

## SUMMARY

Yakuts are the northermost Turkic-speaking people who created the original cattle breeding and horse breeding culture in the north-east of Asia, that is in Valleys of the Lena, Yana, Indigirka and Kolyma rivers. Rich and unique is their oral poetic art, the collection and reserch of which is closely connected with the development of science and sociopolitical ideas in Russia to which Yakutia was incorporated in the 20 — 30's of the 18th centry.

Myths, legends and songs of the Yakuts were first recorded by the members of the Great Northern (Second Kamchatskaya) expedition in the 40's of the 18th centry Academician A.F. Middendorf who traveled in the north and east of Siberia in 1842—1845 recorded and published the samples of all most principle genres of the Yakut folklore. In 1851 Academician O.N. Botlingk translated into German and published olonkho — the Yakut heroic epos — that had been recorded from memory by A.Ya. Uvarovsky a Russian born in Yakutia, remarkable connoisseur of the Yakut language and folklore. An important contribution to the reserch of the Yakut folklore was made by I.A. Khudyakov. Exiled to Verkhoyansk, he became proficient in the Yakut language, created an alphabet on the basis of the Russian script, made excellent records of the samples of oral poetry and translated them into Russian. Besides, he wrote a perfect ethnographic work on the material and spiritual culture of the Verkhoyansk region people. Another political prisoner E.K. Pekarsky compiled a famous dictionary of the Yakut language and published samples of the Yakut folk literature. At the same time together with E.K. Pekarsky other political prisoners such as N.A. Vitashevsky, V.M. Ionov, V.L. Seroshevsky, V.E. Troshchansky, S.V. Yastremsky and other were also engaged in the collection of ethnographis and folklore materials. Many of them participated in the Yakut (led by I.O. Sibirykov) expedition of the Siberian Department of the Russian Geographical Society in 1894—1896.

Influenced by the first Russian revolution of 1905—1907, the movement started in Yakutia for the development of the national culture; the public interest in folk arts arose and there appeared national writers and scientists such as A.E. Kulakovsky, V.V. Nikiforov, A.I. Sofronov and S.A. Novgorodov.

After 1917 the Yakut people got their official written language, wide masses learned reading and writing, there developed national fiction and professional arts. One of the basic sources for the formation of modern literature and arts is folklore. In the 20's the collection and study of the oral poetry of the Yakuts was carried on by the scientific Reserch society "Sakha keskile" (The Yakut Rebirth). This work acquired a more systematic and consistent character with the organisation in 1935 of the Scientific Reserch Institute of Language and History attached to the Soviet of People's Commissars

of the Yakut ASSR (now the Institute of Language, Literature and History of the Siberian Branch of the USSR Academy of Sciences. The institute was headed by a prominent political and social figure, scientist and founder of the Yakut Soviet Literature Platon Aleksyevich Oyunsky. Led by him the institute collected, studied and published national folklore. The institute became the center of the folklore, research in the republic. The publication of folklore was suspended in the years of the Great Patriotic War of 1941—1945.

In the postwar period the Institute arranged folklore expeditions which became regular since 1960's; it also prepared manuals for the folklore collector. The issue of olonkho "Nyurgun Bootur the Swift" by G.U. Ergis initiated the Institute's bilingual scientific publications of the samples of the Yakut oral poetry.

In recent decades the Yakut folklore researchers published comprehensive works on the history of the development of the Yakut folklore and its traditional genres. There appeared works on the moral and aesthetic contents of olonkho and its epic images, on the subjects of olonkho, the problems of its relations with the epos of turkic-mongolian peoples, on the sound arrangement and the rhythmic system of the verse and the peculiarities of the narrative structure of olonkho. They study the art of olonkhosuts — the narrators, investigate the problems of the role of folklore in the modern Yakut poetry and prose with the oral poetry, "the counter streams" of folklore traditions and the traditions of classic literatures in the development of young literatures. The Yakut folklore is often referred to in the general theoretical studies of historical and structural typology of the USSR peoples' epic monuments.

Olonkho occupies the central place in the genre system of the Yakut folklore. Long ago the first collector and researcher of the Yakut oral poetry I.A. Khudyakov called olonkho "the main kind of poetry, the main of enlightening".

Olonkho is genetically close to the epos of turkic-mongolian peoples, being the earliest ancient layer of the archaic epic art. Whereas the epos of turkic-mongolian peoples of the Baikal region and southern Siberia has developed from the epos of the tribal period to that of the class society, the Yakut olonkho has as if "set" as the epos reflecting profound features of the development and the gradual decay of the tribal system of the period of their ethnic formation (ethnic consolidation).

