

## PORTRAYALS OF THE GOOD AND THE EVIL IN THE KAZAKH FAIRY TALES

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**Abstract:** The concepts of the good and the evil are known as key concepts in every culture. The concepts of the good and the evil are brightly depicted in national fairy tales. In general one can hardly imagine certain culture without the most difficult and important concepts. Concepts are limited in number as not all notions are considered to be concept. Only those phenomena which are of great importance for certain culture and can serve as titles for proverbs and sayings, poetic and prose texts can be regarded as concept. In Kazakh culture the complex structure of concepts “the good and the evil” can be seen in materials collected from national fairy tales.

**Keywords:** Concept; Kazakh fairy tales; the good and the evil; Kazakh culture; folklore; images of the good and the evil.

### INTRODUCTION

Folklore is an art created by folk wisdom, and the fairy tale is one of the primary genres in folklore. It is known that wisdom and spirit of every community are better reflected in traditions. As for the folklore and fairy tales, they depict a worldview and traits of people’s character. Reading fairy tales helps to know the language and better comprehend other ethnoses to reach mutual understanding or restore the relationships as well.

Fairy tale genre is an embellished and developed type of folk prose that is classics of the folklore genre. The value of the fairy tales in education has been made clear. They also appeal to the aesthetic sense of the reader or listener. Kaskabassov, S. (1984) says that “In works of such genre the description of life doesn’t conclude the cognitive purpose, vice versa, it aims to persuade a person, and to make a great impression on the reader or listener, tries to bring pleasure”. Fairy tale has a variety of functions: educational, artistic and aesthetic. From the point of genre and narrative structure fairy tales also vary. They are internally divided into several types: 1) fairy tales about animals; 2) fairy tales, heroic tales; 3) an adventure tales, satirical tales.

Reading fairy tales, one gets acquainted with history, life and culture of other people. Fairy tales as national wealth exist in almost every culture. They depict the outlook of the people, life principles, dreams, fantasies and other special features. From the majority of tales of early times one can clearly see their worldview, the way they comprehended natural phenomena.

In the XIX century such turkologists as Sh. Ualikhanov, Y. Altynsarin, A. Divayev, V. Radlov, G. Potanin, I. Berezin, A. Alektorov, P. Melioranskiy began

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to systematize Kazakh fairy tales which were the priceless heritage passing from generation to generation. In ten volumes "Examples of national literature of Turkic tribes" V.V. Radlov published many epic poems and fairy tales of Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Uighur, Uzbek, Azerbaijan and many other Turkic tribes. Kazakh scholar, A. Konyratbayev, A.(1991) in his work has pointed out "...that epic poetry, fairy tales, fables, aitys, proverbs and sayings, mourning, wedding songs are written in purely national language". Later at the beginning of the twentieth century Kazakh fairy tales had been of great interest to K. Zhumaliyev and Y. Ysmayilov. We should mention their followers, as M. Gabdullin, B. Kenzhebayev, Kh. Suinshaliyev, S.Sadyrbayev who made an extraordinary contribution to investigating and systematizing fairy tales from different aspects, too. Another scholar who thoroughly studied Kazakh fairy tales and devoted a separate chapter to them in his research work "History of Kazakh literature" was Mukhtar Auezov. The scholar divided this small sized epics into three domains (fairy tales; tales about animals; traditional fairy tales) and described each of them in a detailed way. Moreover classification and typology of fairy tales have been developed since 1970. Kaskabassov S.A. devoted his monograph (1972-1973) to the origin of fairy tales; meanwhile Tursynov E.D. studied and published the origin of ritual tales. In 1979 the first academic edition of tales about animals was published. Therefore the study of Kazakh fairy tales has become a huge and important field within the science of national folklore.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The materials for the research paper were collected from the Kazakh fairy tales and from literary works. The main research methods are descriptive, comparative and componential analyses.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

In general magic is often an element for many events in Kazakh fairy tales. Such magic tales appeared when a human being did not completely understand the natural phenomena. "Yer Tostik", "Altyn saka (Golden peever)", "Zhalgyz kozdi dau (The one-eyed giant)", "Kerqula atty Kendebai (Kendebai named as Kerqula)", "Zherden shykkan Zhelim batyr (Zhelim batyr emerging from nowhere)", "Kun astyndagy Kunikei kyz (Kunikei girl under the sun)" are the most outstanding examples of magic fairy tales. In these fairy tales people who experienced the courage against evil forces were brave warriors, bowmen as Yer Tostik, Kendebai, Zhelim heroes. They always protect their families from enemies as zhalmauyz kempyr (the Gluttonous Mouth, or the Copper Old Woman-Witch), diyu (giant), zheztyrnak (a woman-demon with sharp nails), mystan kempir (witch). In this regard S. Kaskabassov (1979) says: "Kazakh fairy tales feature a bowman, Kunikei beauty or the golden-haired girl from humans along with zhalmayuz (monster), kazyk ayak (witch with bone leg), karga tumsyk kempir (sharp-nosed witch), zheztyrnak, zhalgyz kozdy

