

THE DOG IN THE HEROIC EPOS OF THE BURYATS

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ABSTRACT

Mythological and epic image of the dog – one of the basic zoomorphic uliger characters acting as friend, grateful assistant, protector and savior of the hero is considered in the article on the basis of folklore material – plots of Buryat heroic epos (uligers). Stories about the dog are most frequently encountered in Ekhirit-Bulagat Buryat epic tradition preserved many archaic traits in its structure. The origins of this image go back to ancient beliefs, views of the people, where the dog is one of the most important cult animal. In the old days it enjoyed great respect and reverence, killing her was considered a grave sin. There was the belief about resettlement of souls of the ancestors in a dog. In traditional culture of Buryats this character appears as a sacralized animals associated with the cult of the ancestors, whose function is to protect and guard of the man and his property.

Keywords: Buryat heroic epos, ekhirit-bulagat epic tradition, a reflection of the cult of the dog, zoomorphic characters – epic hero's friends and patrons, a reflection of ancient ideas and beliefs in the buryat epos.

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ОБРАЗ СОБАКИ В ГЕРОИЧЕСКОМ ЭПОСЕ БУРЯТ

АННОТАЦИЯ

В статье на основе фольклорного материала – сюжетов бурятских героико-эпических сказаний (улигеров) рассматривается мифо-эпический образ собаки – одного из основных в системе действующих зооморфных персонажей, выступающих в роли друзей-побратимов, благодарных помощников, покровителей и спасителей героя-богатыря. Сюжеты о собаке наиболее часто встречаются в эхирит-булагатской эпической традиции бурят, хорошо сохранившей в своей структуре многие архаические черты. Истоки данного образа уходят в древние верования, представления народа, где собака является одним из значимых культовых животных. В старину она пользовалась особым уважением и почитанием; убийство ее считалось тяжким грехом. Существовала вера о переселении души предка в собаку. В традиционной культуре бурят этот персонаж предстает как сакрализованное животное, связанное с культом предков, функция которого заключается в покровительстве, охране и защите человека и его имущества.

Ключевые слова: Бурятский героический эпос, эхирит-булагатская эпическая традиция, отражение культа собаки, зооморфные персонажи – побратимы и покровители улигерного героя, отражение древних представлений и верований бурят в эпосе.

In the system of characters of Buryat heroic epics, especially Ekhirit-Bulagat, preserved in its structure many archaic features; zoomorphic images have significant place presented as friends and wonderful assistants of the hero. For the most part they are realized in the tales about heroic engagements, when the hero is on the way to his bride, he meets distressed animals: ants, frogs, turtles, mice, hedgehogs, fishes. Ekhirit-Bulagat epics` hero, as a rule, helps them, and the animals in turn save the hero miraculously, when he inevitably must die, doing difficult (deadly) tasks of bride`s father. Ekhirit-Bulagat epics researcher D.D. Gomboin assigns this category of images to blood brother grup - grateful assistant of hero, researcher classifies “zoomorphic creatures, which become faithful friends of hero only after he wins and tames them” to the second category. (Gomboin, 1990: 64,65). In the tales, first of all, it is the dog, acting “in the hero`s protector and reviver role, also it is a creature, who is worshiped”. (Gomboin, 1990: 65). In consequence D.D. Gomboin expresses well-founded opinion about the genetic connection of these zoomorphic characters with totem myths.

Paying tribute to the valued observations of researcher, we aimed consider more in detail this quite ambiguous image of animal in ekhirik and bulagats` eposes, where the image of animal found its own brightest reflection.

As D.D. Gomboin correctly discerned, the image of huge dog takes place in almost all tales of this epics tradition. According to the functional significance the dog perhaps takes more main place after horse in ekhirit-bulagat epos. We analyzed more than ten tales texts, where there are stories about the dog, hero`s blood brother and assistant. The tales recorded by Ts. Jamtsarano in the beginning of XX century from talented storytellers M. Imegenov, B. Buldaev, Zavin, Zayahanov, Shobho; by A.K. Bogdanov from B. Mosoev; also it is “Han-Gujir” tale, published by M.N. Hangalov in 1889, and the texts recorded by S.P. Baldaev: “Huherdey Mergen” (without certification), “Erjen Mergen hubun” from Bagay Donkin, “Osodor Mergen” from N/ Gulhanov, “Alamji Mergen hubun” from A. Batlaev at al.

