



# *The Relations of Ssidi Kur – 3.*

## *The Adventures of Massang*

Folk-Lore And Legends: Oriental

Arabic

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*Advanced*  
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When the Son of the Chan arrived at the foot of the amiri-tree, and spoke as he had formerly done, Ssidi approached him, suffered himself to be placed in the sack, fastened with the rope, and carried away. Ssidi spoke as before, but the Son of the Chan shook his head, whereupon Ssidi began as follows:—

“A long time ago there lived in a certain country a poor man, who had nothing in the world but one cow; and because there was no chance of the cow’s calving, he was sore grieved, and said, ‘If my cow does not have a calf, I shall have no more milk, and I must then die of hunger and thirst.’

“But when a certain number of moons had passed, instead of the calf the poor man had looked for he found a man with horns, and with a long tail like a cow. And at the sight of this monster, the owner of the beast was filled with vexation, and he lifted up his staff to kill him; but the horned man said, ‘Kill me not, father, and your mercy shall be rewarded.’

“And with these words he retreated into the depth of a forest, and there he found among the trees a man of sable hue. ‘Who art thou?’ inquired Massang the horned. ‘I was born of the forest,’ was the reply, ‘and am called Iddar. I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.’

“And they journeyed forth together, and at last they reached a thickly-covered grassy plain, and there they beheld a green man. ‘Who art thou?’ inquired they. ‘I was born of the grass,’ replied the green man, ‘and will bear thee company.’

“Thereupon they all three journeyed forth together, until they came to a sedgy marsh, and there they found a white man. ‘Who art thou?’ inquired they. ‘I was born of the sedges,’ replied the white man, ‘and will bear thee company.’

“Thereupon they all four journeyed forth together, until they reached a desert country, where, in the very depths of the mountain, they found a hut; and because they found plenty both to eat and to drink in the hut, they abode there. Every day three of them went out hunting, and left the fourth in charge of the hut. On the first day, Iddar, the Son of the Forest, remained in the hut, and was busied preparing milk, and cooking meat for his companions, when a little old woman put up the ladder and came in at the door. ‘Who’s there?’ exclaimed Iddar, and, upon looking round, he beheld an old woman about a span high, who carried on her back a little sack.

‘Oh, what, there is somebody sitting there?’ said the old woman, ‘and you are cooking meat; let me, I beseech you, taste a little milk and a little meat.’

“And though she merely tasted a little of each, the whole of the food disappeared. When the old woman thereupon took her departure, the Son of the Forest was ashamed that the food had disappeared, and he arose and looked out of the hut. And as he chanced to perceive two hoofs of a horse, he made with them a number of horse’s footmarks around the dwelling, and shot an arrow into the court; and when the hunters returned home and inquired of him, ‘Where is the milk and the fatted meat?’ he answered them, saying, ‘There came a hundred horsemen, who pressed their way into the house, and took the milk and the flesh, and they have beaten me almost to death. Go ye out, and look around.’ And his companions went out when they heard these words, looked around, saw the prints of the horses’ feet and the arrow which he himself had shot, and said, ‘The words which he spoke are true.’

“On the following day the Son of the Grass remained at home in the hut, and it befell him as it had befallen his companion on the previous day. But because he perceived the feet of two bullocks, he made with them the marks of the feet of many bullocks around the dwelling, and said to his companions, ‘There came a hundred people with laden bullocks, and robbed me of the food I had prepared for you.’

“Thus spake he falsely. On the third day the Son of the Sedges remained at home in the hut, and because he met with no better fortune, he made, with a couple of the feet of a mule, a number of prints of mules’ feet around the dwelling, and said to his companions, ‘A hundred men with laden mules surrounded the house, and robbed me of the food I had prepared for you.’

“Thus spake he falsely. On the following day Massang remained at home in the hut, and as he was sitting preparing milk and flesh for his companions, the little old woman stepped in as before and said, ‘Oh, so there is somebody here this time? Let me, I pray you, taste a little of the milk and a little of the meat.’ At these words Massang considered, ‘Of a certainty this old woman has been here before. If I do what she requires of me, how do I know that there will be any left?’ And having thus considered, he said to the old woman, ‘Old woman, before thou tastest food, fetch me some water.’ Thus spoke he, giving her a bucket, of which the bottom was drilled full of holes, to fetch water in. When the old woman was gone, Massang looked after her, and found that the span-high old woman, reaching now up to the skies, drew the bucket full of water again and again, but that none of the water remained in it. While she was thus occupied, Massang peeped into the little sack which she carried on her shoulders, and took out of it a coil of rope, an iron hammer, and a pair of iron pincers, and put in their place some very rotten cords, a wooden hammer, and wooden pincers.

“He had scarcely done so before the old woman returned, saying, ‘I cannot draw water in your bucket. If you will not give me a little of your food to taste, let us try our strength against each other.’ Then the old woman drew forth the coil of rotten cords, and bound Massang with them, but Massang put forth his strength and burst the cords asunder. But when Massang had bound the old woman with her own coil, and deprived her of all power of motion, she said unto him, ‘Herein thou hast gotten the victory; now let us pinch each other with the pincers.’

