

Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation
Federal State Budgetary Educational Institution of Higher Education
AMUR STATE UNIVERSITY
(FSBEI HE "AmSU")

Manuscript copyright



Zinenko Yana Viktorovna

History and Modern State of Orthodoxy in Tryokhrechye

Specialty 09.00.14 – Philosophy of Religion and Religious Studies
Dissertation for the degree of Candidate of Philosophical Sciences
Abstract of the dissertation
for the degree of Candidate of Philosophical Sciences

Scientific supervisor
Zabiyako A.P., Professor, Doctor of Philosophical Sciences

Blagoveshchensk 2020

Relevance of the study

Tryokhrechy is a territory located in Inner Mongolia of China between the Haul, Derbul (De'er Bu'erhe) and Gen (Genhe) rivers, which are the right tributaries of the Argun (Ergun) River. The border between Transbaikalia of the Russian Federation and the Hulunbuir aimak of the PRC runs along the Argun. A significant part of the population of this region are Russians and descendants from inter-ethnic marriages of Russians and native people. The Russian population, its history and culture repeatedly became objects of study, but national and foreign researchers have studied only part of the data on the history, socio-political status of the Orthodox Church in the region, cult activity, and Russian Orthodoxy in Tryokhrechy.

The history of the development of the Russian diaspora in this region originated in the 19th century. Nowadays in Tryokhrechy, Russians and descendants of Russians – mestizos, or “half-breed” (self-name), despite the influence of Chinese (Han) culture, keep maintaining “maternal” culture at the heart of their cultural life. In this culture, Russian religious traditions, primarily the traditions of Russian Orthodoxy, continue to exist. Orthodoxy was represented in Tryokhrechy, first of all, by the parishes of the Russian Orthodox Church, the parishes of Old Believers (Popovtsy) and forms of folk Orthodoxy. Orthodoxy continues to influence the religiosity of the Russian population of Tryokhrechy, its ethnic identity and other important aspects of the life of Tryokhrechy Russians.

The parishes of Tryokhrechy are currently subordinate to the Chinese Orthodox Church. On February 17, 1997, due to the 40th anniversary of the granting of autonomy to the Chinese Orthodox Church, the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church decided to retain more custody of the flock of the Chinese Autonomous Orthodox Church. Since 2000, temporary archpastoral care in the autonomous region of Inner Mongolia of the PRC (which includes Tryokhrechy) has been carried out by the bishop of Chita and Krasnokamensk. Thus, Orthodoxy in Tryokhrechy is an important, historically variable and now really present component of Russian Orthodoxy in China. Historical and contemporary processes, state-church relations connected with religious life of the Russian-speaking population of this Chinese region are relevant for further research because of

their importance and scientific uncertainty. The urgency of the research is also the need for a comprehensive study of the history and modern state of Orthodoxy on the territory of Tryokhrechy.

Territorial scope of the study. Tryokhrechy (Chinese: 三河, pinyin: *Sanhe*) is a territory located in Inner Mongolia of China between the Haul, Derbul (De'er Bu'erhe) and Gen (Genhe) rivers, which are the right tributaries of the Argun (Ergun) River. The border between Transbaikalia of the Russian Federation and the Hulunbuir aimak of the PRC runs along the Argun. Since the 19th century, the Hulunbuir aimak has been a place of compact living for the Russians moved from Transbaikalia. Currently, there are several settlements, where the descendants of Russian settlers live: Labdarin (Labudalin, Erguna, Argun), the villages of Karavannaya (Enhe), Olochi (Shiwei), Dragotsenka (Sanhe), Ernishnaya (Sanyang), Schuchye (Suching), Pokrovka (Shang-Kuli-2), Klyuchevoy/Klyuchi (Xiahuli), Sirotui (Heishantou), Verkh-Kuli (Shang-Kuli), etc.

Chronological framework spans the period from the middle of the 19th century (which is defined as the beginning of active resettlement, land development, foundation of small settlements, and the villages in Tryokhrechy by the Russians) to 2019.

