

THE STORY OF A CLAMPED PAW IN FOLKLORE AND LITERATURE OF BASHKIRS AND TATARS

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ABSTRACT

This article analyzes the folk story about the clamped paw. The article made a comparative analysis of the three Russian translations of poems Gabdulla Tukai "Shuraleh" and Bashkir tales Shuraleh recorded in the Primorye Territory in the late twentieth century. The features of the functioning of the plot of the paw clamped in the artwork, and text of oral traditions of the Turkic peoples of Russia –and Bashkirs.

Keywords: story of a clamped paw, Bashkirs folklore, Tatars literature

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СЮЖЕТ О ЗАЩЕМЛЕННОЙ ЛАПЕ В ФОЛЬКЛОРЕ И ЛИТЕРАТУРЕ БАШКИР И ТАТАР

АННОТАЦИЯ

Статья посвящена анализу фольклорного сюжета о защемленной лапе. В статье произведен сравнительный анализ трех переводов на русский язык стихотворения Габдуллы Тукая «Шурале» и башкирской сказки о Шурале, зафиксированной на территории Приморского края в конце XX столетия. Выявлены особенности функционирования сюжета о защемленной лапе в художественном произведении и в тексте устного народного творчества тюркских народов России – татар и башкир.

Ключевые слова: сюжет о защемленной лапе, башкирский фольклор, татарская литература

“The story of a clamped paw” is known in verbal folklore and literature of many people, including the Turkic people. Investigation of folklore plots in fiction is a classical and at the same time a very actual problem, which is at the intersection of the two disciplines – folklore and literature. Traditionally, researchers take a folk story and watch how it is presented in oral folk art and literature. It seems that for the detection of the features of functioning of the folk scene it is interesting to compare the fiction, written several decades earlier than folklore text was recorded. Moreover, the first and the second should be the result of creative representations of related peoples living in the same territory. An equally important issue - the entrance of one of the folk stories of the people (in our case - the Tatar), reconsidered in the fiction, into the literature treasury of other people (Russian) by translation: which folk images and motifs are selected by the translator and why it happens. The selected poem for this analysis is “Shuraleh” (1907) of the Tatar poet Gabdulla Tukay and the tale is recorded almost after 90 years (in 1996) in Vladivostok of Primorsky region by Bashkir Marat Rakhimov, who was born in Ufa (other information about the performer is not available). The fairytale is on Russian Language and Literature Department’s archive of Regional and International Research School of the Far Eastern Federal University.

In 1907 Gabdulla Tukay wrote the poem “Shuraleh”. It is advisable to use his three translations for analyze: by S. Lipkin, R. Buharaev and V.Dumaeva-Valieva (in the article, they will sometimes denote the first, second and third translator). Bashkir fairytale has a similar name with an explanation that shuraleh is the wood goblin (fairytale text is close to plot 38 *The paw, clamped by tree*). Shuraleh is a character in Tatar and Bashkir folklores.

The poem consists of four parts in two translations and of five parts in third. The first one is sang in the village Kirlay which is located near Kazan. The village is not too large, but it is at the same time represented as part of the nature. This land is much better than anywhere else: the velvet grass (Tukay 2007c), mild climate (*«People never know neither cold nor heat:/the wind blows in time and it is raining in time»* (Tukay 2007c)), there is the forest around the village, there are growing raspberries and strawberries, mushrooms and sorrel. Here in the forest, everybody has everything they need to be happy, all the local realities completely replace city’s: “Here, the music and the dances, and the singers, and the circus, / Here boulevards, theaters and players and violinists!..” (Tukay 2007c); “club, orchestra, boulevards, dances replaced my wood / their beauty overshadowed circus, theater and concerts” (Tukay 2007a). Only in two translations – of R. Buharaev and V. Dumaeva-Valieva – there are lines that express the anguish of the great past of the Tatar people: “Suddenly I remember ancestors’ fame, the names / stories of ancient

grandfathers about the old days. / The veil of historical fate slightly opens, / you say: "Oh, what do we get here? Or are we not servants of God? " (Tukay 2007a); " and our grandfathers' time appears in front our eyes / we remember their glory, the states, the names. / As if a curtain on a stage is fully opened, finally, / you think: "What do we get here? The Creator loved us too" (Tukay 2007c). S. Lipkin's translation sounds more optimistic without these lines, but it demonstrates the influence of the Soviet time, when he mentions that God had been confiscated from art works.