zhalmauyz (one-eyed monster), zheti basty zhalmauyz (monster with seven heads) and other giants”. The subjects of the Kazakh fairy tales vary greatly. They depict the conflict between the good and the evil throughout the tale. For example, in ritual tales the following characters have been created to describe good and bad personality traits: an old and wise preceptor, a stupid son, Tazsha bala (bald-headed child), Kanbak shal (a little old man), the poor, the greedy rich person, dreadful king, khans.



Figure 1: “Yer Tostik” [Illustrated by Natalya Nagibina]

The main purpose of such fairy tales is to educate, bring up and give advice. They advocate the idea that one can reach everything by power of wisdom, labour and truth. Ritual fairy tales show that every person should have such traits as adroitness, prudence and patience to achieve his/her purposes and happiness in life. These tips can be found in such tales as “Ush osiet” (Three precepts), “Ake osieti” (Father’s words), “Akyldy kenes” (A word to the wise). In short, intelligence and humanism always win and those who want to gain fortune by dishonesty never win in works of such genres and personality traits as kindness and cruelty, uprightness and partiality, meanness and mercy are clearly and skillfully described in ritual tales.

The tales appeared as a type of oral tradition in literature long ago even before the Kazakhs had their writing system. National tales are one of the effective tools of child rearing. They depict national history, customs and traditions, relationships between people, the best personality traits of Kazakh people as diligence, love to motherland and hospitality.

According to S. Uzakbayeva (2013) “national tales are composed in correspondence with children’s age differences, their aim and interests, wishes and requirements and are distinguished by their imagery and impact on the feelings”.

In the “Good and evil” tale which begins with “once upon a time there lived two men called “the Good and the Evil” (Kazakh tales, 2003) two contrasting notions have been completely revealed.

“Nevertheless, you are a human being! You are prone to error! Even if you played low on, and I’ll do the decent thing to you” (Kazakh tales, 2003). These words make a person ponder over how the Good does the right thing to the Evil, how the

Evil immediately forgets everything, always thinks about dishonest acts, but at the end suffers from its own deeds. Even the end of the fairy tale ends with "So, the Good achieved its goals as it did the right things while the Evil became the prey for predators by its own mistakes" (Kazakh tales, 2003). There are many Kazakh quotes that prove the idea implied in "Bad penny always comes back", "Return good to the evil". Kazakh scholar, Akhmetov, Z. (2002), in his work "Scientific description of Kazakh manuscripts" has collected different groups of Kazakh fairy tales. The collection includes "good to the good", "good to the evil" fairy tales. The first tale tells about three men trapped in the dark cage who later could get rid of the problem due to their good deeds, the latter narrates about repaying bad to the good by featuring certain characters: the passenger traveling back from India who tried to save a serpent from a fire, but later the serpent turns into a dragon, who wants to swallow his rescuer, because it is sure that people always do evil to the good.

One of the true tales which helps to have a better understanding of the good and the evil is "Ayaz biy" tale. Once upon a time there lived Khan who ordered to his forty viziers to bring the worst bird, the worst grass, the worst person in the world. And Ayaz biy appeared in front of the Khan as the worst person. Ayaz biy says to the Khan "Oh, my lord! I am fifty years old. My peers have got married and rear children. As for me I still have been serving as a servant and follow my master wherever he goes. That's why I am the worst person!" (Kazakh fairy tales, 2003).

Like every fairy tale, this one has a happy end. Ayaz biy got married due to his prudence and at the end of the tale he eventually became the Khan. According to the scholar Gabitkhanuly, K. (2006) only at the end of the story he proved to be smart despite his "miserable living condition". Therefore one's wisdom is always above one's good or bad reputation. On the contrary, knowing what is right or wrong demonstrates one's intelligence. "He put his old torn fur coat and cap in the place where it can be seen as a truthful reminder of the past times, every time he was hesitating and going to pursue a wrong path, he took a glance at his shabby clothes and said: Hey, Ayaz biy! You must never get above yourself for being rich and being a khan! Ayaz biy know what is your strength, as an ant which should know its way! How much wisdom and meaning are there in these words! In such way the tale tells the difference between the good and the evil. It advocates the idea that people should not pursue a wrong path. When people are satisfied with what they have, they will be on the right way.

