

ous than a Palesmurt, it may even kill a man. However, this creature has disappeared from the modern folklore.

Translated by Kai Vassiljeva
Commentaries by Aado Lintrop.

Literature

¹*n'ule s* - 'forest', *murt* - 'man, human being'. A forest spirit of the Udmurt mythology. He is considered to be the most important one of all the supernatural beings living in the forest. He is also called *N'ules N'un'a* - 'forest uncle', *Byddzym N'un'a* - 'great uncle', etc. His appearance is often accompanied by wild animals and a whirlwind. Some people have believed that all the other creatures associated with the forest belong to the *N'ulesmurt's* retinue.

²'Esh-Terek' (1915) - Kedra Mitrey's (also known as Pan Reymit and D. Korepanov (1892-1949)) historic tragedy about the struggle of the Udmurts against the Tatars.

THE IDEA OF EARTHLY AND UNEARTHLY WORLDS IN THE UDMURT FAIRY-TALES

Galina Shushakova. Izhevsk, Udmurtia

A fairy-tale due to its mythology presents one of the sources for studying popular world view, i.e. the mytho-poetical images of the world. In this particular case we are interested in the relations between different worlds in the fairy-tales: a human world and the other world – underground or underwater. The opposition of these worlds is based on the Udmurt understanding of the three-layered system of cosmos: sky, earth, and the netherworld.

It is known that the main actions in fairy-tales take place in an unearthly world, where the hero goes through the principal trials. The unearthly (other) world created by the fairy-tale is a mytho-poetical image of the other world, the world of the dead.

Dualistic understanding of the world is vividly observed in fairy images of both earthly and unearthly worlds in the Udmurt mythology, i.e. ethical dualism is based on the antagonism of good and evil, while gnoseologic dualism means the division of the world into the earthly bodily sphere and spiritual beyond sphere, where is also a struggle between good and evil forces.

Let us turn to the plots of fairy-tales and first of all examine those motifs and images that may clear the mytho-poetical image of these two worlds.

The (unearthly) fairy-world is the place inhabited by all kinds of mythological beings: *vumurt* ('a water sprite'), *nyulesmurt* ('a wood-goblin'); *vozho* ('a ghostly being of fear'); *shaitan* ('devil'); long-toothed beings; dead parents, grandparents and great-grandparents; sorcerers (wizards). All the above mentioned beings are the antagonists of the hero.

A wood is often the image of the unearthly world in the fairy-tales. It is usually in the wood where the hero and antagonist meet, and in the wood the hero finds his helpers. The fairy wood is full of mystery and wonder.

In several plots of fairy-tale the hero finds himself either in the underwater world or in the underground kingdom. The goal of all his ordeals may be different: the rescue of the Queen, the search for the offender. Sometimes the hero finds himself in the other world quite incidentally. The connection between the earthly and unearthly world is held through the hole in the earth or through a high mountain. The way to the netherworld is for the hero as difficult as his way back.

The hero goes down into the netherworld through a hole or a well by means of a rope or stairs. In some tales the hero gets into the netherworld by turning over a huge stone on a high mountain. In this case the mountain appears as a variant of the transformation of the world tree, it is perceived as a model of the universe, where all the principal elements of the cosmic order are reflected. In the centre of the universe there is a mountain which forms the axis of the world. The hero's way back from the other world is often connected with climbing a high mountain; birds and animals help him to reach the peak.

The two fairy worlds are hostile to each other. The hostility of the worlds is explained by the peculiarity of the mythological consciousness of people. The sacrament of human existence on the earth and the sacrament of death rise people's awe of the world where a man passes after his death. A man is to be attentive and show respect to his dead relatives, spirits, inhabitants of the other world. Many rites are performed to appease the evil forces of the unearthly world. And the hero of the fairy-tale often saves himself from his persecutors by some magic actions; either by sacrificing to *nyulesmurt* ('wood-goblin') or *vumurt* ('water-sprite') or by magic spells.

In the other world the hero is always being threatened by some danger. That world is strange and unknown to him, though in fairy-tales that unearthly world is described by the attributes of the earthly world. There are similar dwellings and trees. Long and detailed descriptions of the other world are practically absent in Udmurt fairy-tales, nevertheless one cannot but see the wish of a storyteller to create a picture somewhat different from the earthly

world. The hero neither understands nor sees much in that other world. The invisibility of the other world for the hero is a popular motif in fairy-tales. The image of the blind hero may rather often be observed both in his real and unreal (indirect) blindness. Thus, sometimes the hero finds himself in that other world with blind eyes, in some cases the hero sees the world in its real essence only after he puts some liniment or blood on his eyes. Thus having penetrated into the mystery of that other world the hero sees dancing and jumping beings, sees all *vumurts'* tricks on the earth (AT 677). But the creatures of that other world try to keep all their knowledge secret, and the hero who has penetrated into their secrets is blinded by sticking a fish bone in his eye.

