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Literature (UDC 82)

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БУРЯТСКИЙ ЭПОС «ГЭСЭР» И АНГЛО-САКСОНСКАЯ ЭПОПЕЯ «БЕОВУЛЬФ»

Аннотация

Культуры не изолированы друг от друга и не имеют столь большого значения сами по себе, в отрыве от других культур. Каждая культура несет в себе энергию соседних или отдаленных культур. Воин, который олицетворяет всю силу и мощь своего сообщества наделен щедрыми дарами от природы, поскольку его главной миссией является защита племени и рода от всевозможных бедствий. Бурятский эпос «Гэсэр» и англо-саксонская эпопея «Беовульф» имеют много общего в отношении исторической эпохи, отчасти содержания, некоторых эпизодов и мотивов, персонажей, морали и стилевых черт. Дискурс обоих текстов отличается чертами типологического сходства, среди которых наиболее примечательными являются этно-исторический фон, структура текста, обрисовка героических подвигов. Этическое сознание обоих народов характеризуется символическими, мифологическими, тотемистическими, анимистическими чертами. Эти народы с их исконно языческим и шаманским верованиями испытывают на себе влияние других религиозных проявлений, таких как христианские и буддийские соответственно. Оба народа обладают некоторыми общими чертами, которые могут сыграть положительную роль в диалоге их культур.

Ключевые слова: диалог культур; энергия соседних и других культур; гармония; глубокое понимание; экологический императив; культурный плюрализм; герои и героические подвиги; благородство и щедрость; идея спасения.

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THE BURYAT EPOS «GESER» AND THE ANGLO-SAXON EPOPEE «BEOWULF»

Abstract

Cultures are not isolated from one another and are of no significance all by themselves, taken separately. Each culture carries in itself the energy of neighboring and other cultures. The warrior who personifies all the strength and might of his community is showered gifts on by nature for his chief mission is protection of his tribes and kin from all kinds of misfortune. The Buryat epos “Geser” and the Anglo-Saxon epos “Beowulf” have much in common regarding the historical epoch, content, episodes and motives, characters, morals and style features. The discourse of both the texts is noted for the features of typological similarity, among which most prominent are ethnic and historical background, textual build-up, heroic deeds. The epical consciousness of both the peoples was noted for their symbolical, mythological, totemic, animistic features, pagan and shaman beliefs somewhat mixed up with some other religious tendencies like Christian and Buddhist ones respectively. Both possess some common features that can play a positive role in the dialogue between the two cultures.

Keywords: dialogue of cultures; energy of neighboring and other cultures, harmony; the greatest understanding ever possible, ecological imperative, cultural pluralism, heroes and heroic deeds, generosity; salvation.

The epos as part of culture is an expression of national mentality, it can help identify the national belonging of a person. At the same time the communicative function of folklore makes possible the exchange of cultural achievements among certain human communities as well as individuals. This function makes possible the communication within the framework of dialogue of cultures which in its turn helps create the international cultural stock. The process of globalization brings peoples and their cultures closer to each other. One can witness mutual understanding and interpenetration of some elements of various cultures, fragments of epical works, for one. One of the functions of culture is connected with the social and individual factor; in other words, with disintegration, on the one hand, and integration of social, national and other communities of people, on the other hand.

The international picture of the world, globalization of positive and negative tendencies is evidence of integration of formerly closed, disintegrated human communities. Cultures are not isolated from one another and are of no significance all by themselves, taken separately. Each culture carries in itself the energy of neighboring and other cultures. In this context the theory of incomprehensibility of the other cultures is groundless. The idea of peculiarity of each national culture, the contribution of each nation to the culture of the whole mankind is evident. It does not contradict the idea of certain commonness of all cultures.