Ethnic explications. The Russians inhabiting Tryokhrechy are a complex ethnolocal community that has changed during its history. In this study, synonymous names are used: Russians, Tryokhrechy Russians, Chinese Russians, Russian people, descendants of Russians, Russian population, and half-breed. The main characteristics of the ethnic group are exposed in chapter 1, paragraph 1.2 “The history and modern state of Russian Tryokhrechy in the second half of the 20th century – 2019”. The term “Chinese”, as used in this work, refers to the Han in the strict sense.

Source base of the study

1. Written sources. *The first group* of such sources includes articles in Russian journals and newspapers during the years of emigration in the countries of the spread (China, USA): the literary almanac “Rubezh” (“Frontier”), the newspapers “Harbinskoe Vremya” (“Harbin Time”), “Gong-Bao”, “Novaya Zarya” (“New Dawn”), “Khleb nebesnyi” (“Bread of Heaven”) and “Bulletin of the Cossack Exhibition” edited by M.A. Shestakov. They provided information about the economic, household, and ritual

activities of Russians in Tryokhrechy. Large material characterizing different sides of Orthodoxy and the life of Russians in Tryokhrechy contains firsthand testimony: memories or stories, most of which are published in “Russkaya Atlantida” (“Russian Atlantis”) journal printed in Chelyabinsk, as well as the newspaper “Na sopkakh Man’chzhurii” (“On the Hills of Manchuria”). It contains information about almost all aspects of the life of Tryokhrechy Russians. In the array of these data, information about the religious culture of the population is often found. *The second group* of written documents includes official ones: reports of authorized persons stored in the State Archive of the Russian Federation and other similar texts containing statistical and legal data, as well as data on the history, religious life, and culture of Tryokhrechy Russians.

2. Oral sources. Oral sources of the dissertation include field data collected during the work of five AmSU expeditions (2015–2019): June 2015, participants – A.P. Zabyako, A.A. Zabyako, Ya.V. Zinenko, Zhang Ruyang, Wang Jianlin; September 2015, participants – A.P. Zabyako, A.A. Zabyako, Zhang Ruyang; May 2016, participants – A.P. Zabyako, A.A. Zabyako, Ya.V. Zinenko, Zhang Ruyang; August 2018, participants – Zhang Ruyang; June 2019, participants – A.A. Zabyako, A.P. Zabyako, Zhang Ruyang. During the field studies, researchers recorded information on the history of Tryokhrechy Russians, the modern state of Orthodoxy, and folk Orthodoxy.

3. Photo and video sources. This group of sources includes photographic documents published in emigrant newspapers and journals, as well as photo and video materials collected during the field studies.

Methodology of the study. The study depends on general scientific principles (universal communication, objectivity, determinism, and systematicity) and methods of cognition (analysis, synthesis, induction, deduction, and analogy). In addition, the dissertation is based on private scientific methods: cultural-historical, comparative-religious, historical-retrospective, typological, etc.

The object of the study is the history and modern state of Orthodoxy in Tryokhrechy.

The subject of the study are the processes of formation, development, transformation of various types of Orthodoxy in Tryokhrechy, historical and ethno-cultural

factors of its evolution, and ethnolocal features developed under the conditions of the existence of the Russian religious diaspora in Northeast China.

The goal of the study: to study the history and modern state of Orthodoxy among the Tryokhrechy Russians, to identify its main varieties and features stemming from the conditions of the existence of the Russian religious diaspora in Northeast China.

Objectives of the study:

1. To determine the patterns of the emergence and evolution of Orthodoxy in Northeast China and Tryokhrechy, to establish the main trends in its development and the characteristic features arose under the influence of historical, political, ethnic, and cultural conditions of its existence.

2. To restore in stages the history of the Russian Orthodox Church in Tryokhrechy from the end of the 19th century up to the beginning of the 21st century (2019).

3. To reconstruct the history of Old Believers in Tryokhrechy from the end of the 19th century to the first half of the 20th century (the time of the disappearance of the Old Believers communities).

