religious consciousness, in which historical memory, creative self-reflection, and practical human activity are aimed at identifying and preserving one's cultural identity.

Ethnosophical landscape formation factors of the southern Altaians

The basic subject of the traditional ethnosophical landscape is a representative of the tradition that has undergone enculturation. The primary forms of legitimation and socialization of his creative activity are the family and *seok* (clan). These are the primary

institutions for preserving cultural memory and connecting generations. Altai peoples are formed of these *seoks*. For example, the Telengits of the Ulagan and Kosh-Agach Regions include 18 *seoks* (Kobok, Sagal, Kypchak, Mool, Teles, Irkit, Yabak, and others). Moreover, each *seok* has its deity, sacred places, animals, and trees that connect the clan with the Upper World. In relation to the places of contact between the otherworldly and this-worldly spheres, the Altaians observe the custom of *bai*, i. e. veneration through the prohibition of certain actions, for example, women visiting a particular sacred mountain. Thus, being the result of the several clans' (*seoks*) self-organization, each Altai people has a whole set of invariant ethnosophical landscapes. Due to sociocultural heterogeneity, they all have common features but are not identical.

An important factor in the formation of the ethnosophical landscape of the southern Altaians, their remote residence from civilizational centers, should be considered. For many centuries, it provided them with a sense of inner freedom and independence. Even during the times of dual citizenship when the Altaians had to pay taxes to both the Russian and Qing Empires), in relations with any formal authority they felt themselves quite independent, both secularly and spiritually. Let us note that even now among people living in remote areas, there are still some individuals who do not even have a passport. The feeling of inner freedom gave rise to a certain individualism, even some adventurism and separatism of the Altaians. They also have an understanding of the fact that in difficult situations they can only rely upon themselves and their family. At the same time, being far from sources of external power, the southern Altaians found themselves in a kind of intersection of different cultures, often in the harsh warlike interaction of the great khanates, kaganates, and empires. They constantly experienced cultural influences and got used to living in a situation of fluid borders and regularly arising need to defend their territories. In general, the formation of the ethnosophical landscape was ensured by the nomadic way of life. Altai-Kizhi people find the balance due to continuous movement: external constant escape from the state control and internal self-determination, including supersensible journeys of shamans, the passage of the paths of Buddhist practices, and epic trips into the past of the Altai storytellers, *eyelu kaichy*.

The nomadic way of life is one of the key factors in the formation of the ethnosophical landscape of Altai-Kizhi. After all, traditional nomads form a kind of pinnacle of biogeocenosis. At the same time, they never perceived themselves as the kings of nature who have the right to reorganize it; on the contrary, they always tried not to stand out from the surrounding landscape at all. According to them, man is the part of the world. It doesn't belong to him. If one needs to take something from nature, cut down a tree for construction or for firewood, pick berries up, etc., in this case, any nomad will address the "owner of the area", ask him or her for a favor, and will never take more than necessary. If he has used something, he will never forget to thank or make an offering to local forces. When picking mushrooms, an Altai-Kizhi person ought to try not to destroy the mycelium and leave a piece of butter; if he starts a fire, he ought to "treat" the fire, it is a behavioral code. For the Altaians, rivers, lakes, waterfalls are sacred. It is self-destructive to pollute or desecrate a natural phenomenon knowing that everything is connected with everything. It is not just blasphemy; for a nomad, it is an ecological suicide, a taboo action. Altai-Kizhi basic attitude towards the surrounding landscape is not to interfere, not to change anything because the natural world in its form is perfect.

It is no coincidence that the first creators of biosphere reserves were nomads.² There are still a lot of them in the Altai Mountains, and most of them are located in the territories inhabited by the southern Altaians. For a nomad, everything created by nature is *a priori* more beautiful than any masterpiece a most skilled craftsman can produce. This understanding of beauty characterizes the aesthetics of the southern Altaians' ethnosographical landscapes.

