

Mythological images of spirits - masters – Ichchi (on the material of the olonkho of the northeastern Yakuts tradition)

Vasiliy Illarionov
Doctor of Philology Sciences,
Professor
North-Eastern Federal University
named after M.K. Ammosov
Yakutsk, Russia
vv.illarionov@s-vfu.ru

Lyudmila Efimova
Doctor of Philology Sciences,
Professor, head of the Department of
Cultural Studies
North-Eastern Federal University
named after M.K. Ammosov
Yakutsk, Russia

Nurgun Afanasev
Candidate of Philological
Sciences, Associate Professor
North-Eastern Federal University
named after M.K. Ammosov
Yakutsk, Russia

Tuyara Illarionova
Candidate of Philological
Sciences, Associate Professor
North-Eastern Federal University
named after M.K. Ammosov
Yakutsk, Russia

Olga Pavlova
Candidate of Philological
Sciences, Associate Professor
North-Eastern Federal University
named after M.K. Ammosov
Yakutsk, Russia

Abstract—Images of the spirits - masters - *Ichchi* in the texts of the olonkho of the northeastern Yakuts tradition were examined in this article. The images of the spirit-master of fire, earth, forest, vegetation, water, and house were studied. The images of the spirits - masters with similar images of other regional traditions (Prilenskaya and Vilyui) were compared. 28 texts of the olonkho of the three epic Yakuts traditions were considered. As a result of a comparison of the images of the master masters of the three epic traditions, the following conclusions were drawn. The most revered images in the three epic traditions are the spirits-masters of fire, forests and lands. The greatest number of spirits - masters - *Ichchi* are found in the olonkho of the Prilenskaya regional tradition. The spirits - masters of the snowy shaft and summer were characteristic only in the olonkho of the Vilyui regional tradition. In the northeastern tradition, the spirits - masters that were not characteristic of the Prilenskaya and Vilyui traditions were found: the spirit-master of sea *Salbakyny Agylastaj Tojon*, the spirit-master of the trees *Onogoj Baaj Tojon* and the spirit-master of the lands *Aan Bychalga* and *Aan Ichehlgeh*. In addition, in the texts of the olonkho of the northeastern tradition, the images of the host masters of the pass, roads and the crib are not mentioned, which were represented in the Prilenskaya and Vilyui traditions. The authors came to the conclusion that in the olonkho of the northeastern tradition the images of the spirits – masters *Ichchi* were not widely distributed as in other traditions (Prilensky and Vilyui).

Keywords—Yakut epic, olonkho, mythological images, *Ichchi*, regional tradition, northeastern tradition

I. INTRODUCTION

According to the Yakuts, the universe is divided into three parts: the Upper, Middle and Lower worlds. In the Middle World, the people of the tribe "ajyy

ajmaga" live and the spirits – master - *Ichchi*. In the dictionary of E.K. Pekarsky, the word *ichchi* is explained as follows: "*ihchi* - master, lord; the guardian, the spirit-master, is a special kind of beings who are in the objects and phenomena of nature; content, essence, internal mysterious power, available in any subject; the embryo, the body in the egg" [1].

II. METHODOLOGY

In pre-revolutionary times, the master spirits in the Yakut mythology were examined by early researchers, political exiles. For example, V. F. Troshchansky first identified the genus of *Ichchi* and wrote that "in addition to *ajyy* and *abasy*, there is also a special kind of beings that are in certain objects and phenomena of nature, such beings are called *ichi*" [2]. He considered "*ichchi*" as an entity that manages something and is its "virtual cause", which leads to their spiritualization. V.M. Ionov wrote a work on the spirit of the forest owner of the Yakuts. The researcher, having studied the spirit – master of the forest *Baaj Barylaakh Baaj Bajanaj*, came to the conclusion that the cult of the spirit – master of the forest among the Yakuts is borrowed [3]. In the opinion of A.E. Kulakovsky, "*Ichchi* is something between "*ajyy*" and "*abasy*". *Ichchi* can do both good and evil, depending on how people treat them" [4]. He wrote that the most revered spirits – *Ichchi* of the Yakuts are the spirit – master of fire, *Aartyk ichchiteh* - master of descent, ascension, mountain pass and watershed, the owner of the forest *Bajanaj*; land owner *Aan Alakhchyn Khatyn*, the owner of the water, the spirits of the vegetation of *Ehrehkeh-D'ehrehkeh*, and others [5]. During the Soviet era, G.U. Ergis wrote that "the origin and development of ideas about *Ichchi* has not been studied in science. It can be assumed that their existence is associated with the spread of animism in the minds of people and with the