The composition of the narrative sections about the dog within the plot structure of ekhirit-bulagat tales mainly is like: hero meets huge horrendous animal at the behest of Khan-bride`s father who wants destroy the bridegroom or the groom meets the animal accidently on the way. Conquest (tame) of the dog occurs by different ways: a) with the help of heavenly blacksmiths who made iron objects by the hero`s request: the chain on the dog's neck, tie-up (tripod) to his feet, hoop with screws to the muzzle; b) hero, covered in the dog`s mouth by strong current of air, sticks a spear in the larynx, and is clings in the throat; c) met the dog and monstrous

snake Abarga or Arkhan-shuthera (the devil) battering each other in a fight helps the dog and fraternizes with it. The first two methods of them are most common and the third is not typical for ekhirit-bulagat epos. Having failed in either swallow or push the hero from the pharynx, powerful animal usually asks hero to kill himself or spare him. In this situation the hero always gives his respect to the dog, so trustful relationships set between them. Tale hero finds faithful friend and blood brother-assistant (tanil anda) who always ready to give own life for hero.

The image of the dog is mythological. It portrayed mighty lord (boss) of all world: “Газар дайдуун эжэн – Галзуу Гарьха нохээ” – the dog Galzu Garha the owner of terrestrial expanses (“10 years old Altan Shagay hubun”; В. Mosoev), The image of the dog is mythological. It portrayed mighty lord (boss) of all world: “Gazar dayduun ejen – Galzuu Garha nohee” – the dog Galzu Garha the owner of terrestrial expanses (“10 years old Altan Shagay hubun”; В. Mosoev), “Үлгэн замбин Гуриб (var.: Гариг) шара нохой” – earth’s owner – the dog Gunig (“Erjen Mergen hubun”; В. Donkinov), “Газари эжэн Гуниг нохой” – the red dog Garig become earth’s owner (“Altan Segsey hubun”; Zayahanov). In final text the dog presents itself to the hero like this: “Газар дайдлаар хамта гаралсахан – Гариг шара нохой гээшэльби!” – (I am red dog Garig appeared with the earth!) and dignifies itself khan, i.e. the most respected, elder, it is not contradict Buryat’s traditional conception about relationships of dog and supreme godhead, the human creator. In the myth about Earth and human creation Shibegeni burhan creates the dog for first men (men and woman) to guarding from devil – shudher (Hangalov, 1960: 8-10).

Dog suit in the name of its mostly determined by epithet “shara” – yellow, red, bright, and to etymologize semantics of other name parts “garka”, “gurib”, “garig” is difficult, except “galzuu” – furious, raging, fierce and “gunig” – from “gunirka” – canoodle, fawn. Perhaps, their meaning up rises to “garbagar” - emaciated, gaunt; “gardalga” - prolonged starvation, exhaustion; “garduu” - emaciated, exhausted. It can be confirmed by extraordinary voracity of dog. So, it eats numerous cattle given by bride’s father as a peculiar “compensation” for disturbed comfort of Earth’s venerable owner (газар дайдайн эжийн). After eating half of khan’s cattle herds, the dog usually tells the hero:

Эхэхээ гарahaарла Since womb

Иймэ хайнаар садаа-гүйб! I was never full like that!

хайни үрилээр золгожи, Met a good man,

Найн ханай садабалби! I have plenty enough!

«Ayduray Mergen», poetry 1183–1187 (15 years old Ayduray Mergen, 1979).

The dog engages for hero prompt help in hard situations. And in “Hurin Altay” of M. Imegenov the dog has an interest in: is Naran Gerel khan’s property enough for feed it full during three days (Намай гурбан эдүр хүсэдээр идеэлүүлхэ зөөритээ юмүүг-даа?).