The second part of the poem consists of eight lines. It talks about the pride of the village and the holidays, which are arranged there. The pride of the village – its girls: in S. Lipkin's translation they are represented as young beauties (Tukay 2007c), in R. Buharaev's translation the type of girls is drawn in detail – as rosy and black-eyed beauties (Tukay 2007a), V. Dumaeva-Valieva portrays them as bright faced and black-eyed (Tukay 2007c). In the second part the villagers' entertainments are mentioned. In the first translation they are described quite simply ("And the holidays' fun, and spring Sabantuy" (Tukay 2007c)); the second one lists "Sabantui and celebrations" (Tukay 2007a), and the third one presents the completely picture ("*Funny sabantuy, races or holiday field*" (Tukay 2007c)). Only in the second part Gabdulla Tukai suddenly recalls that his narrative is devoted to a completely different subject. In S. Lipkin's translation the character, which will be discussed here, is called in detail and his actions are described as follows: "I am going to tell about shurale's tricks!" (Tukay 2007c). Bukharaev generally avoids naming mythological character, the reference to the title of the poem is only one thing in his text: "Title is somewhere in behind, nucleus of a story is development!" (Tukay 2007a). Only V. Dumaeva-Valieva uses both of two methods at the same time in her translation: "What, wait, I mean, what I wrote in the first line? "*Shurale*"" (Tukay 2007c).

The third part of the poem is small like as the second one: it has also eight lines. She describes the forest, where the event with shurale will take place, but this forest is represented differently, not like in the first part of the poem. On the one hand, the forest is real: there are hares, bears, moose, fox, wolves. On the other hand, the forest is depicted as a kind of mysterious place called *awesome*: "There are a lot of paths and secret treasures, it is said, / There are a lot of animals and horrific monsters, it is said, / Lots of tales and superstitions walks on home soil / And of gin, and the peri, and the terrible shurale" (Tukay 2007c). The use of definitions in the poem is interesting. The beasts are called terrible, but at the same time this definition can be assigned (or not be assigned) to monster. Mythological characters of Turkic people like gins, peris and shurales are mentioned in this translation. The gins and

peris are represented neutrally (definition is not defined), while shurale is called scary, i.e. logically, he is much more dangerous than gin and peri. Albeit, there is another image of gin and peri in folklore. The gin is often described as evil rather than good spirit. It can be “male and female, ugly, with hoofs on the feet, but they are able to take the human look. They tend to hurt people, but they also can help them”. (Piyotrovskiy 2003: 186), – so are the gins described in folklore.

Peri (pari, paeri) is one of the spirit types in mythology of the Turkic people. Tatars consider that these spirits get hostilely to people. “They often appear in human image (as male so female), but it is considered that they can get the shape of dove, other animals, fire etc.” (Basilov 2003a: 429). None of the features, ascribed to gins and peris in folklore, were used in mentioning them in translations of Gabdulla Tukay. One moment attends the attraction: if the terrible beasts and monsters are found in the mysterious forest, they are depicted as actually existing, then gins, peris and shurales are presented according to the poem, only in fairy tales and superstitions.

In the second translation the list of mythological characters is less than one: “As they say, in the dark thicket in impenetrable coniferous darkness /there is a forest evil – Albasts and shurales” (Tukay 2007a). In this version mythological characters are written as already existing in reality. Albast is associated with the water element, shurale is the spirit of the forest, these characters are opposed as locus of their habitation, so in the poem albast’s belonging to water locus was changed by another locus, the forest. In previous version such opposition is not detected.

In the third translation the forest is depicted in double: they are as predators harmless animals for people: “There are, clearly, wolves, foxes and bloodthirsty predators. / *there is a bear. There the hunter met the rabbit and elk not once*” (Tukay 2007c). This version is about the four types of mythological characters, but first three are most likely related to the Slavic (or even global) mythology, not to Turkic, judging by their names, as it is evident in the previous versions of the translation. Thus the wood goblin and shurale (also forest spirit) are mentioned in one enumeration. It means that according to translator’s logic they are different: “It is said that there is an evil spirit in the forest, / *Demons, werewolves, forest goblin and shurale*” (Tukay 2007c).

The forth part is longest section, where the main plot of the work develops (in translation of S. Lipkin the work is divided into two parts, i.e. forth and fifth). In this part two characters meet, the brave and shurale (or young man in one of translations). Moreover, in P. Bukharaev and Dumaeva-Valiyeva the Younger and

Brave are also used as proper names and written with a capital letter, in translation of S. Lipkin, it is a common name, recorded with a lowercase letter (*brave*).