The blind hero or his eye stuck out is a mythological symbol in fairy-tales, and this is connected with some magic force due to which the hero acquires the ability to see, being invisible at the same time. The representatives of the two worlds are invisible to each other. The living people do not see the deceased and vice versa. In Udmurt fairy-tales there is a mythological personage – a one-eyed creature. This quality may speak of his peculiar magic power.

To overcome all the hardships in the other world, different magic assistants help the hero. Fairy assistants may be beasts, birds, kind-hearted spirits connected with the other world. They possess magic power, all they embody benevolent forces and kind origin, that is why all they are true and good companions of the hero. Here the ancient totem idea of the people is reflected as well as the idea that the souls of the dead transform into birds and animals. They are a kind of mediators between the earthly world and the unearthly one.

The fairy motif of the hero who comes back home symbolises the return from the other world. The hero saves himself from his persecutors by changing his appearance, by some transformations. He may transform either to a flower, or a poppy-seed, a fish, a bird, etc. In some fairy-tales the hero wraps himself into a beast skin in order to escape without being recognised.

The boundary between the two worlds is a river. There is a fairy-tale where the persecutor cannot get over the river, in another one he remains on the other side of the river; in the third he perishes in the water.

The earthly world is strange to the inhabitants of the other world. In fairy-tales hostile creatures do not know the customs and traditions of people, they are fooled and deceived by the hero and thus conquered. In one of the tales the hero suggests that the serpent should fight with eyes tied, stressing that it is accepted in the earthly world to fight only in that way and eventually quite easily conquers the serpent.

Not only those creatures are dangerous to a man, but a man is also dangerous to them. Thus in the fairy-tale a man does harm to the inhabitants of the underwater world, he kills their kid with one slight flick. The creatures have to

bring different kinds of presents to their enemy to propitiate him and save the child. The hero comes home with his trunk full of goods.

The unusualness of the other world is described in the following motifs: very often the hero is offered a piece of rotten wood as a reward, and the reward turns into gold coins on the earth. This stresses that in that other world everything is the other way round.

Some plots of tales are wholly based on the opposition of the two worlds. When the hero and his antagonist meet, they ask each other questions about their dreams or their names. The hero is wiser than his rival, by deceiving and fooling his antagonist, the hero gains a victory. Mythological creatures get into different comic situations because they do not know the earthly world, and the comic situations bring them to a tragic end.

In fairy-tales a certain idea about the connection of some people with the netherworld can be found as well. Sorcerers and fortune-tellers are connected with dark forces of the other world. In the fairy-tales with the plots of type AT325 the hero acquires the ability to transform, in some Udmurt tales there are descriptions of teaching the hero the skills of sorcerers.

In the plots of types AT313 and AT325 some ancient animistic ideas are evidently reflected, as well as the belief in witchcraft and sorcery. The tales of type AT670 *The Language Of Beasts* also reflect the idea of the connection between people and the netherworld. The knowledge of the animal language is perceived as the penetration into the mystery of the other world. Only some people possess this ability, the hero must keep his knowledge, but in tales the hero usually breaks the rule and is punished. In fairy-tales the main actions sometimes do not take place in the beyond world, but in some other earthly world. In this case the other earthly world is the embodiment of knowledge about far-away lands. This world is earthly, it is inhabited by other people who differ by the peculiarities of their customs and traditions. There is a fairy-tale where the hero perishes and the tsar asks his friends: 'How do you bury the deceased?' The answer is: 'We bury in a fir coffin'. The hero is buried in that way. Another kingdom is depicted that is the image of some strange far-away lands. In all these tales one may observe a tendency to separate the world where one's relatives and friends are living from the world of a strange state, ruled by a tsar. In such division of the earthly world in tales, an ethnic consciousness of the Udmurt people is reflected.

Thus, Udmurt fairy-tales create peculiar mytho-poetical images of upper and lower worlds, in which the ancient archetypes of sacred worlds and history of struggle between good and evil, are reflected.