As the folklore genre olonkho unites more or less similar legends having the common moral-aesthetic system, the stable structure of the plot and composition and traditional personages. Olonkho is deeply related to mythology and is satiated with the mythological outlook and images.

The creators and keepers of olonkho are gifted folk narrators — olonkhosuts who from their early age imbibed the art of performance from the narrators of the generation. The gift of an olonkhosut is often an inherited one.

The main theme of olonkho is the fate of an epic tribe of ayii aimaga to which the uraanghai sakha (the ancient self — name of the Yakuts belong). The narration about the settlement of the Middle world the epic land of the Yakuts by people about the every day life of the uraanghai sakha forefathers, about the interrelations of the members of the family, kin and tribe, about their fight against the evil, forces for the peaceful, abundant and happy life in the land granted to them by the good spirits.

The introduction of olonkho describes the time of the events which is characterized as "mortal years" of the "feats of arms" It also describes the time

when there had been no Yakuts yet, the time of the creation of three mythological parts of the world. The Middle world is intended for people (ayii aimaga), protected by good deities (ayii) and spirits who are masters (ichchi) of the land, plants, mountains, etc. With special affection the introduction depicts the homeland of the main hero presented as the Middle world with its part called Sibiir (land) and as alaas — a comfortable place where the Yakut settlement is located. Thus, from the very beginning mythology is closely interwoven with reality, macrocosm of the epic world is inseparable from the microcosm of the olonkho creators. A great part in the description of the hero's homeland is dedicated to the sacred tree Aal Kuduk (Luuk) mas personifying the good forces of the Middle world, the "symbol of the inexhaustible fertility of the soil and eternal prosperity on it".

The plots of olonkho develop in consistent compositional parts:

1. The introduction containing the reason of the conflict;
2. The culmination where the plot achieves its climax the episodes of the hero's fight against his enemy;
3. The denouement in which all events with the good forces winning over evil ones and peaceful creative life beginning for the tribe of uraanghai sakha.

The personage system is stable and constant in practically all the stories. The main hero is a knight (it may be a woman) of the tribe ayii aimaga. His enemy is usually a knight from the abaahy tribe — the mythological dwellers of the Lower and Upper worlds, the evil personages of extremely complex characters who seem to embody representatives of hostile tribes. The conflict is always won by the main hero who kills or banishes the abaahy knight. Sometimes the enemy of the main hero is a knight from his own tribe, which reflects conflicts within the tribe. In this case the conflict is settled peace fully.

The other characters are grouped around the main hero and his enemy and represent members of the family and tribe (father, mother, brothers, sisters and fellow — tribesmen). Mythological personages play a special role among the characters of olonkho. The supreme deity Ayii toyon is main patron of the tribe ayii aimaga and the forefather (grandfather or father) of the olonkho main hero who is the ancestor of the human tribe uraanghai sakha. Another direct of the inhabitants of the Middle world is Kyuryue Jesegey — the deity who gives horses to people.

There are three groups of olonkho es distinguished according to their plot:

1. Olonkhoes depicting the outcast descendants of the deity Ayii expelled from the Upper and settling in the Middle world. Olonkhoes about athlete girls, the first people of the Middle world also belong to this group. The peculiar feature of these early types of olonkhoes is the absence of the motif of heroic matchmaking characteristic of the knight epos.

2. Olonkhoes about the tribe forefathers. The main character of many stories of this group Er Sogotokh, the first inhabitant of the earth learns about his divine predestination to be the forefather of the tribe, undertakes a trip in search of a bride and after many ordeals and heroic deeds returns to his country with a young wife. Thus the hero's matchmaking, the formation of a family and its continuation are predominant in the olonkho about the forefathers.

3. Olonkhoes about knights who defend the tribe. Either the main hero is appointed by deities to defend the tribe and by the request of the Middle world inhabitants come down from the Upper world or, in other versions, children of the Middle world inhabitants defend their own tribe are appointed by the deities.

It should be mentioned that not all olonkho plots fit these three groups in many legends. The stated subjects and motifs from intricate interweaving plots.

There are also olonkhoes depicting the deeds of knights of two or three generations.

The epos "Kyys Debiliye Bukhatyyr" the manuscript of which is kept in the archives of the Yakut Scientific centre of the Siberian branch of the USSR Academy of Sciences is published for the first time. Narrated by the oldest olonkhosut Nikolai Petrovich Burnashov (1846—1950), the olonkho was recorded by the journalist Stepan Konstantinovich Dyakonov (1913—1966), in June—July 1941, that is in the first days of the Great Patriotic War.

"Kyys Debiliye Bukhatyyr" is one of the best samples of the Yakut epos. A legend about women athletes it is one of these very popular throughout Yakutia.

