



The Relations of Ssidi Kur – 5. The History of Sunshine and His Brother

Folk-Lore And Legends: Oriental

Arabic

*Advanced
11 min read*

As the Chan's Son was journeying along as before, laden with Ssidi, Ssidi inquired of him as formerly who should tell a tale. But the Son of the Chan shook his head without speaking a word, and Ssidi began as follows:—

“Many years ago Guchanasschang reigned over a certain happy land. This Chan had a wife and a son, whose name was Sunshine (Narrani Garral). Upon the death of his first wife the Chan married a second; and by her likewise he had a son, and the name of his second son was Moonshine (Ssarrani Garral). And when both these sons were grown up, the wife of the Chan thought to herself, ‘So long as Sunshine, the elder brother, lives, Moonshine, the younger, will never be Chan over this land.’

“Some time after this the wife of the Chan fell sick, and tossed and tumbled about on her bed from the seeming agony she endured. And the Chan inquired of her, ‘What can be done for you, my noble spouse?’

To these words the wife of the Chan replied, ‘Even at the time I dwelt with my parents I was subject to this sickness. But now it is become past bearing. I know, indeed, but one way of removing it; and that way is so impracticable, that there is nothing left for me but to die.’ Hereupon spake the Chan, ‘Tell unto me this way of help, and though it should cost me half my kingdom thou shalt have it. Tell me what thou requirest.’

Thus spake he, and his wife replied with the following words, ‘If the heart of one of the Chan’s sons were roasted in the fat of the Gunsu (a beast); but thou wilt not, of course, sacrifice Sunshine for this purpose; and I myself bare Moonshine, his heart I will not consume. So that there is now nothing left for me but to die.’

The Chan replied, ‘Of a surety Sunshine is my son, and inexpressibly dear unto me; but in order that I may not lose thee, I will to-morrow deliver him over to the Jargatschi’ (the servants of Justice).

“Moonshine overheard these words and hastened to his brother, and said, ‘Tomorrow they will murder thee.’ When he had related all the circumstances, the brother replied, ‘Since it is so, do you remain at home, honouring your father and mother. The time of my flight is come.’

Then said Moonshine with a troubled heart, ‘Alone I will not remain, but I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.’

“Because the following day was appointed for the murder, the two brothers took a sack with baling-cakes from the altar, crept out at night, for it was the night of the full moon, from the palace, and journeyed on day and night through the mountainous country, until they at length arrived at the course of a dried-up river. Because their food was finished, and the river held no water, Moonshine fell to the earth utterly exhausted. Then spake the elder brother, full of affliction, ‘I will go and seek water; but do you watch an instant until I come down from the high places.’

“After some vain attempts Sunshine returned, and found that his brother had departed this life. After he had with great tenderness covered the body of his brother with stones, he wandered over high mountains, and then arrived at the entrance of a cave. Within the cave sat an aged Arschi. ‘Whence comest thou?’ inquired the old

man, 'thy countenance betokeneth deep affliction.' And when the youth had related all that had passed, the old man, taking with him the means of awakening the dead, went with the youth to the grave, and called Moonshine back to life. 'Will ye be unto me as sons?' Thus spake the old man, and the two young men became as sons unto him.

"Not far from this place there reigned a mighty Chan of fearful power; and the time was approaching in this country when the fields were watered, but the crocodiles prevented this. The crocodiles frequented a marsh at the source of the river, and would not allow the water to stream forth until such times as a Son of the Tiger-year had been offered to them as food. After a time it happened that when search had been made in vain for a Son of the Tiger-year, certain people drew nigh unto the Chan, and said, 'Near unto the source of the river dwelleth the old Arschi, and with him a Son of the Tiger-year. Thither led we our cattle to drink, and we saw him.'

"When he heard this, the Chan said, 'Go and fetch him.'

"Accordingly the messengers were despatched for him, and when they arrived at the entrance of the cave, the Arschi himself came forth. 'What is it that ye seek here?' inquired the aged Arschi. 'The Chan,' replied they, 'speaketh to thee thus: Thou hast a Son of the Tiger-year. My kingdom hath need of him: send him unto me.' But the Arschi said, 'Who could have told you so? who, indeed, would dwell with an old Arschi?'

"Thus speaking he retired into his cave, closed the door after him, and concealed the youth in a stone chest, placed the lid on him, and cemented up the crevices with clay, as if it was from the distillation of arrack. But the messengers having broken down the door, thrust themselves into the cave, searched it, and then said, 'Since he whom we sought is not here, we are determined that nothing shall be left in the cave.' Thus speaking, they drew their swords; and the youth said, out of fear for the Arschi, 'Hurt not my father; I am here.'

