

УДК 821:398.2

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CONNECTION BETWEEN A NEW VERSION OF “DONKEY-EARED KING TALE” AND HUNNU’S HISTORY

The article attempted to clarify some features of a new version of “Donkey-eared King tale” and prove whether the king is included in which type of tale on the basis of example and evidence.

The oral version is told from grandmother Norjin to P. Tsevegmid, resident of Kharikhan soum, Arkhangai province. We recorded the oral version this year (2020) while we were travelling through the countryside. The oral version is related to historical memory as the donkey-eared king’s ruin which is located at a distance of 22 kilometers from Kharikhan soum, Arkhangai province. Although this version is similar to narration of “Donkey-eared king tale” in Magic Corpse tale of ancient India and Tibet and Mongolia, some parts of the version are different from them. Therefore, we attempted to introduce an oral version of “Donkey-eared king tale” in scientific research.

Key words: *narration, role, artistic features, donkey-eared king tale and oral and written version.*

Introduction

There are many tales about “Donkey-eared king”. The tale was widely spread through many countries such as India, Tibet, Ordos, Kazakh, Kirgiz, Tuva, China, Korean Poland, Portugal and Mongolia etc., and included national differences such as lifestyle, tradition and customs of the country. For example: in some oral and written version, rice flour is mixed by mother milk, grasped in the hand and is eaten by the king. In hot countries, rice flour is mixed by mother milk, whereas dried curd made of mother milk is eaten. Narration of the tale is changed depending on the nation’s features [1; 3; 4; 5; 6; 7; 8; 10].

Especially, “Magic corpse tale” that was originated from India and Tibet is translated and changed by Mongolian writers and translators, converted to Mongolian version in compliance with Mongolian life, tradition and customs according to domestic and (Ts. Damdinsuren, L. Khurelbaatar, D. Tserensodnom and R. Chultemsuren etc.) and foreign researchers’ research (B. Ya. Vladimartsov, Potanin, Mostar etc.). There is written version of “Donkey-eared king tale” in “Magic corpse tale” of India, Tibet and Mongolia. This version was widely spread through Mongolia, scholars and researchers collected and printed oral and folktales related to this version in connection with national and ethnical differences, folktale and dialect.

For research of these works and folktales, R. Chultemsuren, folktale researcher and professor compared 3 written version and 9 oral versions in article themed “Narration and features of donkey-eared king tale”. Ts. Sukhbaatar (Ph.D) newly researched narration of “Donkey-eared king tale” of Portugal, “Midas King” and “Bob King tale” of Greece in the research of “Donkey-eared prince tale”. Among these, there is no a version of “Donkey-eared king tale” that was recorded by us. Therefore, we are emphasizing an oral version of the tale in the article.

Main part.

One.

A long time ago, a poor mom lived with a son. A king of the land where both the mom and son lived, had floppy ears shaped just like the ears of a donkey. Because the king was very embarrassed about his ears, the king got his hair cut by a three year old boy and then the boy was killed after the cutting.

One day, a son of the poor mom encountered a turn to cut the king’s hair. She sucked her breast milk, boiled milk curd till to dry curd, filled it in the bag, put in her son’s pocket, said “My son! While cutting the king’s hair, eat this curd”. The son came in the king’s palace, got out the dried curd from his pocket, ate it little by little. The king saw it and said “let met taste it”. The son gave the curd given by his mom, the king tasted it and the king liked the taste. Then both of them ate and ate. Finally, the curd in the bag was finished. The curd that was full in the bag was completed and the boy completed to cut the king’s hair. The king asked from the son “How was the curd made”, the son said “My mom gave it to me, she made it of her milk”. The king answered “both of us tasted milk of same mom, so we became brothers. I will not cut off your head. You don’t say about my ears to the people. You must promise never to tell anyone that I have ears shaped like a donkey. Let my hair keep being cut by you. When you cut my hair, you bring the tasteful curd to me”. The king decreed so and gave many gifts to the son.

Then, the poor mom’s son cut the king’s hair, the king gave the son many gifts so many times, both the son and his mom became rich and their life got better. One day, the king came to the king’s palace, had his hair cut as previously and returned to his home. Every time the son was thinking of the king’s ears, it was difficult for him to quit smiling and he whispered in the marmot hole “my king has ears like donkey’s ear”, then, while he lost the tolerance, said many marmots’ hole “My king has ears like donkey’s ears”. The local people heard his words and knew the king has big years like the donkey’s ears, all of them kept talking to each other. Very soon the whole village knew about the king’s ears and they all giggled and laughed because they now knew why the king always covered up his head whenever he was out in public. The secrete promise reached to the king. The king got very anxious and cut the son’s head off. Because both of them had become sons of the same mom, he cut his sibling’s head off, the heavens became angry at the king’s action. Then it thundered and the king’s palace was destroyed.