Gallery of images presented by lion, fox, camel, wolf, and bear which depict the good and the evil in tales is very rich. The researchers Jackendoff, R. S. (1983). Mankeyeva, Zh. (2008) and Tolstaya, S.M. (2010) who considers that animals are recognized as the heroes of fairy tales that remind ancient oral literary tradition and behavior of the person. Animals featuring in animal tales symbolize good and bad personality traits. In such fairy tales there is a profound moral which demonstrates social reality, for example, the fox, crow, magpie are the images which are dominated

by cunning, deceitfulness and tricks; camels, lions, turtles symbolize naivety; wolf in fairy tales traditionally represents greed and anger. It is often portrayed a stupid creature.

Among the tales about animals the most popular one is the Brave Fox. It keeps winning the predators stronger than it. Due to its ability to blend into its surroundings, it is generally viewed as sly and cunning being. The fox entraps the wolf to taste a piece of meat, it deceives the goat using its horns to dig out of the hole, inflicts shame on a naive bear. The story about ‘The Camel, Lion, Wolf and the Fox’ begins with their great friendship. At the end of the tale the fox outwits all the friends and ends up killing them one by one. The moral of the tale is that a true friendship goes hand by hand with a false one.

Another character which can be found in animal tales is a wolf. It features hungry and coward being. It is easily enticed into witty tricks of other animals (fox, sheep, and horse). But it also symbolizes cruelty as tiger, lion and bear. All these animals are also similar in being as stupid as a donkey.

In general, the primary purpose of tales featuring animals is to show bad personality traits as evil, cruelty, meanness, greediness, hypocrisy together with good traits as kindness, devotion, intelligence by means of animals. In fact this group of tales is not about animals, they are about human beings. They set the goal to depict traits of human character through animals. Sh.Mazhitayeva, Sh. and others (2015) believe thus, human wisdom, foolishness, cruelty and evil are described in a simple allegorical manner.

Zhalmauyz kempyr is a mythical character which spread only the evil. In the tale “Altyn saka” the Copper Old Woman appears from “a lung floating in the lake” (Tales of the Kazakh, 2003). In the tale Zhalmauyz kempyr was defeated by a little boy (who lost his altyn saka) with the help of his friends (fox, swallow, dog).



Figure 2: Zhalmauyz kempyr (zheztyrnak) [Illustrated by Natalya Nagibina]

This character had been of great interest to many scholars. "According to Sh. Ualikhanov she was a cannibal-monster. M.O. Auezov in 1939 and 1940 in his work "National Kazakh epic and folklore" published in "Literary critic" journal described zhalmayuz kempir as a seven-headed cannibal. Almukhanova, R. (2009) says that a one-headed cannibal is very similar to the ancient Greek Cyclops and Russian Baba Yaga" (Makovskiy, M. M. , 1996).

According to the researcher Khamitova, G. (2007) in Russian folklore one can meet Baba-Yaga accompanied with Koschey image. Similarly, in the Russian oral tradition (legends, fables and etc.) in literature there are many other magic creatures such as mysterious hermits, mountain spirits, witches and wizards" (Nikitina, S. Y., 1993).

Zhalmayuz kempyr features in "Kerqula atty Kendebay" fairy tale and is depicted in the following way: "Everything is under her control, even every flying bird and running animal" (Tales of the Kazakh, 2003). Moreover, there are some other creatures that symbolized the evil and the cruelty: the Samruk bird, seven-headed giant, a roaring strong lion. In the tale "Yedil-Zhaiyk" the evil is depicted by means of witches and wizards, monster that eats people.

Konyratbayev, A. (1991) says that there are indeed very few tales which can be compared with "Yer Tostik" " by its exposition and plot".

Another negative character that symbolizes cruelty and underworld power in Kazakh folklore is a serpent. "The lord of the Bapa underworld decided to swallow the Sun so there would be eternal darkness on the Earth. Now we are stepping underground in the territory of the Bapa. At the entrance there are sizzling guardians which serve the Lord. Yer-Tostik faces with four large yellow snakes. They are the Lord and his wife with two children (Kazakh folk literature, 1989)". The given extract masterfully describes the heroism of Yer-Tostik, who without any fear went down to the underground to talk to horrifying and disgusting creatures. The battle between the good and the evil has a happy end and the main hero achieves his goal.

