

RITEs OF PASSAGE IN THE BEAR HOLIDAY OF THE NORTHERN MANSI PEOPLE

The Mansi ritual system reflects different spheres of the people's worldview and includes specific complexes. The "scenario" of the Bear Holiday includes fragments of many rituals. All of them are syncretic, have different evolution histories and have been repeatedly reinterpreted. The study aims to identify the elements of the rites of passage in the Bear Holiday of the Northern Mansi group through representations and mythology. It is based on published sources on folklore and Mansi Bear Holidays of Russian and foreign researchers and materials collected by the author from six Bear Holidays (1994–2011) in Beryozovsky District of Khanty-Mansiysk Autonomous Okrug — Yugra. It is concluded that the rites of the Mansi Bear Holiday are based on the idea of the mutual transition of life and death, reflecting the idea of rebirth of animals and parallels in the life-cycle rites. The connection with certain biological points (death and birth) and the social standards (initiations) is particularly obvious. The article is based on the examples of individual ritual actions from these transitional cycles. The connection of the bear ceremony with the rites of passage reflects the most ancient layer of the people's worldview.

Keywords: *Mansi people, myths, Bear Holiday, dances, skits, temporary death, liminal/threshold period, rebirth, initiations.*

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