4. To identify and study beliefs and practices in the structure of the Orthodox life of Tryokhrechy Russians related to folk Orthodoxy and to establish specific features of folk Orthodoxy among Tryokhrechy Russians stemming from the conditions of the existence of the Russian religious diaspora in Northeast China.

5. To reveal the modern state and prospects for the preservation of Orthodoxy among Tryokhrechy Russians.

The study is novel in:

1) a comprehensive approach to the Orthodox history of the Russian ethnolocal group on the territory of Tryokhrechy;

2) a holistic reconstruction of the history and modern state of the Russian Orthodox Church in Tryokhrechy from the end of the 19th century up to the beginning of the 21st century (2019);

3) a thorough account of the history of Old Believers on the territory of Tryokhrechy from the end of the 19th century up to the first half of the 20th century and establishing its features and causes of disappearance;

4) an overall analysis of folk Orthodoxy on the materials of field studies (2015–2019) among the Tryokhrechy Russians, educing its characteristic features due to the specifics of the ethnocultural and ethno-religious environment, as well as the prospects for its existence;

5) an introduction of the field studies data – oral texts and other documents reflecting the characteristic features of folk Orthodoxy (calendar rites, folk medicine, omens, demonology, funeral and memorial rites) in Tryokhrechy – into scientific use.

The main findings of the dissertation to be defended:

1. The presence of Russians in Tryokhrechy dates back to the 19th century. In the period of the late 19th – first half of the 20th centuries, there were about 20 Russian settlements. The mass exodus of Russians from Tryokhrechy, due to a sharp change in the socio-political situation, occurred in 1950–1960. At present, the Russian diaspora is represented in the region by Russians and descendants of Russians – *half-breed* (self-name), who identify themselves as Russians. According to official data, the number of the population is about 5,000 people; in fact, the number is much lower.

2. The culture of this people developed, first of all, in terms of inter-ethnic marriages, in which women were mainly Russian, and men were Chinese. Due to this fact, the culture of the population incorporated the features of both “maternal” Russian culture and “paternal” Chinese one. Russian components of the syncretic culture having dominated till the 1950s, gradually lost the dominant position as a result of sharp change in ethnic composition of the Russian settlements, growth of non-Russian population and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. For several decades of isolation from Russia and Russian culture, the culture of Tryokhrechy Russians has been undergoing significant assimilation and syncretization with Chinese culture.

3. The development of the Russian Orthodox Church on the territory of Tryokhrechy was associated with the massive influx of Russians, the establishment of the Harbin diocese, and the activity of the Russian ecclesiastical mission. In the first

half of the 20th century, there were about 18 churches in Tryokhrechye. Church activity was fully conducted, in spite of the fact that there was no unified mechanism for managing and financing the church in Tryokhrechye and there was inconsistency in the relationships between the Russian ecclesiastical mission and the Harbin diocese as well.

4. In the first half of the 20th century, Old Believers in Tryokhrechye were an integral part of Orthodox life. The general picture of this period is characterized, on the one hand, by the heterogeneity of Old Believer movements and complex relations within the church hierarchy; on the other hand, it is specified by the fairly stable functioning of the communities. After 1949, the share of Old Believers sharply reduced; by the beginning of the 1960s, most Old Believers had emigrated from Tryokhrechye. Some traces of the former presence of Old Believers are still preserved in the religious culture of Tryokhrechye settlers.

5. For Orthodox believers of Tryokhrechye the years of the Cultural Revolution were the time of destruction of the churches, icons, church utensils, and crosses at Russian graveyards; services were prohibited; any religious observances were restricted or strictly regulated by the official authorities of the PRC. Orthodox priests were repressed, the clergy actually ceased to exist as an institute.

6. After removal of the restrictions having stemmed from the Cultural Revolution, Russians and descendants of Russian-Chinese marriages began to restore religious traditions. Orthodoxy in Tryokhrechye was officially recognized by the system of state-church relations in the PRC as the religion of the national minority. Over the past 20 years, there has been a positive trend in the development of Orthodox church activities. In Labdarin (Labudalin), there has been opened a church in honor of St. Innocent of Irkutsk; in 2018, Pavel Sun Ming was ordained a priest for the ministry at the Labdarin Innocent Church. With the emergence of the clergyman, Orthodox believers have become to be able to perform church ceremonies and attend services regularly. Chinese authorities do not impede the functioning of church activities in this region. However, in general, the level of the activity is low, and the number of parishioners and influx of youth are declining.