This land is located along basin of Khan Khunui at a distance of 22 kilometers from Kharikhan soum, Arkhangai province. The local people named it as Donkey-eared king’s ruin and kept telling the story until now.

The oral version is told from grandmother Norjin to P. Tsevegmid, resident of Kharikhan soum, Arkhangai province, we recorded the oral version this year (2020) while we were travelling through the countryside.

A. Some features of a new oral version to be distinguished from other versions.

Our recorded version is different from other versions by some features. Herein:

1. Most of the tales are described that the old grandmother made mixed flour by her breast milk. This version described the son’s mom as very poor. In the tales of the previous researched tales the son’s mom was not described in this way.

2. This oral version certainly described the son’s age. Other versions do not have such a description. This is artistic exaggeration and the child’s reckless actions were described in this version.

3. The mom made curd by her breast milk. In other versions, flour and finger –shaped curd are used. From dairies, dried curd is used in Mongolian version, whereas, this new version dried curd was

selected because firstly, boiled and dried curd is tastier than other dairies, secondly, in land where the version was spread (Khaikhan soum, Arkhangai province), the boiled and dried curd is widely used.

4. The king gave many gifts to the son many times, both of the son and the mom's life got better. This narration is not described in other versions. This made the tale more interesting and clarified the meaning that both of the king and the son had the same mom.

5. In many versions of "Donkey-eared king tale", the boy whispered into mouse's hole and said, "our king has ears like donkey's ears". In Mongolian and our researching of this version, the son whispered into marmot's hole and it is similar to other versions. In other version, the animals announced about the king's ear to the people, whereas in the new version, the son said, "Our king has ears like donkey's ears", the people heard his secret whispering, and the local people began to know about the king's floppy ears. So, the Mongolian version and our researching version are different oral versions of other countries stories.

6. General meaning, idea and civil life mode of many versions of the tale are similar. This is enriched by new real role and artistic role and reflects different narration depending on national features.

7. The end of most of the tales of donkey-eared king is similar. But this version is different. In other oral version, the tale is ended by people's disliking the king's ears. At the end of this new version, the king beheaded the son with whom he shared the same mom. Then, the sky is angered at the king's action, thunders and destroyed the king's palace. So, this version described people's belief in the sky.

R. Chultemsuren (Ph.D and professor) concluded the tale with same theme and common narration that many versions of "Donkey-eared king tale" has combined the natures of myth, historical legend and folktale [9, p. 67]. We are agreed with it because our recorded version has ethnical and oral evidences and is connected with historical memorial places of Mongolia. So, we consider that this version is connected with natures of myth, historical legend and folktale.

S. Badamkhatan, scholar and researcher emphasized that there are many places in Mongolia relating to this version. For example, there are Donkey-eared king's ruin at Guchin Hovd soum and Guchin Us soum of Uvurkhangai province and Donkey-eared king's road in Nariinteel soum of Uburkhangai province and Taats lake of Bayankhongor province. "Donkey-eared king tale" similar to it with land name and ethnical connection are common [2].

B. On the role of the new version of "Donkey-eared king tale"

In observing role's natures and features of the new version, the king has floppy ears like donkey's ears similar to most versions. But, the age of the son is different from role from the other versions. Firstly, this version certainly specified the son's age. So, the narration got more abstract and artistic. Secondly, in Mongolian oral version, the son promised to keep secret about the king's floppy ears. Then, it was very difficult to keep the king's secret, he got anxious and nervous, visited a doctor, and his mom advised to say it into the mouse hole [9, p. 69]. Mental state of the son was not described in our recorded version. This version is connected with the reckless behavior of a child.

In addition, in new oral version, the mom's role is similar to mom's role of the other version, mother's sympathetic behavior for her child was described. The version certainly described Mongolian mom's mild manner and noble-minded behavior. In most versions, the king is described with long floppy ears. This description precisely illustrated conflict between simple people and the royals, thus this version illustrated civil lifestyle.

So, this new version is similar to versions of other versions themed "Donkey-eared king tale", but different depending on national features, lifestyle, tradition and customs.

Two. Connection of Donkey-eared king's ruin and Hun's history

As mentioned above, "Donkey-eared king tale" is connected to "Donkey-eared king's ruin" in Kharikhan soum, Arkhangai province. From basin of these rivers, historical and memorial findings are commonly found. For example, geographic location of Khanui and Hunui rivers.



Figure 1. Khunui river

Khunui river at Kharikhan soum, Arkhangai is originated from eastern side of Teeliin Tsagaan Nuruu and Bugatiit mountain range and flows through territory of Erdenemandal, Ikhtamir and Khairkhan soum northward 120 kilometers and merges with Khanui river. The basin of this river is marshlike. The river's name is originated from word as Hun according to B. Ryenchin. From the basin of Hunui river, historical and memorial findings are commonly found. For example, Gol Mod place in Khairkhan soum (<https://mn.wikipedia.org>) [12]. The special features of Hun river was researched and stated by scholar Ts. Batmunkh in article "From History of Hun empire recorded in the history" as specified below.