Now the humankind came up to the point beyond which there might be global catastrophes. This prompts the need in change of the former model of unstable development and integration in the spiritual aspect as well. The words “harmony” and “understanding” should become the key notions of the contemporary world view. People belonging to different cultures should treat each other with the greatest understanding possible. The dialogue of cultures as interpretation of “the alien”, different cultures calls for quite a special mentality, new ontology, otherwise a new paradigm “world with man” or “man with the world” or “man in nature” rather than “nature for man”.

It is important to become aware of the priority of the spiritual basis in the whole life of the contemporary mankind, as well as of ecological imperative, human-conformable and nature-conformable tendencies. Internationalization, globalization brought world civilizations and cultures closer to each other. The world does become united and integrated. In the light of the theory of “cultural pluralism” culture is a connecting link among nations. Therefore understanding and respect for cultural values is not a matter of being educated but an indispensable condition for harmonious development.

No doubt there are very many outstanding tales and legends depicting the ideals of kindness, truth and justice. Among them one could mention an Anglo-Saxon epos “Beowulf”. The poem of Beowulf is the only great work of the heroic epos of Anglo-Saxons that came to us almost intact. It was composed in an armed force community just as the Buryat Geseriade, they both describe battles, warriors and feasts in honor of the victory over the enemy. The early medieval period of history, i.e. the V-XI centuries is described in the Beowulfiade. The story began when in the middle of the V century Anglo-Saxons and other tribes of German origin invaded the territory of Britain. The end of that period is 1066 when there was the battle at Hastings that marked the conquest of the British Isles by Normans. The Anglo-Saxons founded some small kingdoms. Angles founded Mercia and Northumbria, Saxons – Wessex, Jutes – Kent. Those new formations struggled for the political superiority. Soon Northumbria yielded to Mercia, then in the IX century to Wessex. The western-Saxon dialect of Wessex became the classical dialect of the Old-English language. “Beowulf” was based on the old German pagan legends which appeared among German tribes long before Anglo-Saxons settled in the territory of Britain. The scenes of the poem were laid on the shores of the Baltic sea.

In the Geseriade the actions take place on the territory of the present Buryatia (Russia), Mongolia and Tibet (Amdo, Kam). The interaction of the Tibetan, Mongolian, Buryat, Turkic and other cultures made possible the creation of various versions and variants

of the heroic epos of Geser. One should also bear in mind that Beowulf is not an Anglo-Saxon hero and the scene is laid not on the territory of contemporary England. Neither mentioned in most of the variants of the Buryat Geseriade are the Buryats proper. The episodes and motives of the Buryat epos come from the ancient times, when probably the name of Buryats as nation and not just a tribe or a kin had not been formed up yet.

In the first part of the Anglo-Saxon poem the events take place in Zealand, in the second part in Juteland. Neither Angles, nor Saxons take part in the events depicted in the poem. Accordingly one might suppose that the events described in the epopee of Beowulf could date back to the time before settling of Anglo-Saxons in Britain when their territory on the continent bordered on Denmark. One might as well assume that the poem was composed in the period of the Dutch interventions. This accounts for the presence of the northern narrative traditions typical of Anglo-Saxon tales as well as the details related to the genealogies of the Dutch kings.

Fragments of historical events, battles of North German peoples among themselves and with South German tribes poetically adapted in the form of saga might have been formed up in the first half of the VI-th century. Under the influence of paganism the poetical works were not to be written down, it was prohibited to fix them up in written form. It was not until the introduction of Christianity that recording was allowed. The names of pagan gods and traces of German mythology are lacking but introduced are Christian inclusions. Therefore there are allusions to Cain's descendents, i.e. borrowings from Old Testament: the names of Abel, Noah, ark, the flood that dates back to the biblical book of Genesis. The description of the hero's death was subject to literary adaptation in the Christian way. As for the epos of Geser Buddhism that came much later pressed shamanism. Since the epos "Geser" bears the traces of shamanic ideas owing to its archaic origin, the Buddhist clergy did not regard it with favor. Buddhist elements in the epos are not of quite organic nature, they bear evidence of artificial inclusions. "Geser" bears traces of various cults of early communities. Buddhism made attempts at affecting the spiritual foundations of the traditional society. But it was not quite an easy task to compete with shamans in their practice of guarding soul which was one the main spheres of shaman's profession. Nevertheless Buddhist inclusions are still presented in the epos. The spiritual basis of the heroic epos of such Mongolian nations like Mongols proper, Buryats, Kalmycks is characterized by the rich diversity of various cults and rituals. The epos in its spiritual archaic nature possesses mythological, fairy-tale and magical, animistic, totemistic, fetishistic, shamanic features of the ancient syncretical consciousness of Mongolian tribes.