In the epos at the same time with *shara nohoi* – yellow, red dog is used its second name: *Nara Buura* - Black Bura (*Хазадаг хара буура-ла Газар дайдуйн эжэн* – Earth Owner, Biting Black Bura). Semantics of word *buura* is not clear. Perhaps, as academics deem it up rises to Old Turkic stem *borya* (*bure* or *buryu*) in meaning of “wolf” (Tsydendambaev, 1972: 277). It is quite possibly that this is really ancient totemic belief’s marks preserved in ekhirit-bulagat epos. As known ekhirit still don’t forget such names of clans like *shono urag* (wolf clan), *nohoi urag* (dog clan) or *nohoi galzuut* (furious, raging dog), (Tsydendambaev, 1972: 195-197, 210, 262, 264, 276).

In the epos the dog is presented in form of huge, powerful and dangerous monster-devourer (eaters). Characteristics of this vicious and terrible creature is usually given through the mouth of the bride, khan’s daughter, which trembles for the hero-warrior’s life. Sic, in “Hurin Altay” of M. Imegenov the girl Aguy Nogon tries to dissuade bridegroom-aliens from trip:

Гуниг шара нохой гэшэ Гуниг Yellow dog

Айха ехэ бэтүл Owns big magic,

Абатайла юүмэлэ. That is troubling

Ширээхэ ехэ бэтүүл Owns great sorcery,

Шэжэтээл юүмэлдаа! It is throw down in tremble!

Үзүүрээ юүмээн ерэхэдэ Who comes from corner,

Үнхэлдэхэ юүмэл; Will be swallowed,

Захайн юүмээн ерэхэдэ Who comes from afar,

Зальядаха юүмэл. Will be devoured!

Харийн хүбүүн, хариш саашаа! Younker from alien race, go away!

“Hurin Altay”, poetry 17553–17562 (Abay Geser-Hubun, 1964: 138).

And in “10-years old Altan Shagay hubun” of B. Mosoev and “Ayduray Mergen” B. Buldaev is given appearance of dog:

L’I’ t[‘ yhu’yabby His huge maxilla

Үндэр тэньерын get till high sky

Хүрүхэ шудархымал! (To the letter: scratches the surface of the sky)!

Доода ехэ үргэнийн His huge mandible

Үлгэн эхээн plows the surface

Хүрэхэнь шудархымал! Of Mother-Earth!

(“10-years old Altan Shagay hubun”: 69) – Translation D.B.

Хазадаг хара буура гээшэ Black biting Bura.

Орой дундаа болобо On the center of his top

Ганса алтан эбэртэй, There is a single horn,

Ооши дундаа болобо In the middle of the mouth

Ганса сагаан шүдэтэй, There is a single tooth,

Маньялай дундаа болобо In the middle of the forehead –

Ганса ханай нүдэтэй юүмэ хэ. There is a single eye.

“Ayduray Mergen” (15-years old Ayduray Mergen, 1979), poetry 957-963

The huge dog - owner of Earth, is invincible and has an incredible strength. In “10-years old Altan Shagay hubun” tale of B.Mosoev the bride Tului Nogon basagan says, that either 13 khans (Arban gurban haahan), nor heavenly thunderer

Huhedey Mergen with lady-mother Hultee hatan (Hultee hatan iibii) can not win the dog Galzuu Garha. And other hero Hurin Altay getting Khan's job is confused: how to lead this Red dog Gunig? Because the dog crushed bull-necked heroes, broke to pieces in the dust the youngers with quivers (Буха ехэ хүзүүтэни булгалахан нохой байнал! Буудай мүнгэн хаадагтани ханьялахан нохой – ханай байна!) ("Hurin Altay", poetry 17648-17651) (Abay Geser-hubun, 1964).

But at the same time in the tales the dog initially knows who will win it. It tells to hero, that throughout the vast land it is done only by Hurin Altay – Abay Geser's son! When the dog hears about hero's birth no without reason "it's gray heart becomes flutter and it's short slats move on" ("Hurin Altay", poetry 17902-17909) (Abay Geser-hubun, 1964). In "Erensey" the dog Gunig tells the same thing to Hanhan Sogto hubun ("Erensey", poetry 7981-7992) (Erensey, 1968) and Biting Black Bura (Hazadag hara buura) in "Ayduray Mergen".

