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NOTES ON THE ARCHIVAL FOLKLORE RECORDS OF THE BURYAT EPIC «GESER»¹

It is known that there are three oral versions of the Buryat epic «Geser» - Ekhirit-Bulagat, Ungin and Khori. Ekhirit-Bulagat version, the most archaic one, was recorded in 1906 by Ts. Zhamtsarano as told by the narrator Manshud Imegenov and published in 1930-1931. The field records of Ungin version are kept in the general archival fond and in the personal fond of the Center of Oriental Manuscripts and Xylographs of the Institute for Mongolian, Buddhist and Tibetan Studies of the Siberian Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences (SB RAS). The texts were recorded by Buryat scholars S. P. Baldayev and I. N. Madason from folk storytellers in 1940's. The article briefly describes specifics of poetic styles and plots of the Ungin «Geser». Modern scientific information environment requires creating an electronic annotated catalogue of folk records of «Geser» epic.

Keywords: Buryat versions of «Geser», archival records, Ts. Zhamtsarano, S. P. Baldayev, I. N. Madason, plots, poetics, the Center of Oriental Manuscripts and Xylographs, electronic cataloguing

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О ФОЛЬКЛОРНЫХ ЗАПИСЯХ БУРЯТСКОГО ЭПОСА «ГЭСЭР»

(ПО АРХИВНЫМ ДАННЫМ)

В бурятской фольклористике утвердилось положение о существовании трех устных версий эпоса «Гэсэр»: эхирит-булагатская, унгинская, хоринская. Эхирит-булагатская версия была записана Ц. Жамцарано от сказителя Маншуда Имегенова в 1906 г. и опубликована в 1930-1931 гг. В общем и личном архивных фондах Центра восточных рукописей и ксилографов Института монголоведения, буддологии и тибетологии Сибирского отделения Российской академии наук содержатся полевые записи унгинских версий бурятского эпоса «Гэсэр». Тексты были записаны бурятскими учеными-фольклористами С. П. Балдаевым и И. Н. Мадасоном в 1940-е гг.

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от народных сказителей. В статье даются краткие сведения об особенностях поэтики и сюжетики унгинского «Гэсэра». В условиях современной научно-информационной среды необходимо создание электронного аннотированного каталога записей текстов бурятского «Гэсэра».

Ключевые слова: бурятские версии «Гэсэра», архивные записи, Ц. Жамцарано, С. П. Балдаев, И. Н. Мадасон, сюжетика, поэтика, Центр восточных рукописей и ксилографов, электронная каталогизация

The Center of Oriental Manuscripts and Xylographs (COMX) of the Institute for Mongolian, Buddhist and Tibetan Studies (IMBTS) of the Siberian Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences (SB RAS) has one of the largest Russian collections of oriental literature and archives of high academic value.

The collection consists of three major parts: Tibetan, Mongolian fonds and archival fond.

There are two major complexes in the archival fond of IMBTS of SB RAS - the general fond containing 2900 items and private archives of about 12,000 items (there are 44 private archives). These two contain valuable materials and documents of the peoples of Central Asia and Eastern Siberia in various spheres such as history, economics, ethnography, religious studies, folklore and literature in the Russian, old Mongolian, Buryat and Western European languages. They store unfinished manuscripts and type prints, unpublished monographs, folklore texts, audio-recordings, articles, dictionaries, reviews, notes, translations, fieldwork reports, diaries, photos, musical notations.

Unique archival records of various versions of the Buryat epic «Geser» are a real treasure of the Center's folklore collections. Ekhirit-Bulagat version is known to be the most archaic one, it was recorded by Ts. Zhamtsarano from Manshud Imegenov in 1906. The texts were published in the series «Obraztsy narodnoi slovesnosti mongolskikh plemen. Epicheskie proizvedenia ehirit-bulagatov: teksty» (The samples of folk literature of Mongolian tribes. Ehirit-Bulagat epic texts). Vol. II, Issue I «Abai Geser», Issue II «Oshor Bogdo». – Leningrad, 1930, 1931). The texts were published in the Russian academic transcription with no translation or comments. The records of these texts are stored in the Orientalists' Archives of the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts in St. Petersburg (fond 62). Later, these texts were transcribed again in a simplified system, close to the modern Buryat spelling system and published along

with the Russian translation by M. P. Khomonov - a famous Buryat folklore specialist (Abai Geser-khubun P. I. Ulan-Ude, 1961; Oshor Bogdo and Khurin Altai P. II. Ulan-Ude, 1964). The handwritten texts and translations are stored in the private archive of the scientist in the Center of Oriental Manuscripts and xylographs (private fond 23).

A considerable part of the Ungin versions of «Geser» is still unpublished; records of epic texts are preserved in the archival collection of the Center of Oriental Manuscripts and xylographs. Below is a brief list of field records of the Buryat epic texts preserved in the personal archives of the Buryat scholars.