Wonder of bronze time
 Time two thousand years ago.
 A walled ruin of Hun empire (BC 300 to AD 100)
 Tsorog ditch of Hunui river
 Hunui river originated from Hun empire
 Legendary river rich of stone monuments
 Ishgen Degt and Khadat Khoshuu
 Hunui river with weird legend [13].



Figure 2. Hanui river

Hanui river is originated from Khan-Undur mountain of Khangai mountain range, flows 421 kilometers northeastward and merges with western branch of Selenge river. Water collecting area is 14 620 km². Along basin of the Hunau river, there are many extinct volcanos. Basin of upper part of the river has forest and the river has many curves. The width is 110 m, depth is 2.2 m, flow speed is 0,5 to 3,5 m/c, flows along cliff of basalt rocks and rubble rocks. Average flow is 15 cubic meters. There are fishes of Selenge river. Hunui river merges with Hanui river.



Figure 3. Basin of Hanui and Hunui river

Basin of Hanui and Hunui rivers is homeland of ancient nomadic people. Especially, archeologists consider that territory of Khaikhan, Ulziit, ERdenemandal and Battsengel soums of Arkhangai province is homeland of hun empire. Soon, Luut city was found and it was announced as capital of ancient Hun empire, Archeologist T. Iderkhangai precisely made exploration in territory of Erdenemandal, Khaikhan, Ulziit, Tsenkher and Erdenebulgan soums of Arkhangai province, new memorial places were found from northern parts of the places [11]. Scholar Ts. Batmunkh recorded features and natures of the basin and wrote in "From history of Hun empire":

With spirit of Hun ancestors
 My homeland of Hunui river
 With Khan Undur mountain
 My land is Hanui river.
 At the basin of three rivers
 At valley of Gol Mod
 Modun khan of Hun empire
 Fell into deep slumber.

A ruin on a small hill at basin of Khanui and Hunui rivers at distance of 22 kilometers from Khaikhan soum, Arkhangai province is called as "Donkey-eared king's ruin" by local people. As illustrated in the tale, the king killed the younger brother, the sky became angry with him, and destroyed the king's palace and his people. Only this ruin was left. This ruin is closed by basin Hanui and Hunui rivers and it is more abrupt and difficult to reach for people and animals. In crossing the river and rounding by northern part of the mountain, there is walled ruin like wall around the city. The ruin covers 250 m² area. The site around it does not have tree and bushes, restricted by small hills and mountains from northern mountain and faced to sun-rising direction. It was surrounded by Hanui and Hunui rivers like natural fortification to protect from enemy.



Figure 4. Historical memorial places at “Donkey-eared king”
(being kept in Museum of Kharikhan soum, Arkhangai province)

Human-shaped rock monument without head, lion and wild sheep-shaped rock monuments were beside “Donkey-eared king’s ruin”, these were carried in socialist time (1980s) and located at the gate of cultural center of the soum. Now, these findings are kept in museum of Khaikhan soum. Moreover, at a distance of 40 meters from the ruin, parallelepiped shaped, black and smooth rock with hole at the center was found. This rock is seen as like an idol and sacrifice rock. Therefore, possibly, this place was trace relating to Hun empire.

CONCLUSION

1. Although this new version of “Donkey-eared king tale” is similar to versions of the previous researches, some parts of the tale are different and distinguished depending on natural and ethnical lifestyle, tradition and customs. In addition, this oral version is version combined from myth, historical legend and folktales.

2. Because this oral version is new evidence and is oral ethnical evidence, this version is very important for research.

3. Historical memorial place as “Donkey-eared king’s palace” at Kharikhan soum, Arkhangai province should be precisely researched.

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СВЯЗЬ МЕЖДУ НОВОЙ ВЕРСИЕЙ “СКАЗКИ О КОРОЛЕ С ОСЛИНЫМИ УШАМИ” И ИСТОРИЕЙ ХУННУ

В статье предпринята попытка прояснить некоторые особенности новой версии “Сказки о короле с ослиными ушами” и доказать, включен ли король в какой-либо тип сказки на основе ряда примеров и доказательств.

Устная версия рассказана бабушкой Норджин П. Цевегмиду, жительницей Харихан сум, провинции Архангай. Мы записали устную версию в 2020 году, когда путешествовали по сельской местности. Устная версия связана с исторической памятью, такой как руины замка короля с ослиными ушами, которые находятся на расстоянии 22 километров от Харихан-сума в провинции Архангай. Хотя эта версия “Сказки о короле с ослиными ушами” похожа на повествование сказки о Волшебном трупе древней Индии, Тибета и Монголии, некоторые части версии отличаются от них. Поэтому мы попытались внедрить устную версию “Сказки о короле с ослиными ушами” в научные исследования.

Ключевые слова: повествование, роль, художественные особенности, сказка о короле с ослиными ушами, устная и письменная версии.