appearance of an idea of property, first generic, and then private. The idea of a spirit – master was probably worked out in ancient times by the ancestors of other Siberian peoples when they closely communicated with each other" [6]. Early mythological views of the Yakuts and other Turkic-speaking peoples of Siberia were first considered in the writings of N.A. Alekseev. He separately studied the commercial cult and the cult of the patron spirits of the family. N.A. Alekseev wrote that in the veneration of the spirit-master of water and forest, there are many magical elements preserved from ancient cults. He noted that the materials do not support the widespread opinion that the commercial cult was borrowed from the Yakuts from neighbors. According to the researcher, a significant place in the religion of the Yakuts was occupied by the family cult – the veneration of the patron spirits of the family: the spiritual master of the house, the home, the courtyard, the cowshed, etc. N.A. Alekseev came to the conclusion that "the cult of spiritual patrons of the family is now almost forgotten [7]. In the opinion of A.I. Gogoleva, *Ichchi* took a peculiar place in the religious and mythological representations of the Yakuts. The researcher emphasized that "*ichchi* were a special kind of beings that are in certain objects and phenomena of nature, the inner mysterious force that exists in some subject. Under certain conditions, they are always useful to a person and are more likely to be his patrons in various everyday affairs "[8]. The spirits of *Ichchi* were benevolent and positive. In the post-Soviet period, A.N. Danilova in her work "The image of a woman of the hero in the Yakut olonkho" singled out images of spirits – *Ichchi* by a separate group. Spirits – *Ichchi* passes and localities belong to a separate group [9]. A.A. Kuzmina studied the functions of mythological characters in the texts of the Olonkho of the Vilyui regional tradition: the spirit – master of the lands *Aan Bychalga* and *Aan Ichehlgeh* the spirit-land master *Aan Alakhchyn Khotun*, *Sehehrkehehn Sehsehn* and others [10]. N.A. Orosina studied the mythological images in the texts of the Olonkho of the Tatta local tradition. In this tradition, the spirits – masters of fire, forest, lakes, seas, vegetation, road, homestead, dwelling, crib, etc. are characteristic. Their function is to protect the inhabitants of the Middle World from the onslaughts of the dark forces of the Upper and Lower Worlds [11].

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Next, images of the master masters *Ichchi* in the texts of the olonkho of the northeastern tradition are considered. The most typical in the olonkho of the northeastern epic tradition is the spirit of fire. He is one of the most revered spirits in Yakut mythology. This image is mentioned in the texts of the Verkhoyansk, Momsk and Abyisk local traditions. For example, in Olonkho of the Verkhoyansk local tradition "*Khaan D'argystaj*", there is an image of the spirit of fire *Aan Ulakhany*. The following explanation is given by E.K. Pekarsky: "*Aan Ulakhany ehe* – spirit of the sacred fire" [1]. In the text of the olonkho of this tradition, the image of the spirit of fire, *Aan Ulakhany*, was the youngest son of the supreme deity, *Yuryung Ajyy Tojon*