The poem of Beowulf might be supposed to date back to the time of the Anglo-Saxon literature of the VIII – IX centuries because it is written in ancient German alliterated verse which can be found in the Anglo-Saxon as well as the ancient Upper German and ancient Scandinavian poetry of the period between the VIII and the XIII centuries. Each verse is divided into two hemistiches with two chief rhythmical accents. The consonants standing in front of one or both the chief accents of the first hemistich were to be repeated before the first accent of the second hemistich.

The use of metaphors is typical of the Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian poetry. Consider some interesting terms designating the nobility in England in the period of the early Middle ages. The term miles (warrior) besides designating the occupation soldier denotes the subordinate position of man in public service. Various Anglo-Saxon (eorl, ealdormen) and Latin words (dux, comes, nobiles, defensor, patricius, primas, satrap, subregulus) designate certain ranks of aristocracy. The words cyninges, thegh, thanius, regis denote rich high-born people. Let us give a brief account of the contents of the Anglo-Saxon poem. Beowulf is a nephew of the king of Geats (a Scandinavian tribe inhabiting the southern coast of present Sweden and called Gauts in Scandinavia). He learns of the tragedy with Dans. Their palace Heorot or Deer's palace is celebrated for its beauty and splendor. During many years it had been attacked at nights by a horrible man-like creature Grendel who killed warriors. Beowulf goes to Dans, spends a night in Heorot, fights Grendel, defeats him, during the fight he tears off his right hand. The next night Grendel's mother comes to Heorot to take revenge. She kills and takes away one of the Dutch warriors.

Beowulf finds Grendel's den that was at the bottom of a mountain lake. With the help of a magic sword he defeats Grendel's mother. In a while after Higelac's and his son's death Beowulf becomes the king of Geats for fifty happy years of prosperity.

Then there appears a fiery red dragon. He longs for the revenge because the treasure that he was standing guard over had been encroached upon. A terrible dragon attacks Geat's settlements and fortresses. Beowulf defeats him but himself dies of the dragon's poison. The Geats bitterly mourn over his death, set fire to his body and make up a high burial mound on the cape that protruded into the sea so that Beowulf's mound were seen from afar. The description of the funeral rites and mourning over the great hero completes the poem.

The bases for the heroic actions are the conflicts that involve many tribes just like in Geseriade. The main hero of the poem is fearless, courageous and brave (Beowulf: lines 603-608, 1383-1396, 2509-2527). The monsters, the hero's adversaries are blood-thirsty, greedy and malicious (Grendel: lines 729-746; his mother: lines 1276-1281; dragon: lines 2286-2310).

The main hero is unique, he is destined to complete a great feat; he is the only in the world to defeat Grendel and the dragon. Beowulf's strength is the strength of all Geats (lines 698-700). The warrior who personifies all the strength and might of his community is showered gifts on by nature which are conditioned by his chief mission, i.e. protection of his tribes from all kinds of monsters.

Here we can see similar features with the main hero of the Buryat epos and his mission in all the variants of this work, those of the Buryat, Mongolian, Tibetan, Turkic peoples. One of the main functions of the protector and fair judge is that Beowulf subdued thirty warriors with only one hand (Beowulf: lines 381-382) just like Geser who only with the strength of his shoulder (combat in wrestling) or his big finger (archery) defeated the enemy.

