



SUMMARY

The Udehe are the people of Manchu-Tungusic group living in the South of the Far East (Primorsky territory and the southern parts of the Khabarovsk region). At the beginning of the 20th century they were a half nomadic people in their way of life in the mountaineous taiga down the slopes of the Sikhote-Alin', along the upper and middle reaches of the Ussuri tributaries and the shores of the Japanese sea.

This was a sort of an ecological niche for the Udehe, which determined their traditional economy: hunting and fishery, including the laying in of salmon for winter. Their hunting equipment included a spear, a bow, a cross-bow with metal points and nets for catching the sable. They employed nets and harpoons for fishing. In winter they used dog-teams as a means of transportation. The Udehe used to build both permanent and temporary lodgings, i.e. summer and winter booths or tree-houses in which a hunter spent a night wandering in the taiga in seach of animals.

As for their religious beliefs, the Udehe were shamanists.

In the 30s, during the period of collectivisation, all the Udehe were forcibly made to settle, as it was supposed to improve their life. As a result, by the beginning of the 40s they had lost their ethnic territory and occupied only nine major settlements. According to the census of 1989 there are only 1,9 thousand Udehe. Regrettably, only a few of them, mostly people over 50 or 60 still know their language and culture rather well.

Along with the Nanai, Ulcha, Orok and Oroch languages the Udehe belongs to the southern branch of the Manchu-Tungusic languages.

It was in the middle of the 19th century that the collectors of the Udehe folklore began recording it. One can distinguish four types of folklore records.

1. Short renderings in Russian or some other European language. One can see them in ethnographer's diaries or in expedition records of the explorers such as short reproductions of the Udehe tales in Polish in the field diaries by S. Poniatowski (1914), the reproduction of an improvised song by M. Ven'ukoy (1868) and a shaman practice written down by S.N. Brailovski (1898).

2. The Russian records (directly from the narrator or with the help of an interpreter). This was the method of V.K. Arseniev. In the 50s it was also used by B. Mozhayev.

3. The texts rendered in the Udehe language. There are many of them in the story of the first Udehe author Jansi Kimonko "Where the Sukpai flows" written in the Udehe, but published only in Russian.

4. The recording of texts in the Udehe began in the 30s of the present century and was performed by Y.R. Schneider. In 1936 he prepared the first publication of the Udehe folklore, the texts and scientific translations. The volume included 21 texts — tales, stories, riddles, historical and ancestral legends — as well as research commentaries. Unfortunately, Y.R. Schneider was subjected to repressions and his book was not published. Of all that he had collected only two tales were published in the children's book "Selemaga". In 1936 Udehe texts were recorded by Schneider's post-graduate Y.N. Baskakova who was subjected to repressions as well and whose texts have not yet been published.

Since the 60s the texts have been recorded (in the written form and on a tape-recorder) by an Udehe V.T. Kialundziuga. The texts of her archive seem to be the best as they had been recorded by a person of the native folklore media who understood the narrators perfectly well. In 1985 V.T. Kialundziuga helped the members of the Novosibirsk research folklore expedition to record some Udehe narrators on the modern compact-disks.

Since the 50s the Udehe folklore has been collected by L.I. Sem and in the 70s it was recorded by Y.I. Sheikin, a musicologist. Recently some works of the Udehe folklore have been recorded by A.Kh. Girfanova and Y.V. Perekhval'skaya.

The present volume is the first academic publication of the Udehe folklore. The compilers included into it the works of various folklore genres — tales, legends, songs and riddles — of the various territorial Udehe groups.

The volume consists of two parts. The first and the larger part contains 78 works of folklore including Udehe tales and recitative monologues, the stories of ancient life and customs, some historical and fairy legends, riddles, taboos and simple songs. The second part of the volume includes Udehe myths, tales and legends recorded by V.K. Arseniev (about 50 works).

The volume is supplied with a disc of the Udehe music and the notation.

The folklore of the Udehe has been investigated rather poorly in comparison with that of the other Manchu-Tungusic groups.

On the whole, the Udehe folklore seems to be on the same level as that of other peoples of the Siberian and American North. The characteristic features of this level are the vagueness of genre borders, the existence of both pre-shaman and shaman mythology and the weakness of the epic tradition.

The process of genre formation has not yet been completed which makes the classification of the Udehe folklore works very difficult. Of course, there are many works that can be definitely referred to myths, tales or legends, but there are others involving mythological or shaman motifs (see N 13, 14, 18,

19 etc.). With greater certainty we can refer to the tale genre N 2, 3 though there are among them some unusual for the European reader tales of animals, the masters of the taiga and the elements (N 1, 4).