“Whereupon Massang nipped hold of a piece of the old woman’s flesh as big as one’s head, and tore it forcibly from her. ‘Indeed, youth,’ cried the old woman, sighing, ‘but thou hast gotten a hand of stone; now let us hammer away at each other!’

“So saying, she smote Massang with the wooden hammer on his breast, but the hammer flew from the handle, and Massang was left without a wound. Then drew Massang the iron hammer out of the fire, and smote the old woman with it in such wise that she fled from the hut crying and wounded.

“Shortly after this, the three companions returned home, and said to Massang, ‘Now, Massang, thou hast surely had something to suffer?’

But Massang replied, ‘Ye are all cowardly fellows, and have uttered lies; I have paid off the old woman. Arise, and let us follow her!’

“At these words they arose, followed her by the traces of her blood, and at length reached a gloomy pit in a rock. At the bottom of this pit there were ten double circular pillars, and on the ground lay the corpse of the old woman, among gold, brass, and armour, and other costly things. ‘Will you three descend,’ said Massang, ‘and then pack together the costly things, and I will draw them up, or I will pack them, and you shall draw them out.’ But the three companions said, ‘We will not go down into the cavern, for of a verity the old woman is a Schumnu’ (a witch). But Massang, without being dispirited, allowed himself to be let down into the cavern, and collected the valuables, which were then drawn forth by his companions. Then his companions spoke with one another, saying, ‘If we draw forth Massang, he will surely take all these treasures to himself. It were better, then, that we should carry away these treasures, and leave Massang behind in the cavern!’

“When Massang noticed that his three companions treated him thus ungratefully, he looked about the cavern in search of food, but between the pillars he found nothing but some pieces of bark. Thereupon Massang planted the bark in the earth, nourished it as best he might, and said, ‘If I am a true Massang, then from this bark let there grow forth three great trees. If I am not, then shall I die here in this pit.’

“After these enchanting words, he laid himself down, but from his having come in contact with the corpse of the old woman, he slept for many years. When he awoke, he found three great trees which reached to the mouth of the pit. Joyfully clambered he up and betook himself to the hut, which was in the neighbourhood. But, because there was no longer any one to be found therein, he took his iron bow and his arrows, and set forth in search of

his companions. These had built themselves houses and taken wives. 'Where are your husbands?' inquired Massang of their wives.

'Our husbands are gone to the chase,' replied they. Then Massang took arrow and bow, and set forth.

His companions were returning from the chase with venison, and when they beheld Massang with arrow and bow, they cried, as with one accord, 'Thou art the well-skilled one! take thou our wives and property, we will now wander forth further!' At these words Massang said, 'Your behaviour was certainly not what it should have been; but I am going to reward my father—live on, therefore, as before.'

"By the way Massang discovered a brook, and out of the brook arose a beautiful maiden. The maiden went her way, and flowers arose out of her footsteps. Massang followed the maiden until he arrived in heaven, and when he was come there, Churmusta Tângâri (the Protector of the Earth) said unto him, 'It is well that thou art come hither, Massang. We have daily to fight with the host of Schumnu (witches). To-morrow look around; after to-morrow be companion unto us.'

"On the following day, when the white host were sore pressed by the black, Churmusta spake unto Massang: 'The white host are the host of the Tângâri, the black are the host of the Schumnu. To-day the Tângâri will be pressed by the Schumnu; draw, therefore, thy bow, and send an arrow into the eye of the leader of the black host.' Then Massang aimed at the eye of the leader of the black host, and smote him, so that he fled with a mighty cry. Then spake Churmusta to Massang, 'Thy deed is deserving of reward; henceforward dwell with us for ever.' But Massang replied, 'I go to reward my father.'

"Hereupon Churmusta presented to Massang, Dschindamani, the wonder-stone of the Gods, and said unto him, 'By a narrow circuitous path you will reach the cave of the Schumnu. Go without fear or trembling therein. Knock at the door and say, "I am the human physician." They will then lead thee to the Schumnu Chan, that you may draw out the arrow from his eyes; then lay hands upon the arrow, scatter seven sorts of grain towards heaven, and drive the arrow yet deeper into his head.'

"Thus spake Churmusta authoritatively, and Massang obeyed his commands; reached, without erring, the cavern of the Schumnu, and knocked at the door. 'What hast thou learned?' inquired the woman. 'I am a physician,' answered Massang; and he was conducted into the building. He examined the wound of the Chan, and laid hands upon the arrow. 'Already,' said the Chan, 'my wound feels better.' But Massang suddenly drove the arrow further into the head, scattered the seven grains towards heaven, and a chain fell clattering from

heaven down to earth.

“But while Massang was preparing to lay hands upon the chain, the Schumnu woman smote him with an iron hammer with such force, that from the blow there sprang forth seven stars.”

“Then,” said the Son of the Chan, “he was not able to reward his father.”

“Ruler of Destiny, thou hast spoken words! Ssarwala missdood jonkzang.” Thus spake Ssidi, and burst from the sack through the air.

Thus Ssidi’s third relation treats of the adventures of Massang.

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