7. Throughout the history, folk Orthodoxy played a prominent role in the Orthodox life of Tryokhrechy Russians. During its existence, folk Orthodoxy of the region has acquired a number of specific features due to both the internal processes of reproduction in the terms of Russian-Chinese families and the external circumstances of the influence of Chinese religious culture. The integrative characteristic of folk Orthodoxy of Tryokhrechy is its syncretism, based on the combination of not only the elements of Orthodoxy and Slavic paganism, but also the ideas and practices of Chinese (Han) folk religion. The Chinese component of this syncretism plays a secondary role. In ideological, cult, and organizational meaning folk Orthodoxy in Tryokhrechy concentrates around informal leaders, primarily older women (“little old women”). The rites are motivated by the idea of following the original pattern, perceived from the “maternal culture”. Folk Orthodoxy is more firmly rooted in the ethnolocal culture of Tryokhrechy Russians than the canonical one, but the completeness and quality of its reproduction in inter-generational dynamics are reducing.

The scientific and practical significance of the study consists in the archival data, memoiristics, journalistic materials and periodicals being introduced into scientific use, as well as the materials from the field studies containing interviews with representatives of Tryokhrechy Russians in the Russian language, collected in 2015–2019 and still relevant. The actual data and understanding of the dynamics of state-church relations within the framework of Orthodoxy in Tryokhrechy, the Russian Orthodox Church and the PRC authorities can be used by state, confessional and other institutions to form and predict the religious situation affecting the interests of Russia in the region.

Approbation of the study. The main findings of the dissertation are set forth in reports at international, interregional, and national academic and practical conferences and seminars: XII International Academic and Practical Conference “Russia and China on the Far Eastern Borders: Russian Émigré Community in China: The Experience of Exodus” (Amur State University, Blagoveshchensk, 2016); XXIV International Academic Conference of Students, Graduate Students and Young Scientists “Lomonosov” (Lomonosov Moscow State University, Moscow, 2017); International Academic and Practical Seminar “Ethnic Contacts in the Far East: History and Modernity” (Amur

State University, Blagoveshchensk, 2017); Russian National Academic Conference “Problems of Modern Science” (Amur State University, Blagoveshchensk, 2017); XIII International Academic and Practical Conference “Russia and China on the Far Eastern Borders: Peoples and Ethnic Cultures” (Amur State University, Blagoveshchensk, 2018); IV Congress of Russian Scholars of Religion: Religion as a Factor in Interaction of Civilizations (Amur State University, Blagoveshchensk, 2018); II International Academic Conference “Social and Cultural Transformations in the Context of Modern Globalism”, dedicated to the 85th anniversary of Professor Ibragimov Khamzat Ismailovich (RAS Comprehensive Research Institute n.a. Kh.I. Ibragimov, Grozny, 2019); International Interdisciplinary Tungus Conference “Social Interactions, Languages and Landscapes in Siberia and China (Evenki, Even, Oroqen and Other Groups)” (Amur State University, Blagoveshchensk, 2019); International Youth Academic and Practical Seminar “Far Eastern Frontier: Language, Culture, Literature” (Amur State University, Blagoveshchensk, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019).

The main findings of the dissertation are presented in 12 publications, 3 of which are articles in academic journals and publications indexed in Scopus and Web of Science: 1 – published, 2 – accepted for publication; 5 articles published in journals from the list of the Higher Attestation Commission.

Articles in academic journals and publications indexed in Scopus and Web of Science:

1. Zabiyaiko A.A., Zinenko Ya.V., Kontaleva E.A., Tsmykal O.E. V. Han's Archive – A Source for Reconstruction of the Processes of Ethnocultural Identity of Russian Emigrants in China. *The European Proceedings of Social & Behavioural Sciences*. P. 3433–3439. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.15405/epsbs.2019.12.04.461>. ISSN: 2357–1330.