The problem of epic genres is especially complex. We cannot possibly speak of the Manchu-Tungusic epos as of a genre since this group of works has just begun to form and at present it is but a mixture of various genre traditions and motifs. Nevertheless, there are a number of epic features such as an unusual birth, the hero's matchmaking, the father-in-law's trial of a son-in-law, etc. It would probably be more proper to call these narrations heroic tales.

One of the remarkable features of the Udehe folklore in any kind of tales is aetiological insets — why the Manchu deer's rump is red (N 24), why the tomtit's head is black (N 3), how the birds got such firm beaks and talons (N 3), why the hair's ear-tips are black (N 35).

The Udehe themselves divide all the narrative genres into two classes — nimanku and telungu. Nimanku includes the works different in their origin, function and artistic form, those of mythological, everyday, heroic and aetiological character. All the peoples of the Manchu-Tungusic group (except the Manchu) know the term nimanku (or nimnakan) and all of them divide their oral works into the two major classes. The word-root nima- (nimna-) means in the Manchu-Tungusic languages "to practise shamanism" and is connected with the most ancient ideas of a man about the magic of words. At present nimanku are taken by the folklore natives as the works of imagination and fancy, which distinguishes them from telungu narrating of the actions that supposedly took place in reality. Here are some subjects of the Udehe nimanku.

1. A large bird dropped its dung on a young girl (belie*) and the girl got pregnant. She left her parents, married a young man (yegdyga) and gave birth to a son. Once when the yegdyga went hunting there came seven wolves and devoured the child. The wife climbed up the shaman pole and asked a raven to tell her husband of the misfortune. The husband killed the wolves, put their carcasses into seven bark boxes and delivered them to the old woman — the Mother of the wolves who did not suspect these were her cubs and ate the meat. Only in the last box did she find the heads of her sons and full of grief turned into a wolf too (N 26, cf. N 105 (31) by Arseniev).

2. Once upon a time there lived a poor old man and a rich old man. The poor man lay down by an ice-hole and pretended to be dead. A hare found him and together with other hares brought the man home. There the old man and his wife killed all the hares and only one of them managed to run away. But the old woman touched his ears with an oven fork and they became black. The rich old man tried to repeat the trick, but he could not. In another case the poor old man prepared the glew and spread it over a tree. Many birds got stuck to the tree. The rich old man tried to do the same, but instead got stuck to the tree together with his whole family (N 35; a common Manchu-Tungusic subject).

*For the terms belie and yegdyga see later.

3. A fox asks a heron to give him her nestlings as if for wives and eats the little ones. An eagle-own opens the foolish heron's eyes and she refuses the fox. Then the fox catches a halcyon and is about to swallow it but the bird tells the fox first to ask Bua the spirit for permission. The fox opens his mouth and the bird flies away, while the fox falls into a precipice (N 37; versions of the first part of the nimanku may be observed among all the Manchu-Tungusic peoples).

Unlike the nimanku, the telungu speak of real authentic actions that can evoke no doubt among narrator's listeners. Telungu reflect either the ethnic mentality or the people's concept of themselves and the surrounding world. Some of the telungu speak of the tribal norms and of the punishment for violating them.

Here are some telungu subjects.

1. Once there were two suns shining above the earth. And it was unbearably hot. A yegdyga (a young man) shot into one of them and it turned into a moon. Life became nice and beautiful. The myth is spread in the Amur region (N 5). Arseniev's version: The moon was a man, and the sun — a woman; they shone together and everything was dying from the scorching heat. Three old men decided to shoot into the sun. After that the moon began shining at night (N 81 (7)).

2. A man was chased by singmu — a monster. For a long time the man was rushing up and down the hill, then he threw away what he carried and thus managed to get rid of the persecutor (N 59; all the Manchu-Tungusic peoples of the Amur region have such a myth; see N 60).

3. Once some Udehe went upon the ice hunting for seals. Suddenly the storm began and they were carried off to Japan where they live now. These are the Udehe from the tribe of Bosa (N 118 (4)).

4. The Udehe from the river of Shoomi took wives from the river of Nakhtoku but they did not give their daughters in exchange. Then the settlers of Nakhtoku took the Shoomi girls and women by force. When the men were returning home two of their boats were crashed by the landslide and got drowned. It was supposed that the evil spirits punished them for taking the married women and thus violating the tribal law (N 120 (46)).

Nimanku and telungu differ considerably. Nimanku are characterised by all the tropes and all the beauties of the language. The main peculiarity of the heroic nimanku are the sung monologues — a kind of arias sung at the culminating moments of the narration (see N 15, 16, 19, 23, 25, 30, 34 and others). The singing of monologues is always begun by some special words that have now lost their initial semantics. This device is peculiar to the folklore of all the Manchu-Tungusic peoples and it must have been connected with some rituals in the past.