1. Abai Geser khubun (Nyuhata Sura). Manuscript. The text was recorded by S. P. Baldayev from the narrator P. Stepanov in 1940 in the village of Nigda, Alarsky district, Irkutsk Region (COMX. Fond 36 (S. P. Baldayev), series 1, file 170, pp. 78, about 2200 poetical lines)

2. Abai Geser Bogdo Khan. Manuscript. The text was recorded by I. N. Madason from the narrator P. Tushemilov in 1940 in Melkhitui ulus, Nukutsky district, Irkutsk Region (COMX. Fond 18 (I. N. Madason), series 1, file 71, pp. 79, about 2100 poetical lines)

3. Abai Geser Bogdo Khan. The text was recorded by S. P. Baldayev from the narrator N. T. Ivanov in 1940-1941 in the settlement of Ust-Orda, Irkutsk Region. (COMX. Fond 36 (S. P. Baldayev), series 1, file 161, pp. 106 about 31500 poetical lines)

4. Abai Geser. Manuscript. The text was recorded by A. Balburov from the narrator B. Zhatuchayev, a native of Unga, in 1941 in Ulan-Ude. (COMX. Common archival fond. № 1041, pp. 102, about 2800 poetical lines).

5. Abai Geser Bogdo. Manuscript. The text was recorded by I. N. Madason from the narrator A. Baldkhinov in 1940 in the village of Uley, Bokhansky district, Irkutsk Region. (COMX. Fond 18 (I. N. Madason), series 1, file 73, pp. 89, about 2300 poetical lines).

The records retold in prose were published in the book of Burchina D. A. «Geseriada zapadnich buriad» [Burchina, 1990].

The comparison of motifs and episodes in the first chapters of the Ungin «Geser» version shows big difference in their interpretations, episodes and scenes within the same epic and local traditions. The first part of the Ungin «Geser» about the celestial events is a series of myths similar in their form to epic saga, where the forces of good and evil, light

and darkness are personified. Their eternal struggle is expressed in the war of deities, split into two parties based on the principle of usefulness or harmfulness, destructiveness of various natural phenomena for people.

The colorful picture of events taking place in the sky reflects the earthly life of people. The image of "heavenly life" is a representation of the ancient people of the early tribal society. The family and tribal relations between celestials clearly describe the existing tribal society.

The following parts of the Ungin «Geser» telling about the hero's activities on the Earth, are similar to the Mongolian «Geser». The greatest similarity is seen in the versions of P. Petrov, P. Dmitriev, B. Zhatuhaev, in the transcription of M. Khangalov, especially in those chapters and episodes, which narrate the story of the Geser's birth, his childhood feats, the trials of the sons by Shargal Noyon, the war with Sharablin khans, and the story of Gumen Sesen Khan. Nevertheless, this Ungin versions display originality not only because they are unlike the prosaic Mongolian «Geser». The Buryat epic of «Geser» reveals the ethical and aesthetic views of the people by means of the image-bearing system specifically of the Buryat epic poetics. It contains many more details, episodes and scenes than the Mongolian epic, as the Buryat epic is characterized by the expansion of the narrative plot. The descriptions of the fight with the monsters (*mangadhay*), enemies, grooms contests, epic formulas, solos, *seg daralga* (song inserts), *udeshelge* (farewell ceremonies) sagas are specific only to the Buryat heroic epic. The Ungin variants in comparison with the Mongolian «Geser» are more archaic because they are based on the ancient canons of the Buryat epic.

The Buryat epic about Geser is not a mechanical borrowing, not a direct transfer of the Mongolian epic to the Buryat ground, but an original reedition of the borrowed work on the basis of authentic epic tradition. Mongolian legends served only as one of themes which found themselves in the Buryat environment at the time of the productive existence of the epic. The mythological prologue in the heaven is a centuries-long way of the development of the Buryat epic.

The Buryats created their own biography of Geser, which unfolds against the background of the creation of the worlds of the universe and its inhabitants. It expresses notions of happiness, prosperity and peaceful life.

The staff of the archive group of COMX works on scientific and technical processing, restoration and digitalization of rare documents and materials, their systematization by subject, composing annotated descriptions of the folklore materials.

The electronic annotated catalogue of the folk materials of the peoples of Inner Asia is based on the description of each storage unit according to the scheme proposed by I. V. Kulganek [Kulganek, P. 47–48]. We have highlighted the following parameters: serial number in the Catalogue; press-mark or inventory number; field of study; type of material (recording, research articles, reviews, reports, dictionaries, maps, music); genre (uliger, tale, song, myth, legend, small genres, and so on); ethnic group to which the material is related; the title; author's or collector's name; informant's name; a short annotation; additional notes (notes in the margins, the date of entry to the archive); technical data (a manuscript form, stitched sheets, the number of the sheets, recording tools: pen, pencil, typing, e-mail text); language; graphic arts; the writing or recording date (field data); place of writing or recording; information about the publication of this document (if any). Below is an example of such description:

Ordinal number: 1

Press-mark or inventory number indicating the fond:

Fond 18, series 1, file 74.

Field of study: folklore

Genre: uliger

Ethnic group: Buryats

Title: Abai Geser Bogdo

Collector: I. N. Madason

Informant: A. Baldkhinov

Time of recording: 30th of October, 6 p.m., 1940

The place of recording: Bulag ail, Uleisky bulug, Bokhansky aimak, Irkutsk Region

Language: Buryat

Type: manuscript

Form of document: stitched sheets

Number of sheets: 89

Writing instrument: pen

Information about publication: no

An electronic annotated catalogue of folklore materials, once created, will become a secure resource for long-term storage of the unique cultural heritage, open to public. It will also serve as academic database for the contemporary studies of folklore, history and culture.

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4. Abai Geser-khubun. Epopeia (ekhirit-bulagatskii variant) / M. P. Khomonov. P. I. Ulan-Ude, 1961. 230 p.
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