– younger son of The White Creator of *Aan Ulakhany's* grandfather [12]. Researcher A.I. Gogol said that "in the Yakut myths, the spirit master of the fire has a heavenly origin. According to one version, he is the son of *Uluu tojon*, on the other – *Yuryung Ajyy Tojon*". According to A.I. Gogolev, the spirit of fire is the son of the Supreme deity is confirmed in the olonkho text of the Verkhoyansk local tradition. Also in the texts of the olonkho of the Momsk local tradition, there is an image of the spirit-master of the fire *Tuene Mogul* (*Түөнэ Моһул*). In the text of the olonkho of the Abyisk local tradition "*Er Sogotokh*" by the narrator G.F. Nikulin, there is an image of the spirit of fire *Khatansyjar Khatan Chobuo*. The texts of the olonkho of Momsk local tradition "*Kotor Mulgun*" and "*Kobuo Diagil*" are characterized by the image of the spirit-master of the fire *Tuene Mogul* (*Түөнэ Моһул*). The word *tuonul=tuoneh* (*түөнүл=түөнэ*) was not explained in the dictionary of E.K. Pekarsky, only compound words are given: *tuoneh magan tuorehkh* – light fortune, *tuonehl ojuun* – epithet of the spirit of the forest [1]. In the modern Yakut language, these options do not function independently; they can be considered archaisms, which were preserved only as part of the epithet constructions of the Olonkho language. The word *tuonul=tuoneh* (*түөнэ = түөнүл*) is understood as 'flipping, turning' and more suited to the epithet of the spirit of fire. The word *Tuene Mogul* (*Түөнэ Моһул*) should be understood as a 'turning-over, turning giant', where the Yakut word *mogol* (*моһол*) 'big, great; solid, corpulent, corpuscle' has such parallels as an *моһол* (Ottoman), *моңол* (Mongolian), *моһол* (Afghan Mongolian) [1]. The spirit of fire is called *Khatansyjar Khatan Chobuo* in the text of the olonkho of the Abyisk local tradition "*Er Sogotokh*" by G.F. Nikulin. Such a proper name of the spirit of fire is found only in the olonkho of the northeastern tradition. E.K. Pekarsky gives the following explanation of the word "*khatan*": "hard, strong, strong, roasted; fragile, brittle [though strong and hard]" [1]. The word "*chobuo*" in the dictionary of E.K. Pekarsky is defined as "lively, bright; quick, sharp (on the tongue), not shy; brave, impetuous"[1]. "*Hatan chobuo*" is not its own name; it is an epithet of the spirit of fire and is translated as "strong, bright, sharp tongue".

In the olonkho of the studied tradition, the images of the spirits – masters of the earth are characteristic. For example, in the text of the Olonkho of the Verkhoyansk local tradition "*Haan Diargistai*", two images of the spirits – master of the land are sung: "*Agys iilehehkh-sagalaakh Aan in'eh dajdym anallaakh ichchiteh, Altan torooskolookh Ad'aarykhsa Tojon, Komyus torooskolookh Kyn Kybehjikhseh Khatyn, Tolorujbeht syun syullyugehskin Toloryutehn biehrdin!*" spirit with a copper cane Monsieur *Ad'aarykhsa*, spirit with a golden cane Sun The Highly Honorable Lady [12]. In the dictionary of E.K. Pekarsky, name *Ad'aarykhsa Tojon* is explained as follows: "*Anaarykhsa (tojon)* is the name of the spirit of mother earth (the universe)" [1]. So, the master spirit was called *Anaarykhsa Tojon*, not *Ad'aarykhsa*. The name of the spirit-master of the earth comes from the word *anaaryj (anaryj)* "spread over and over in length

or breadth, reach the limit of growth (about grass or ears on the field, already beginning to wiggle), to be distinguished by some special qualities" [1]. Next, the name of the spirit - master of the land *Kun Kubehjikhseh Khatyn* is considered. E.K. Pekarsky gives the following explanation to the given name "*Kubehjikhseh* is the name of the wife of the spirit - master of the universe *Anaarykhsa Tojon*"[1]. Therefore, in the text of the olonkho of the Verkhoyansk local tradition, *Anaarykhsa Tojon* is the spirit of the earth, the universe. *Kun Kubehjikhseh Khatyn* is represented as his wife. Also, there are images of the spirit - master of the land *Aan Bychalkhai Aan Ichehlgeh* in the text of the olonkho of this tradition. There are images of the spirit of the grass *Kylbadahyn kyys* and the spirits of the vegetation *Orookuj-Sorookuj*, as well as the tree spirits *N'ylakhsyn uol* and *Onogoj Baaj Tojon*.