Beowulf stands out for his appearance which is the evidence of his heroic nature. It is for his outward appearance that guards on the coast pay special attention to him. It is just at first glance at him that celebrated warriors understand that he is an outstanding fighter (lines 336-339). Beowulf's look, his strength and his moral features, his being true to his mission, the king and his people are artistically idealized in the poem.

Here one can recollect the lines of the heroic beauty of Geser, his might and build. The genealogy of the hero also adds up to his heroic description. The man in the epical story is inseparable from his folk with whom he is connected by the bonds of kinship and friendship. It is typical of the Geseriade that many of its lines are devoted to the celestial and earthly "biography" of the central hero.

The introduction of the personage in the narration begins with the indication of his kin which is quite important. The connection with a celebrated kin determines to some degree a hero's merits. He is capable of completing noble deeds not only owing to his personal qualities but as a representative of the kin which is known for its generous deeds. Very often the heroic qualities of the hero are conditioned by the merits of the kin the personage belongs to. Depicted in "Beowulf" are some other examples of noble conduct, namely wisdom and generosity of the king of the tribe Hrothgar; courage and devotion of Wiglaf; beauty and generosity of Wealhtheow, the queen of Dans. The epical conflict divides the images of the poem into two camps. In one of the camps there is the main hero, the king and the queen, their armed force; in the other there are monsters, enemies. In Geseriade we also see two camps: those of the eastern and western deities.

The king, his bodyguards, the queen, the main hero form up an ideal community of the epical world of the Anglo-Saxon epopee. The king is mighty, generous, wise; the warrior is devoted to his king, courageous and lofty. Embodied in the image of Hrothgar are the ideals of a noble ruler, of social order and well-being which he maintains in his kingdom. One of his chief duties is distribution of wealth, dispensing of treasure just like in the Geseriade. The chief mission of both the rulers is protection of their tribes, warriors which is evidenced by a great many epithets embodying the idea of protection, patronage.

Glorified is the wisdom of the ruler which is understood as observing the ethical norms, conformity with the heroic ideal. Blood relationship is one of the important social relations. In the epoch of the late tribal and early feudal set-up each man was involved in the system of vassalage. The duties of the king in relation to his armed force, his bodyguards are unambiguous and are

embodied in the image of the ideal ruler. In rare cases the attitude of the bodyguards to their king is more complicated and ambiguous. Here one might recall the image of Agsagaldai from Geseriade who betrayed Geser.

In Beowulfiade the ideal is Wiglaf, who is also connected with Beowulf by bonds of blood relationship. Faith and loyalty of a vassal is kind of charge for the charity and quarter with which a ruler endows his warriors. The blood relationship is also quite important. Beowulf is true to his suzerain Higelac who is also his uncle. He helps his son. Hrothulf is greatly condemned for killing his relative, Hrothgar's son in the struggle for the Dutch throne.

All the objects, mentioned in the poem of Beowulf are weapons, feasts and palaces, rich utensils. All other things representing the diversity of the material world are lacking in the poem. Much is concentrated around battles.

In Geseriade on the contrary presented in great detail is the whole material world of that time and those communities. This is accounted for by the big size of the epos, sweeping generalization of the epical narrative, where alongside with heroic deeds there is space for the description of everyday life, household and domestic affairs

Depicted more often in Beowulfiade are weapons and armor, cuirass, helmet, shield, sword with the help of which the hero defeats the enemies. The splendor of weapon, its peculiarity is a well-spread method for representation of heroism just like in Geseriade. Here the key notion in both the eposes is unique nature of weapon. Uniqueness of the hero is shown also in the uniqueness

of his weapons, in their being destined for each other. The sword which Beowulf finds in the dwelling of Grendel was the only weapon to do away with the monster's mother. Geser also fights with the mother of one of the monsters. He has many weapons that were destined for him and were sent to him by the celestial deities.