In translation of S. Lipkin the action takes place in the summer in a dangerous time of the day, i.e. at night. The brave goes on a cart in a dense forest to cut wood, the appearance of the hero is not described. It is silent all around, even the birds are silent, and in this silence a scream is heard: "*Hark! What a horrible scream is heard far off / and the axe has stopped in raised hand / and our agile woodcutter freezes in surprise*" (Tukay 2007c). He sees a creature whose nature he cannot determine immediately. At first the creature was called human ("*Who is this man?*" (Tukay 2007c)). And then the brave began to guess: "*Is it the gin, robber or ghost, this shrivelled monster?*" / *He is so ugly and terrifying!*" (Tukay 2007c). Further appearance of the creature is described in detail, it is different from human appearance:

Nose curved like a fish hook,

Hands, feet - just like branches, frightening even daredevil!

Angrily flashing eyes, burning in black deep.

Even during the day, not at night, this look will scare!

He looks like a man, very thin and naked,

Narrow forehead is adorned with a horn in our finger size.

He's got a half a yard fingers on curved hands,

Ten fingers, ugly, sharp, long and straight!

(Tukay 2007c).

In translation of R. Buharaev it is talked about another time of day: the action takes place not at night, but at *moonlit evening* (Tukay 2007a), time indication is absent at all. If in the first translation the brave chops wood in the forest, so Younger (in the second translation) prepares it on clearing. Moreover, the crescent illuminates meadow instead of the moon ("*The crescent, there are shadows on the meadow*" (Tukay 2007a)). As soon as the hero decides to break off work, so immediately he "*heard the strange screams not far off*" (Tukay 2007a). If in the first version the scream was horrible, here the cries are strange, in addition, it reversed the distance, from which the scream comes, and in this translation these cries are somewhere

near. The younger cannot determine what the creature standing in front him is: “*Who is it in front of him? Is it escapee? Werewolf? Who is it in front of him? With whom this unfortunate met, indeed with Shaitan?*” (Tukay 2007a). If early in this version it was talked about albasts and shurale in the forest, so now it is all about different characters: the younger cannot understand, whether it is human in front of him (but potentially dangerous one – escapee) or werewolf, or demon. The appearance of the antagonist in this version is drawn as frightening, it is very different than human:

The nose is downhill and hunchbacked, just like a moose muzzle, hey-hey,

Hands and feet are knotted, like curve roots,

Deep-set eyes are burning blue fire:

It is hard to hold the soul in body not only at night – but in days!

If he was barefoot and skinny he would be look like a human,

There is a horn on the forehead and it's at the height of middle finger

Very thin, straight fingers – just look at them,

Each of them is over half a yard, fearfully, God forbid! (Tukay 2007a).

In translation of V. Dumaeva-Valieva the action takes place in the forest in summer evening in New Moon. As in previous versions, the brave engages in the work that is cutting wood. “*Suddenly the sharp voice is heard out of the silence*” (Tukay 2007b). And in this version the brave cannot understand who is in front of him - a man or a monster: “*He sees something in front of him: or escapee or spirit. / Maybe it is werewolf?*” (Tukay 2007c). And then there is a detailed description of shurale’s appearance:

As if branch, the nose hanging to the chin, hamate,

The sparse beard below, himself is as if gnarled.

Tossing lightning, the eyes are flashing in the depths of eyes without eyelids,

All naked, skinny and narrow, in appearance like a man

The black horn with the height of a finger on the middle of forehead,

God forbid anyone to see him not only at night, but at the day,

But his all fingers are straight on his curved hands,

But they are very long, like half a yard, or more” (Tukay 2007c).

As in previous versions, it is focused on the beaked nose of character, his lean figure, a horn sticking out of his forehead, his eyes burning with fire, unusually long fingers, but in this version another feature of appearance is described, which is absent in previous two versions – the sparse beard. Description of shurale in all three translations of the poem is represented within the conception of Tatars: “<...> represented in shape of haired man with the horn on forehead <...>, has very long arms with long fingers” (Basilov 2003c: 627).