In the text of the olonkho of the studied tradition, images of the master spirits of the forest are characteristic. For example, olonkho "*Khaan D'argystaj*" mentions images of the spirits of the forest *Baryylaakh Baatyr* and *Tuonehl ojuun tojon*. Pekarsky defines the name of the spirit-master of the forest *Baryylaakh Baatyr* "having everything - the epithet of the forest spirit of the *Bajanaj*, the patron of hunters and trappers, *Baaj Baryylaakh* (all rich); *Baaj Bajanaj Baryylaakh* - rich *Bajanaj*, an old man having all"[1]. Hence, *Baryylaakh* is the epithet of the spirit-master of the forest of *Bajanaj*. The name of the spirit-master of the forest, *Tuonehl ojuun tojon*, means "The *Tuonehl ojuun* is the epithet of the spirit of the forest" [1]. Hence, the name of the spirit-master of the forest comes from the word "*tuonehl*", which means "Turn over". Therefore, *Baryylaakh Baatyr* and *Tuonehl ojuun tojon* are the epithets of the spirit-master of the forest.

In olonkho "*Khaan D'argystaj*" of the studied tradition, there is an image of the spirit-master of water, *Odugeht Tojon*. In the dictionary of E.K. Pekarsky, the name of the spirit-master of the water, *Odugeht Tojon*, is explained as follows: "*suuruktehehkh surgeh dalaj ichchiteh Odugeht tojo* - the spirit of fast water, incessant lord" [1]. So, *Odugeht Tojon* is the spirit-master of fast water. The image of the spirit-master of the sea of *Salbakyny Agylastaj Tojon* is characteristic in the olonkho "*Er Sogotokh*" of the Abyisk local tradition.

In the Olonkho text of the Verkhoyansk local tradition "*Haan Diargistai*" there is an image of the spirit - master of the house *N'akha Kharakhsyn N'yrylyn Kuo, Kuo Chehmchehj n'aad'ym* in olonkho "*Khaan D'argystaj*" of the Verkhoyansk local tradition. In the dictionary of E.K. Pekarsky, the name of the spirit-master of the house is explained as follows: "part of the female name: *N'akha-Kharakhsyn-N'yrylyn-kuo Kuo-Chehmchehj n'ad'y* -" the spirit of the main house, which grew under the yurt pillar "[1]. The spirit-master of the house had the name of *N'akha-Kharakhsyn-N'yrylyn-kuo Kuo-Chehmchehj n'ad'y*.

So, in the texts of the olonkho of the northeastern tradition, there are images of the spirit - master of fire (4 images), earth or universe (4 images), vegetation (3 images), forests (1 image), houses (1 image), water and sea (2 images).