Telungu are usually not very long, they are performed in the every-day language, and have no alliteration, rhythm or tropes.

The main personages of the Udehe folklore are belie, a young girl, and yegdyga, a young man, who embody the ideal features of a man and a woman.

The etymology of the words *belie* and *yegdyga* is obscure. In the folklore of other Manchu-Tungusic peoples the analogous personages are called *puji*(n) and *merge*(n). One of the most important personages of the Udehe folklore is *Kanda*, an old man. He is the forefather, sometimes the main hero's father-in-law or simply an old man.

Belie and *yegdyga* are usually endowed with shaman abilities. Besides that, the *yegdyga* is extremely strong and the *belie* is a fine needle-woman. The best characteristics of the *belie* and *yegdyga* are not much spoken about, they are hidden in the depths of the text. It is only gradually that the fine characters of the beautiful *belie* and the courageous *yegdyga* are revealed to the listener.

The ritual folklore is presented in the volume by only one piece of shamanism (N 62) as the practice of shamanism is disappearing now among the Udehe.

Not very numerous are also the riddles (N 47), taboos and omens (N 51). Taboos (the Udehe "*sondo*") are widely spread among all the Manchu-Tungusic peoples. They are concise and more detailed formulas of behaviour. Thus 1. The bear's eyes should not be eaten. When a bear is killed his eyes should be placed into a split tree (N 51.2). 2. One should not laugh at a physically handicapped or suffering man. It is forbidden (N 51.12). In the past there existed a great number of taboos that ruled the tribal society's life. *Sondo* (taboos) have a definite structure — "it is forbidden to do this or that". Sometimes this "minimal" *sondo* is followed by an explanation of what penalty is awaiting the transgressor. If one has eaten the animal's tail which he should not have eaten, he will always hear some rustle while walking about the taiga and will be filled with constant fear (N 51.8). At present such taboos have almost disappeared in everyday life and only some very old men remember some *sondos*. Very few *sondos* are observed now, those connected with hunting.

The Udehe, as well as all the representatives of the southern Manchu-Tungusic peoples, had no specific dances. Besides the songs inserted into the *nimanku*, the Udehe have several types of songs: traditional lyrical songs (N 67, 69), the so-called "personal" songs (N 61, 65), dedication songs and improvisation songs (N 72). Lyrical and "personal" songs are very much alike — they are always biographical, composed by the narrator; other people have no right to sing them. "Personal" songs usually speak of a man's life or the hardest periods of his life (N 61).

The second part of the volume contains the Ude (Udehe) folklore collected at the beginning of the 20th century by the Far East explorer and author V.K. Arseniev (1872—1930).

Vladimir Klavdievich Arseniev came to the Far East in 1900 as a military topographer. Later he was promoted to the rank of a lieutenant-colonel of the tsar's army. He lived in Khabarovsk and Vladivostok. Arseniev wrote some superb books of his travels: "*Dersu Uzala*", "*Through taiga*", "*Through the thickets of the Ussuriisk region*". Throughout his life Arseniev studied and described the nature of the Far East. He was also interested in ethnography. Arseniev's archives contain a lot of travel diaries full of ethnographical,

geological, botanical and archaeological data. So far only fragments of these diaries have been published.

The greater part of Arseniev's folklore materials has been taken from his travel notes. The first tales appeared in Arseniev's notes in 1907. Arseniev considered folklore very important for the ethnographical studies. He recorded the folklore of the Udehe, the Oroch, the Nanai, the Evenki, the Manchu and even the Koriak. Arseniev always wrote his notes in Russian sometimes inserting words and expressions of the aboriginals. The greater number of the texts are devoted to the Udehe folklore. Some of them were published in Arseniev's books (N 76 (2), 102 (28)).

Arseniev's materials include 28 myths, 8 legends and 13 tales. Some subjects have parallels in the folklore of other Manchu-Tungusic peoples (N 76 (2), 82 (8), 83 (9)), many of them coincide almost fully with the records made in the 70s and the 80s (N 105 (31) and 14; N 107 (3) and 31; N 108 (34) and 21; N 111 (37) and 34; N 112 (38) and 42). There are among Arseniev's texts some unique specimens reflecting the most ancient pre-shaman concepts of the Ude. Such is the myth of "Tagu-Mother and Chinihe" (N 85 (11)) telling of the heavenly husband and wife Chinihe and Tagu and of how the old woman Tagu sends the children's souls to the earthly world. Judging from Arseniev's notes the cult of women was of great importance in the life of the Udehe.

In spite of the absence of the original in the Udehe language, Arseniev's materials are extremely valuable now. They present a rather exhaustive rendering of the subjects made at the beginning of the century when the Ude culture and folklore were integral and living.

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