Exactly from this moment – the trip of hero to the forest for wood – narration begins in Bashkir fairytale, recorded in 1996 in Vladivostok. Immediately the eye catches one detail: if in poetic translation the hero is determined by the name (brave, boy), so in fairytale he is called younker. Appearance of the hero is described as follows: he is “*tall, handsome, strong*” (manuscript collection in 1996: 1), in poetic translations description of the hero is absent. Time in the text of fairy tales is a defined traditional adverb for fairytales, such as *once upon a time*, in folklore text there are no indication of the season or the time of the day or the phase of the moon. The action also takes place in the forest. Only in the Bashkir tale it is talked about just only on shurale, in addition there is the Russian translation of the title and no other mythological characters: “<...> in this forest goblins lived” (manuscript collection in 1996: 1). It is focused on the number of shurales (it is absent in the translations of Gabdulla Tukay): “*They were very much* (manuscript collection in 1996: 1). The Russian name of the character – goblin – is clearer for the informant, than the term *shurale*, probably for this reason there is the following interpretation of using the term in the tale: “One of these goblins, named Shurale <...>” (manuscript collection in 1996: 1). Any description of the character, except the name, is found at this stage of the narrative.

In the translation of S. Lipkin the brave courageously asks shurale, what he wants. Speech of shurale contains not only the answer to the question of the hero, but also an explanation for what purpose the character's long fingers serve:

Why when I saw you, I gave a cheerful shout? –

Because I used to kill people by tickling!

Each finger is adapted to tickle angrier,

I kill people making them laugh! (Tukay 2007c).

The game of tickling - a favorite pastime of shurale in Tatar folklore: he "can tickle to death" (Basilov 2003c: 627). The brave agrees to play tickling with shurale, but first he asks him to help to finish the job - to move on a cart thick log:

You will notice a large gap at the other end of the log,
Hold a log firmer, you need all your strength!"
Shurale looks at specified place,
And, agreed with the brave, not arguing back.
He put long straight fingers into the mouth of timber (Tukai 2007c).

The brave dislodges the wedge from crack of wood, and fingers of shurale stay on the tree. Similarly, he can make away with shurale too – character of Tatar folklore: "Shurale is able to catch, persuading to poke a finger in the split tree, and then pulling out a wedge" (Basilov 2003v: 627). Shurale calls for help his brothers: "Shurale saw deception, yelling, screaming, / He calls his brothers for help, he calls the people of the forest" (Tukay 2007c). Antagonist begs the hero to let him go, he promises not to do harm to the hero and not allow anybody to harm the brave, nor his son, nor his whole race. But the brave remains deaf to the pleas of the sufferer. Then shurale asks the name of the offender, he uses the trick:

*"Tomorrow, if I will live until I meet my brothers,
For question "Who is your abuser?" - Whose name I will call?"*

"So be it, I say, my boy, do not forget this name:

My name is "Inthepastyear" ... Now I have to go" (Tukay 2007c).

Shurale wants to punish the brave and begins to scream, resounding the name of his offender: "I will die! Forest spirits, help me quickly, / Inthepastyear pinched me, villain ruined me!" (Tukay 2007c). Other shurales appear only in the morning, they run from all sides. They perceive the invented name of the brave as the time in which the punished shurale was pinched fingers: "What is the matter with you? Are you mad? Why are you upset, silly? / Calm down, shut up, we can brook your scream anymore. / Pinched in the past year, so why you cry in this year?" (Tukay 2007c).

In the translation of R. Buharaev the woodcutter also asks shurale, what he wants. Shurale explains: "My habit: I tickle human to death. / Don't think that I scare you, I cry for joy. / See, my fingers were created as if for tickling, / I tickled many people to death – it were golden days!" (Tukay 2007a). From the speech of the character it is clear that he thinks that to kill a man by tickling is not bad, but scaring them is bad. The boy immediately agreed to play tickle, but before the game he asks shurale to help him to move a log on the cart. As in the translation above, the hero says shurale to grab the beam near the wedge. And fingers of shurale were trapped. His behavior changes at once, in this translation it is described in more detail: "Shuraleh, trapped, howled in pain, began to shout, / calls all cousins and brothers to rescue him / but shouting is useless, villain itself got trapped, / excuses and whines, becomes quiet, politely ..." (Tukai 2007a). In the translation of R. Buharaev the list of persons whom shurale promises not to touch is not detail: "I don't touch anybody from your big kin!" (Tukay 2007a), but within it there is an enlarged list of those who will not cause harm (in the first version of translation it is talked about only shurale): "With her you will be the best guest in any forest, / neither ghoul, nor albast will harm none of you" (Tukay 2007a). If he shurale regarded his performance in the tickling, because of which many people died, as entertainment, so he sees the action of the Boy with himself in a different way: "Let me go, are there not many benefits in evil, / what do you find, boy, in mortal flours of Shurale?" (Tukai 2007a). Realizing that he would not be let go, the antagonist asks the hero to say the name to tell brothers about Boy, and besides, in this version, the aim of knowing name is represented neutral: it is not clear, he needs to know the name punish the offender or for warning other shurales about the potential danger: "If I would not die until tomorrow, keep my soul in my body, / I will tell all my brothers about deceiver with horse..." (Tukay 2007a). The boy answers that his name is Lastyear. In S. Lipkin's translation, other mythological characters (not to mention that there is only shurale) also appear in the morning. "In the morning forest evils begin to berate him: / – Are you crazy, absolutely crazy, you did not let sleep us last night! / Don't cry, unfortunate, when you come to mind?! / Trouble was last year, why are you screaming now, silly!" (Tukay 2007a).