"Kyys Debiliye Bukhatyyr" is a many-sided story. In terms of its moral-aesthetic contents and the variety of epic subjects that embraces characteristic features of the indicated three groups of olonkhoes.

The main character of "Kyys Debiliye Bukhatyyr" a mighty athlete-woman of the Upper world tribe "ayii aimaga" is expelled to the Middle world where she accomplishes heroic feats defending the people of her tribe who are exposed to the crafty designs of a woman of the tribe "abaahy aimaga".

Her enemy is an abaahy woman Sarakhana Kyukennik the Junior daughter of the head of the Lower world Arsan Duoly. She acts against the inhabitants of the Middle world with cunning and insidiousness. She does not make destructive raids. Settled in the Middle world together with her three sisters she kidnaps three children from the three worlds and brings them up in hatred towards the people "ayii aimaga". Two of the three wards are descendants of the ayii aimaga. Fed with milk of the abaahy woman they inherit all the habits of the abaahy woman they inherit all the habits of the abaahy and do not differ from the third ward a son of the inhabitants of the Lower world. As they grow up, they destroy the peace and prosperity of the ayii aimaga people.

Chugdaan Bukhatyyr personifies the positive features of the defenders of the Middle world people. He and his relatives live happily and prosperously in one of the abundant countries of the Middle world. Chugdaan Bukhatyyr is depicted as a generous and hospitable forefather, an organizer of the kumys feast ysyakh. When the foster children of the abaahy invade his country Chugdaan Bukhatyyr tries to settle the conflict in a peaceful way and in order to escape bloodshed he tries to negotiate with them. After the abaahy foster children destroy half of his wealth and threaten his tribe he starts fighting two of his enemies. Feeling unequal that the forces are unequal Chugdaan Bukhatyyr begs Kyys Debiliye Bukhatyyr for help. Having a grudge against the supreme deities Kyys Debiliye does not make up her mind to help her tribesmen immediately. Later, however, she overcomes her resentment and together with the other ayii aimaga knights against the abaahy foster children.

The Olonkho blames the horrors of the battle between knights. The mostrepulsive personages of the Yakut mythology — the bloodthirsty war spirits-inflict frenzy onto the combatants who lose their human features. The description of the terrible fight of the knights reflects the idea about the abnormality of all kinds of murders and wars.

The Olonkho is permeated with the idea of peace among the tribes. The supreme deities stop the bloody battle of knights. And the knight of the Lower world Dygyidaan Bege who is the cause of the bloody deeds is forever put in to prison by his tribe-fellows.



After peace and calm have been settled Kyys Debiliye takes care of the fate of her tribes people and helps them to regulate their life. Special attention is paid by her to the two foster children of the abaahy woman, who are of the ayii aimaga origin. She manages not only to quiet them, but also to help them return to their tribe, thus purifying them from the evil of the abaahy woman. Kyys Debiliye sends home the sons of the Upper and Middle worlds to the places where they lived and grew up before being kidnapped by the abaahy woman.

Thus Kyys Debiliye is not only a warrior but also organizer of the peaceful creative life of the ayii aimaga people. The text of the legend consists of free alliterational assonant verses, formed on the basis of the inner synharmony laws of the Yakut verse. The poetic system is of a tride structure: a chain of verses forms a complete semantic period with a number of rhythmic-syntactic parallelisms and reiterations. Thus the first tride i.e. a period, consists of three semantic blocs with the first being an introduction; the second and third blocs representing syntactic parallelism are a poetic description creating the image of the heaven. The olonkho text abounds in epithets and comparisons. The land (country, world) is defined by a constant complex epithet "eight-rimmed — eight-sided", "primordial"; low bushes are compared with Russian women in sarafans (national dresses) birch-trees with famous people and so on. All the descriptive epithets, various comparisons and parallelisms are grouped into semantic blocs, which form stable epic formulae and typical passages.

An Olonkho is performed in the manner of recitation and singing. The introduction of the legends, the description of knights, the country, the ysyakh festival the knight's preparations for the campaign and his departure, the depiction of the battle field and the knights' fight are performed as a more hastened recitation. Diverse is also the song composition of the olonkho. Thus monologues and dialogues of the characters are polysemantic in their and psychological nuances. They are various in genres: these are an invocation song, an appeal song knight's boasting song, a weeping song, the deities' song, a damnation song, etc.

Olonkho has absorbed the best features of the Yakut verbal poetic art. Based on mythology and fairy-tale fantasy, saturated with the cult of poetry and shaman invocations, it reveals all the colourful expressive means of the folk language.