“And when the youth was come forth, the messengers took him with them; but the Arschi they left behind them weeping and sorrowing. When the youth entered into the palace of the Chan, the daughter of the Chan beheld him and loved him, and encircled his neck with her arms. But the attendants addressed the Chan, saying, ‘To-day is the day appointed for the casting of the Son of the Tiger-year into the waters.’ Upon this the Chan said, ‘Let him then be cast into the waters!’ But when they would have led him forth for that purpose, the daughter of the Chan spake and said, ‘Cast him not into the waters, or cast me into the waters with him.’

“And when the Chan heard these words, he was angered, and said, ‘Because this maiden careth so little for the welfare of the kingdom, over which I am Chan, let her be bound fast unto the Son of the Tiger-year, and let them be cast together into the waters.’ And the attendants said, ‘It shall be according as you have commanded.’

“And when the youth was bound fast, and with the maiden cast into the waters, he cried out, ‘Since I am the Son of the Tiger-year, it is certainly lawful for them to cast me into the waters; but why should this charming maiden die, who so loveth me?’ But the maiden said, ‘Since I am but an unworthy creature, it is certainly lawful for them to cast me into the waters; but wherefore do they cast in this beauteous youth?’

“Now the crocodiles heard these words, felt compassion, and placed the lovers once more upon the shore. And no sooner had this happened than the streams began to flow again. And when they were thus saved, the maiden said to the youth, ‘Come with me, I pray you, unto the palace?’ and he replied, ‘When I have sought out my father Arschi, then will I come, and we will live together unsevered as man and wife.’

“Accordingly the youth returned to the cave of the old Arschi, and knocked at the door. ‘I am thy son,’ said he.

‘My son,’ replied the old man, ‘has the Chan taken and slain; therefore it is that I sit here and weep.’ At these words the son replied, ‘Of a verity I am thy son. The Chan indeed bade them cast me into the waters; but because the crocodiles devoured me not, I am returned unto you. Weep not, O my father!’

“Arschi then opened the door, but he had suffered his beard and the hair of his head to grow, so that he looked like a dead man. Sunshine washed him therefore with milk and with water, and aroused him by tender words from his great sorrow.

“Now when the maiden returned back again to the palace, the Chan and the whole people were exceedingly

amazed. 'The crocodiles,' they exclaimed, 'have, contrary to their wont, felt compassion for this maiden and spared her. This is indeed a very wonder.' So the whole people passed around the maiden, bowing themselves down before her.

But the Chan said, 'That the maiden is returned is indeed very good. But the Son of the Tiger-year is assuredly devoured.'

At these words his daughter replied unto him, 'The Son of the Tiger-year assuredly is not devoured. On account of his goodness his life was spared him.'

"And when she said this, all were more than ever surprised. 'Arise!' said the Chan to his ministers, 'lead this youth hither.' Agreeably to these commands, the ministers hastened to the cave of the aged Arschi. Both Arschi and the youth arose, and when they approached unto the dwelling of the Chan, the Chan said, 'For the mighty benefits which this youth has conferred upon us, and upon our dominions, we feel ourselves bound to go forth to meet him.'

"Thus spake he, and he went forth to meet the youth, and led him into the interior of the palace, and placed him upon one of the seats appropriated to the nobles. 'O thou most wondrous youth!' he exclaimed, 'art thou indeed the son of Arschi?' The youth replied, 'I am the Son of a Chan. But because my stepmother, out of the love she bare to her own son, sought to slay me, I fled, and, accompanied by my younger brother, arrived at the cave of the aged Arschi.'

"When the Son of the Chan related all this, the Chan loaded him with honours, and gave his daughters for wives unto the two brothers, and sent them, with many costly gifts and a good retinue, home to their own kingdom. Thither they went, drew nigh unto the palace, and wrote a letter as follows:—"To the Chan their father, the two brothers are returned back again.'

"Now the father and mother had for many years bewailed the loss of both their sons, and their sorrows had rendered them so gloomy that they remained ever alone.

“On receipt of this letter they sent forth a large body of people to meet their children. But because the wife of the Chan saw both the youths approaching with costly gifts and a goodly retinue, so great was her envy that she died.”

“She was very justly served!” exclaimed the Son of the Chan.

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

Thus, Ssidi’s fifth relation treats of Sunshine and his brother.

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