V. Dumaeva-Valieva in her translation remains which people shurale tickles, this detail is absent in other translations: "*I will tickle to death lonely one in the forest*" (Tukay 2007c). The brave immediately agrees to play with shurale in Kitty-Kitty (so in this version it is called a game of tickling), but puts his condition to help him to carry fir log into the cart. If in the translation of S. Lipkin and R. Buharaev the hero calls antagonist *forest sheep*, then in the translation of V. Dumaeva-Valiyeva it is called *forest mutton*. Shurale's fingers are caught in the gap logs. Another difference: there are more complete lists of those than shurale promises not

to touch, and those who will not cause harm, "I swear to you, now, the all-powerful man! / Know, I will not ever touch a finger any of you in the forest, / All your family, children and grandchildren, and not only me / No one else in the forest hurts all of you,"(Tukay 2007c). Shurale asks the name of brave in this translation too. The hero answers him that his name is Letos. Name of Letos, as represents, is not the best version of three translations, alignment of the name with the last line of the poem is broken, where Letos is represented in another translation – *last year*: "*Shurales come running in the morning and begin to reproach the poor fellow: / – Crazy, stupid! How long are you going to cry? / Shut up, you lost your mind, your scream is terrible, / Your fingers were pinched last year, so why are you crying this year?*" (Tukay 2007c).

In the previous translations of the poem of Gabdulla Tukay, Bashkir fairytale tells about the younker, who chops wood in the forest. At this time Shurale appears and tells younker that he wants to tickle him. The tale focuses on a line of shurale about cannibalism: shurale wants to tickle the hero to eat him. The younker decides to outwit Shurale, asking him for help. Another difference from the story line of the poem: if all translations notify that a wedge was driven into a tree before shurale's appearance, so in Bashkir tale the hero is scoring wedge into the tree, when shurale already appears in front the hero and invites him to play tickling. The tale focuses on the only important detail in the exterior of the antagonist for the plot development: his long fingers or other details of the exterior are not mentioned at all. "Younker scored the wedge in the gap of wood <...>. and asked shurale to hold it with his long fingers. A younker knocked a wedge from wood and Shurale's fingers were pinched" (manuscript collection in 1996: 1).

The goblin begs the hero to let him go, but the younker don't answer, and then Shurale is interested by the name of the hero (as in known Tatar tales goblin asks the hero's name before he wants to play with him or tickle him). The younker calls himself Baltyr. Informer gives a necessary explanation of this word: "Baltyr means "something, occurred in the last year" (Manuscript collection in 1996: 1). Further the tale from the archive develops as usual: Shurale begins to call other goblins for help. They come and ask him: "How did you get here, what happened to you?" Shurale answers: "Yes, that Baltyr has pinched me." And goblins said to him: "Well, if you were pinched last year, why are you crying this year?" Because of the translation of the non-Slavic text to Russian the consistency of units is significantly affected in the proposal about Baltyr and baltyr (subject replaced by adverb of time), but the meaning remains the same. The story from the archive ends in this episode: Shurale stays with clamped fingers in the tree. However, such a finale accords to the

known Tatar tales, where goblins refuse to release their stupid friend, and he walks through the woods with a pack, tightly wrapped around his fingers.

Thus, our analysis allows us to do some conclusions. In three translations of the poem of Gabdulla Tukay recorded at the end of the last millennium Bashkir tale has almost the same story line of shurale, which allows us to talk about archetypal story of the leg clamped in the tree, as in the folklore texts and in works of fiction. All three versions of the poem "Shuraleh" are basically the same, the different translations give the text unique folkloric details, to which we can relate differing lists of mythological characters, descriptions of Shuraleh and his modes of behavior. In the translation of the poem there are two systems of mythological characters: Tatar and Slavic (or universal), the second one is suitable for an interpreter's attempt to find analogies between the characters of Turkic and Slavic mythology. The poem is much fuller in small details than the Bashkir tale. Verse translation is more emotional than the folklore text that is located in specific scopes of the poetic, artistic and prose folkloric works.

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