Also in the epos the taking of the huge dog has been complicated because it is always awake. Heavenly deities-protectors advise Ayduray Mergen approach to it only in noon (халтагай үдэр врееида), during it's short sleep. In other versions it sleeps with open eyes ("10-years old Altan Shagay hubun"), or closes during sleep only the right eye ("Khan Gujir") (Hangalov, 1960: 249). It should be noted that all these features characterizing the dog is peculiar to many opponents (monsters), with whom the tale hero has to fight. These features are general and universal for all the negative characters which are represented as monsters. Thus, for example, yellow poisonous turtle's "portrait" (хорото шара мэнэхэй) in "Ayduray Mergen" and Red dog Gurig (poetry 1382-1389) are both identical each other, as well as monster-eaters with huge open jaw like a snake Abarga and dog Galzuu Garha ("10-years old Altan Shagay hubun"), as well as forest's owner White deer Orgoli (Ойн эжэн Орголи сагаан гүрөөхэн) [Orgoli → argali 'mountain sheep'] in the epos of ungin version "Abay Geser" of Pyeohon Petrov (Abay Geser, 1960: 76-77) and Geser's waking enemy Galhan Nurman Khan closing it's eyes only in predawn time in ekhirit-bulagat version of Abay Geser-hubun (poetry 3017-3024) (Abay geser-hubun, 1961).

The dog's habitat is particular interesting. Herewith toponymy is generally mythological. Thus, in "Ayduray Mergen" earth's owner, Biting Black Bura lives on north side of Enyin yellow lake, laying down ring around three Uher hills (Ара хойто бэедэ лэ, Эньийн шара нуури эжэлжэ хэбтэхэ, Үхэри гурбан болдойн Гарихалжи хэбтэһэн Хазадаг Хара буура-ла Газар дайдуин эжэн) (poetry 941-947). Black Bura is not only owner of this land, but it is protector and guard of the land: «Эньийн шара нуурайн Эрье дунда хуурилхан, Гурбан үхэри болдойн

Үзүүр нахиан Хазадаг хара буура гэжэ» (poetry 1420-1425). In “Erensey” and “Hurin Altay” of M.Imegenov Red dog also lives on east side, on Yellow Milk sea’s right coast, laying down around three valleys: «Ара гэрээн зүүхэнтээ, Хунхэн шара далай биихэн. Хунхэн шара далайн Баруун эрье эжэлбэ, Гурбан ялгай гархилба – Гуниг шара нохой» (“Hurin Altay”, poetry 17541-17546).

But in the future narrative the dog’s habitat is called differently. So, Red dog Gunig after it’s revival tells to Hurin Altay, that it is going to go to own land, to Outer Sea’s bay, at the border, bound of their land. And the hero admonishes it:

Гуниг шара нохоймни, Gunig, my Red dog,

Газаада ехэ далаяа Vigilantly guard

Гарам ехэ нахишгаа! Outer Sea’s bay!

Газар дайда хоёроо Get up to the border, bound of

Мужаа дээрэ гарышгаа! Your area, your land!

(Poetry 18034-18042, Translation D.B.).

In “10-years old Altan Shagay hubun” epos Biting Black Bura represented as an owner of Four Uher hills on Hilly land Dulo (Үхэрее дүрбэн мужаа эжэлхэн Дүлөө Болдог дайда Хазадагай Хара буура биймэ) (10-years old Altan Shagay hubun: с. 75).

And in “Osodor mergen” epos (Osodor Mergen, 1956: 77-78) Mungen Shagay goes for Red dog Gunig to left, East side, far and unpleasant for eye land (Зүүни зүгтэ Зүггүй холо дайдада, Зүһэ буруу газарта), i.e. to other world adverted to human world.