2. Zabiyaiko Anna A., Zinenko Yana.V., Yishan Feng, Xinyu Zhou, Shi Liu. Frontier as an Artistic Concept. *The European Proceedings of Social & Behavioural Sciences*. ISSN: 2357–1330 (accepted for publication: June 01, 2020).

3. Zinenko Yana Viktorovna, Ju Kunyi. Harbin Image in the Memories of Its Inhabitants. *The European Proceedings of Social & Behavioural Sciences*. ISSN: 2357–1330 (accepted for publication: July 17, 2020).

Articles in journals included in the “List of Peer-Reviewed Scientific Publications in which the Main Scientific Results of Dissertations Should Be Published...” of the Higher Attestation Commission of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation:

1. Zabiyako A.A., Zabiyako A.P., Zinenko Ya.V., Zhang Ruyang. Folklore of the Russian Speaking Diaspora of Tryokhrechye as the Basis for Preserving Ethnicity. *Bulletin of Irkutsk State University*. 2016. Vol. 17. P. 109–125.

2. Zabiyako A.A., Zabiyako A.P., Zinenko Ya.V., Zhang Ruyang. Family Memoirs of Tryokhrechye Russians as the Basis for the Reconstruction of Historical Processes and Ethnocultural Identification in the Chinese Environment. *Russia and the APR*. 2016. No. 3. P. 185–198.

3. Zinenko Ya.V. The Calendar Rites of Tryokhrechye Russians. *Traditional Culture*. 2019. Vol. 20. No. 4. P. 97–107.

Articles in publications included in the List of Journals recommended by the Scientific Council of the Russian Academy of National Economy and State Administration for publication of articles on philosophical sciences:

1. Efendieva G.V., Zinenko Y.V. To the History of Church and Spiritual Life of Russian Emigration of the Far East: From the Journalistic Heritage of Arseniy Nesmelov. *Study of Religion*. 2015. No. 4. P. 170–187.

2. Zabiyako A.A., Zabiyako A.P., Zinenko Ya.V. Folk Orthodoxy of Tryokhrechye Russians. *Study of Religion*. 2016. No. 3. P. 121–135.

Other publications:

1. Zabiyako A.A., Zinenko Ya.V., Zhang Ruyang. Conversations with a Harbin Russian: Lyubov Nikolaevna Li. *Russia and China at the Far Eastern Borders. Russian Émigré Community in China: The Experience of Exodus*. Blagoveshchensk: Publishing House of AmSU, 2018. Iss. 12. P. 212–229.

2. Zinenko Ya.V., Ju Kunyi. “We Lived in Harbin, as in Tsarist Russia”: Socio-Cultural and Ethnocultural Processes of the 10–50s of the 20th Century in the Minds of Far Eastern Emigrants. *Russia and China on the Far Eastern Borders. Historical Experience of Interaction of Cultures*. Eds. A.P. Zabyako, A.A. Zabyako. Blagoveshchensk: Publishing House of AmSU, 2015. Iss. 11. P. 363–371.

3. Zinenko Ya.V. Orthodoxy in China: An Overview of Publications of Materials from the Conferences “Russia and China on the Far Eastern Borders” (2000–2013). *Russia and China on the Far Eastern Borders. Historical Experience of Interaction of Cultures*. Eds. A.P. Zabyako, A.A. Zabyako. Blagoveshchensk: Publishing House of AmSU, 2015. Iss. 11. P. 167–172.

4. Zinenko Ya.V. Cultural and Religious Life of Russian Tryokhrechy (On Materials of “Rubezh” Journal of 1926–1945). *Proceedings of the 5th International Academic and Practical Conference “Russia and China: History and Prospects of Cooperation” (Blagoveshchensk, May 18–23, 2015)*. Blagoveshchensk: BSPU Publishing House, 2015. P. 147–149.

Structure and main content of the dissertation. The dissertation includes introduction, three chapters, conclusion and the list of references.