The Buryat epic "Geser" and Anglo-Saxon epic "Beowulf" have much in common regarding the historical epoch, content, episodes and motifs, characters, morals and style features. The discourse of the texts in the Buryat Geseriade and Anglo-Saxon Beowulfiade is noted for the features of typological similarity, among which most prominent are ethnic and historical background, textual build-up, heroic deeds and other aspects. The most important passages in the content of the Anglo-Saxon and Buryat epics and their significance and interpretation are very important. The epical consciousness of both the peoples was noted for their symbolical, mythological, totemistic, animistic features and cult pagan and shamanic beliefs somewhat mixed up with some other religious tendencies like Christian and Buddhist ones respectively. The mythological consciousness displays itself in various heterogenous and heteromorphic elements.

The parallel study of the two epopees might help establish good ties between the two peoples. The two cultures the Geseriade and Beowulfiade belong to are separated from one another not only geographically but in the historical, ethnical, language, cultural and other aspects. Nevertheless they have some common features that can play a positive role in the dialogue between the two cultures.

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ИСКУССТВО СКАЗЫВАНИЯ ИЛИ СКАЗИТЕЛЬСКИЙ ДАР

Аннотация

Некоторые экологические воззрения связаны с мифологическими представлениями о близости человека и природы и необходимости заботливого отношения к ней. Сейчас можно наблюдать попытки преодоления познавательного психологического барьера, который отделяет дискурсивно-логические методы от интуитивно-сенсорных, динамических подходов. Тело человека представляет собой вмещище многих каналов восприятия. Большое значение имеют символические образы, возникающие в виде моделей Вселенной или отпечатков мысли или смыслов, формирующихся посредством волнового резонанса. Вначале были движение тела, некие обыденные движения, затем появилось слово, сопровождающее действия, иначе говоря, миф. Можно говорить о гипотетическом первенстве ритмического движения, ритмов кинетического свойства или волн, распространяющихся во Вселенной. Это следует принимать во внимание при рассмотрении сложного сказительского процесса или любого другого вида исполнительского искусства, сопровождаемого произнесением вступ слов.

Ключевые слова: мастерство сказывания; правое полушарие мозга; духовное восприятие действительности, природа и природные объекты, сенсорно-двигательный канал, ритмодинамика, принцип золотого сечения.

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THE ART OF NARRATION: THE STORY-TELLERS'S GIFT

Abstract

Some ecological views are associated with the mythological ideas of affinity of man and nature and the need in careful attitude towards the latter. Attempts at overcoming the cognitive psychological barrier which separates the discursive-logical methods and the intuitive-sensory, integrated dynamic methods are observed now. Man's body is the repository of many channels for perception. Of great importance are symbolic images emerging as models of the world or images of thought or meaning which are formed by means of wave resonance. There was motion, body movement, ritual movements, afterwards there emerged the word, i.e. the myth. One can assume hypothetical priority of the rhythmical motion, rhythms of kinetic property, waves that spread in the Universe. This all should be taken into account when considering the intricate process of story-telling or any other kind of artistic performance.

Keywords: skill for story-telling; brain right hemisphere; spiritual mastering of the reality; nature and natural objects; sensual-motor channel, rhythmodynamics, golden section.

The altered state of consciousness which sometimes vividly displays itself presents quite a typical property of consciousness and psyche of the people in general, not to mention story-tellers who possess a peculiar quality, i.e. story-teller's gift. The functioning of the right hemisphere of the brain or the intuitive zone of cognitive processes increases during story-

telling ceremonies but in some cases this is accompanied by the decrease of the level of self-control. When people suffer from some organic disturbances of the right hemisphere of the brain, their creative potential suffers too although their formal-logical thinking and everyday skills remain intact. When the right hemisphere preserves the ability for individual perception, the skills for abstract