Thereby, the dog inhabits in far edge, on North side or North-East (left) side, on sea’s/lake’s coast, near the hills/valleys. As we see dog’ residence presents the edge, bound (мужаа), separating human’s mundane land from other, otherworldly land (зүһэ буруу газар), which is on East (left) side. These marks of archaic images about dog, occurring in Buryat epos, have an accordance with traditional culture of other people. According to O.V. Golubkova’s investigations, semantic relationship dog-water, traceable in “Slavic, Finn-Ugric, Turkic mythology, goes up to the image of Iranian deity Senmurv”, represented in the shape of winged dog, who is respected as an intermediary between Heaven’s and Earth’s deities; and also as a guardian of

the seeds and young plants, which “shows that Senmurv (Simargl) belongs to dead world and Senmurv’s ability of influence on harvest”, which is perceived as “ancestor’s gift”...” (Golubkova, 2009: 189).

In Buryat materials it is confirmed by vow of Red dog Gunig to the hero: “ If I will not keep my words this my big sea dries up to the pebble; На бурятском материале это подтверждается клятвой Рыжей собаки Гуниг, даваемой герою: «Если не сдержу своих слов, то это большое море мое высохнет до самой гальки; these my lush grass wither to the roots! (Энэ ехэ далай мэни Хайратаа хатахал, Энэ ехэ ногоод мэни Үндүхүндөө хатахал!) (“Erensey”, poetry 7999-8002).

Hereby, in Buryat tales the dog as a mythological character has such features: a) awaking guardian in the shape of monster-eater, protector of Earth edge from dead world; b) protector of plants and water, it means the life in the world; c) faithful friend-blood brother, protector and saver of epics hero.

The last point in contrast to previous gets colorful story development in tales. The subdual of dog, their fraternization’s motives are woven into the plot structure of Ekhirit-bulagat epos, bonded in generally with theme of fighting with a snake, where the hero – winner of snake, killed by its poison, saving the powerful bird Hanhan Herdig’s daughters. A dog came running to the aid of the twin hero, always said he would die for friend (Нүхүрөө түлөө хоройн идээн укхулдаа!) and revives the hero sucking poison at the expense of own life. But before the death Red dog Gunig catches the time to “write” the bequest that it should be buried worthily: take away to the middle of Outer sea’s bay; build a palace, where there is not cold in winter and not hot in summer; squeeze gold-silver pen between the claws of its right foot, and in the left leg - colored paper; put the dog on the throne of gold and silver (алтан мүнгүн ширээ), erected near right-front support of home (“Hurin Altay”, poetry 18489-18509). This plot brightly demonstrates the artistic expression of the ancient custom of the dog’s funeral, bonded with cultus of this animal. Thus, accordingly archeologists, since Mesolithic era (about 10 thousand years ago) Siberian people often buried these animals by human ceremony. One of such interment, accordingly M.F. Kosarev, was researched near the parking Ust-Belaya in Baykal, where the dog was placed on the abdomen, extended to orient the northeast – southwest. The head was turned to the right and placed on the claws. Eight teeth pendants from red deer were found on the animal’s neck, located on the left and four on the right, which were apparently sewn on the dog’s collar. From the west, it was besieged by large bones and horns’ fragments of a bull and deer (Kosarev, 2003: 65).

Pictures of these animals on the deer stones, relating to Scythian time (VII-VI centuries B.C.) and spread from East Europe till Ordos, the pictures testified significant role of the dog in the ancient people's worldview. (Savinov, 1980: 321, 323).

Domestication of wild dogs, which lasted for thousands of years, generates occurrence of short stories in primitive collective about meetings of ancient trappers with the strong and terrible beast, about human's wit, skill and courage in the fight with animal. Most likely these stable stories gradually grew into the myths and fairy tales, which in turn as a source material, the archetype, entered into the spot structure of heroic tales, which reached from the oral traditions to present day. As we see, Buryat tales kept picturesque mythological image of ancient dog, captured in its domestication spots. This fact is confirmed by scientist's conclusions that sometimes very ancient people's ideas of animals and its cult's shapes was represented in different genres of folklore.

In conclusion it should be noted that in Buryat legends the dog acts as a chthonic animal, bonded with ancestry's cult, and as a creature, which guards human from forces of evil.

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