The authors decided to compare the images of the spirits – masters with similar images of other regional traditions (Prilenskaya and Vilyui). 28 texts of the olonkho of the three epic Yakuts traditions were considered. The images of the spirit - master of the forest (10 images in 4 texts), lands (8 images in 4 texts), fire (6 images in 5 texts), passes (6 images in 2 texts), cowshed (4 images in 3 texts), dwellings (2 images in 2 texts), vegetation (2 images in 2 texts) are mentioned in Olonkho texts of the Prilenskaya tradition. In Olonkho texts of the Vilyui regional tradition (8 texts), the images of such master masters as the spirit-master of the earth (5 images in 4 texts), fire (4 images in 4 texts), seas (2 images in 2 texts), roads and passes (2 images in 2 texts) are mentioned. The images of the spiritual masters of the forest, vegetation, snow, summer (1 image) is also characteristic of the olonkho of the Vilyui regional tradition.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions are drawn as a result of a comparison of the images of the spirits-masters of the three epic traditions. The most revered images are the spirits-masters of fire, forests and lands. More *ichchi* are found in the Olonkho texts of the Prilekenskaya regional tradition. The spirits-masters of the snowy shaft and summer are characteristic only in the olonkho of the Vilyui regional tradition. In the studied tradition, the following 6 spirits-masters are honored: the spirit of fire, forest, land, vegetation, sea, house. In the northeastern tradition, there are spirits-masters who were not characteristic in the Prilenskaya and Vilyui traditions. These are the images of the spirit-master of the sea of *Salbakyny Agylastaj Tojon*, the spirit-master of the trees *Onogoj Baaj Tojon* and the spirit-master of the lands of *Aan Bychalga* and *Aan Ichehlgeh*. In the texts of the olonkho of the northeastern tradition, the images of the spirits-masters of the pass, the roads and the crib are not mentioned, which are represented in the Prilenskaya and Vilyui traditions. Consequently, in the olonkho of the northeastern tradition, the images of the spirits-masters *Ichchi* were not widely distributed as in other traditions (Prilenskaya and Vilyui).

REFERENCES

- [1] E. K. Pekarsky, Dictionary of the Yakut language. 2nd edition [Slovar' yakutskogo yazyka. 2 izdanie]. Leningrad: the USSR Academy of Sciences, 1958-1959, 3858 p.
- [2] V. F. Troshchansky, Evolution of the black faith (shamanism) in the Yakuts [Evolutsiya chernoj very (shamanstva) u yakutov]. Kazan: the Imperial University, 1902, 219 p.
- [3] V. M. Ionov, "The spirit - master of the forest of the Yakuts", in Collection of the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography under the Imperial Academy of Sciences [Sbornik Muzeya antropologii i ehtnografii pri Imperatorskoj akademii nauk], 1916, Vol. 4, No 1, 43 p.
- [4] A. E. Kulakovskiy, Scientific works [Nauchnye trudy]. Yakutsk: Book publ., 1979, 484 p.
- [5] P. A. Oyuunuskai, Selected works [Izbrannye proizvedeniya]. Yakutsk: Yakutsk Book Publ., 1975, 432 p.

- [6] G. U. Ergis, Essays on the Yakut folklore [Ocherki po yakutskomu fol'kloru]. Moscow: Science, 1974, 402 p.
- [7] N. A. Alekseev, Ethnography and folklore of the peoples of Siberia [Ehtnografiya i fol'klor narodov Sibiri]. Novosibirsk: Science, 2008, 494 p.
- [8] A. I. Gogolev, Mythological world of the Yakuts. Deities and spirits are patrons [Mifologicheskij mir yakutov. Bozhestva i dukhi-pokroviteli]. Yakutsk: TsKII named after A. E. Kulakovskiy Publ., 1994, 29 p.
- [9] A. N. Danilova, The image of a female hero in the Yakut olonkho [Obraz zhenshhiny bogatyrki v yakutskom olonkho]. Novosibirsk: Nauka, 2014, 166 p.
- [10] A. A. Kuzmina, Olonkho of Vilyui region: existence, plot-composition structure, images [Olonkho Vilyujskogo regiona: bytovanie, syuzhetno-kompozitsionnaya struktura, obrazy]. Novosibirsk: Nauka, 2014, 160 p.
- [11] N. A. Orosina, Tattinskaya local tradition of the Yakut epic olonkho: forms of existence, the main images and motives. Doct. diss. [Tattinskaya lokal'naya traditsiya yakutskogo ehposa olonkho: formy bytovaniya, osnovnye obrazy i motivy. Dokt.Diss.]. Yakutsk, 2015, 25 p.
- [12] Khan Djargistai: Olonkho [Khaan D'argystaj: Olonkho]. Yakutsk: Alaas, 2016, 232 p.