Another character that portrays cruelty and violence in Kazakh fairy tales is Zhezyrnyak, a woman-demon with sharp nails who lives in the forest. There is a huge number of tales about this magic creature (Sh. Ualikhanov). According to Kaskabassov, S. (1984) the tales where Zhezyrnyak features has rather vivid descriptions than the stories about demonic forces, a single-eyed giant. "One can enjoy more than just a conflict of people with the monster. It further describes the feelings and emotions of people, surrounding, the night before Zhezyrnyak appears, and the way Zhezyrnyak looks in a skillful way". In the light of the foregoing we want to add "... If you want to gaze at Zhezyrnyak at the daybreak, she looks rather ominous with her bloated belly with long steel nails and silver, gold shashbau decoration (a type of plait decoration) (Kazakh national literature, 1989). This image taken from the tale is called "Zhezyrnyak". The main characters of the story are

Shora batyr and Zheztyrnak. Zheztyrnak's father is depicted in the following way "a one-eyed person on his forehead, riding a camel who lives in the uninhabited mountains" (Kazakh folk literature, 1989). Daughters of Zheztyrnak also appear in some events. At the end of the story Shora batyr was victorious over them.

In the tales belonging to the fantastic type of folk tradition which are very close to the heroic zhysr such as "Yer Tostik", "Kerqula atty Kendebay", "Shora Batyr" main characters are depicted in a unique way that makes them different from others (Yer Tostik, Kendebai, Shora Batyr). We can see their relationship with nature by hunting in mountainous regions, even fairy tale characters are opposed to the surrounding dark forces. However, their personality traits are not fully revealed, only their adventures are narrated. Issina, G.I. (2012) considers that in the narrated stories the good and the evil go hand in hand. Nurdauletova, B.I. (2011) considers stereotype as follows: "A stereotype describes the world view related to the mentality of the cultural community preserving stereotypical concepts about social and cultural objects. From this point of view it is regarded as a component of the concept. World outlook is formed through the system of stereotypes". Thus, zhalmauyz kempyr, diyu, zheztyrnak, lion, dragon, samyruk kus, mystan kempyr images featured in Kazakh tales form only negative stereotype in national worldview.

Here, in national Kazakh tales an old cannibal woman, demons, zheztyrnak, lion, dragon, Samruk bird, mystan kempyr serve to form a negative stereotypes which greatly depict our world picture.

Summing up, we want to refer to the researcher Alibekov, Sh. (1991) who states: '...the philosophical ideas in oral tradition of Kazakh literature are the result of the people's ancient wisdoms and beliefs'. The concepts of the good and the evil are the primary categories of philosophy". These ideas could be better seen in the Kazakh fairy tales, proverbs and sayings, riddles, words of wisdom".

## CONCLUSION

There is a large number (more than four thousand) of fairy tales in Kazakh folklore: animal tales, fairy tales, ritual tales, heroic tales, and humorous tales. National tales teach us how to struggle with subtlety and understand the simple truth. Most of them focus on encouraging children to labor, not to be lazy.

The characters of fairy tales (batyr, zheztyrnak, alyp) help to know what good and bad qualities are (modesty, uprightness, mercy, goodness, subtlety and etc.).

Indeed, in each type of fairy tales the good and the evil and their fight serve as the most important issue. Another good example of the tale in which good and bad human qualities are well depicted is the tale of "Ayaz biy". The story where the khan ordered to find the worst bird, grass, and person makes readers think. The chosen name for the main character raises, once again, the issue of wisdom and the nature of a bad person.



One can see a lot of magical creatures such as zhalmauыз kempyr, diyu, peri in the tales “Yer Tostik”, “Kerqula atty Kendebay”, “Shora Batyr”. Such negative characters form a certain stereotype. The battle of the good against the evil develops throughout the whole story. The animal tale has a great social value and illustrates a moral lesson. Animals personify human qualities and act out human situations. Sh.Mazhitayeva, Sh. (2015) believes that in our daily life we can face with people who are sly as a fox, cruel as a lion, wolf or tiger, naive as camel, turtle or bear. Such examples involuntary recall Krylov’s fables which Abay and Ybyrai (Ibrahim) translated.

Kazakh folklore is the basis for national literature which has its own distinctive features. The fairy tales as a genre of oral tradition are full of life philosophy. Despite their ancient history, tales have not lost their aesthetic, educational value. Konyratbayev, A. (1991) suggested that “In Kazakh folklore art nothing could be compared with a fairy tale. Because it is an indicator of the community psychology”.

Thus, the most tacit dreams of people about the victory of the good over the evil, happiness are reflected in fairy tales, and fairy tales make people believe in the best, kind and bright.

In this paper we have analyzed the portrayals of the good and the evil concepts in Kazakh fairy tales.

By analyzing characters and actions depicted in Kazakh folk tales, we can say that “the good and the evil concepts are reflected by means of the characters’ actions. These concepts first of all, require a careful philosophical, linguistic and psychological study. This type of oral tradition in literature reflects life philosophy of the community.

### **Conflict of Interest**

The author(s) declare that the present paper has no competing interests.

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