Despite the well-known eclecticism of the religious views of the southern Altai people with their Buddhist specificity, namely attention to the degree of awareness of the current moment, ability to track cause-and-effect relationships, and motivation to bring benefit to others, the common basis of the worldview of the southern Altai-Kizhi is the spiritualization of the landscape and a sense of personal connection with nature and cultural heritage, with personal and family ancestors. The surrounding world is sacred; it is understood as a continuation of one's ethnocultural physicality, entrenched in ritual practices of communication with nature and fellow tribesmen. This is based on taking personal responsibility for preserving nature and building harmonious relationships with the visible and invisible world. Hence the painful perception of any outside interference in the natural and traditional course of life arises; it is perceived as an existential challenge. In the whole complex of ethnocultural self-preservation problems, freedom and responsibility, relationships with the world, search and discovery of the meaning of life play the key role. These and many other aspects of the ethnosographical worldview acquire their unique definition in specific landscapes and require further understanding and research.

Conclusion

The study of cultural landscapes is a promising direction in the study of peoples and cultures. Objectifying and subjectifying approaches reveal specifics of regional life from different angles and can be considered complementary. Research conducted by the author in the Altai Republic showed the need to distinguish between the religious and ethnosographical landscape. The latter is proposed to be defined as a space of imagination founded on ethnic traditions and religious consciousness, in which historical memory, creative self-reflection, and practical activity of a person are aimed at identifying and preserving their cultural identity. The study of the ethnosographical landscape of Altai-Kizhi from a theoretical perspective allows us to clarify the mechanisms they developed for preserving ethnic identity and transmitting cultural memory. In turn, the practical significance of these studies lies in increasing administrative and managerial efficiency; establishing fruitful forms of interaction with indigenous peoples; eliminating the causes of possible separatist sentiments; as well as in making informed decisions on the preservation and development of the ethnocultural identity of the region.

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² The first nature reserve recorded by historians was created in the 12th century by Genghis Khan, who, on pain of a death sentence, forbade hunting in the mountains; all forested mountains were declared sacred.

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Received: January 14, 2024
Accepted: September 16, 2024

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Для цитирования: *Alekseev-Apraksin A. M. Ethnosophical Landscape of Gorny Altai // Вестник Санкт-Петербургского университета. Философия и конфликтология. 2024. Т. 40. Вып. 4. С. 703–713. <https://doi.org/10.21638/spbu17.2024.411>*

Статья посвящена реконструкции этнософского ландшафта Республики Горный Алтай. Основное внимание в данной работе уделяется рефлексивному этническому самосознанию коренного населения, именующего себя алтай-кижи. Натурные и включенные наблюдения, анализируемые в данной статье, были собраны в ходе культурологической экспедиции на Алтай в 2023 г. Методологической опорой проведенного исследования выступили теории культурного ландшафта, компаративная аналитика и культурологическое обобщение. В статье выявляется специфика объективистского и субъективистского подходов в изучении ландшафтов культуры; отличия религиозного и этнософского мировосприятия. Впервые вводится и обосновывается концепт «этнософский ландшафт», который определяется автором как фундированное этническими традициями и религиозным сознанием пространство воображения, в котором историческая память, творческая саморефлексия и практическая деятельность направлены на сохранение и созидание культурной идентичности. Проведенные интервью и наблюдения позволили автору выявить традиционный, модернистский и метакультурный этнософские ландшафты. Среди ключевых факторов, определяющих региональную специфику ландшафтов южных алтай-кижи, выделяются: родовая структура, удаленность от цивилизационных центров, кочевой образ жизни, сакрализация природы, ощущение личной связи с природным и культурным наследием. Делается вывод, что теоретическое значение исследования этнософских ландшафтов состоит в уточнении механизмов сохранения этнической идентичности и трансляции культурной памяти. В свою очередь практическое значение заключается в повышении административной и управленческой эффективности; в установлении плодотворных форм взаимодействия с коренными народами и устранении причин для их обособления; а также в принятии взвешенных решений по сохранению этнокультурного своеобразия российских регионов.

Ключевые слова: этнософия, алтай-кижи, ойраты, старoverы, алтайские казахи, религиозный ландшафт, номадизм, сакральные места, фронтирные территории.

Статья поступила в редакцию 14 января 2024 г.;
рекомендована к печати 16 сентября 2024 г.

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* Исследование проведено при поддержке РНФ, проект № 22-18-00018 «Этнософия Алтая: идеология и мифология национального самосознания».