

# *The Relations of Ssidi Kur -*

## *Intro*

Folk-Lore And Legends: Oriental  
Arabic

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*Intermediate*  
*8 min read*

Glorified Nangasuna Garbi! thou art radiant within and without; the holy vessel of sublimity, the fathomer of concealed thoughts, the second of instructors, I bow before thee. What wonderful adventures fell to the lot of Nangasuna, and to the peaceful wandering Chan, and how instructive and learned the Ssidi will be found, all this is developed in thirteen pleasing narratives.

And I will first relate the origin of these tales:—

In the central kingdom of India there once lived seven brothers, who were magicians; and one barren (a measure of distance) further dwelt two brothers, who were sons of a Chan. Now the eldest of these sons of the Chan betook himself to the magicians, that he might learn their art; but although he studied under them for seven years, yet the magicians taught him not the true key to magic.

And once upon a time it happened that the youngest brother, going to bring food to the elder, peeped through the opening of the door, and obtained the key to magic. Thereupon, without delivering to the elder the food which he had brought for him, he returned home to the palace. Then said the younger son of the Chan to his brother, "That we have learned magic, let us keep to ourselves. We have in the stable a beautiful horse; take this horse, and ride not with him near the dwelling-place of the magicians, but sell the horse in their country, and

bring back merchandise.”

And when he had said thus, he changed himself into a horse. But the elder son of the Chan heeded not the words of his brother, but said unto himself: “Full seven years have I studied magic, and as yet have learned nothing. Where, then, has my young brother found so beautiful a horse? and how can I refuse to ride thereon?”

With these words he mounted, but the horse being impelled by the power of magic was not to be restrained, galloped away to the dwelling-place of the magicians, and could not be got from the door. “Well, then, I will sell the horse to the magicians.” Thus thinking to himself, the elder called out to the magicians, “Saw ye ever a horse like unto this? My younger brother it was who found him.”

At these words the magicians communed with one another. “This is a magic horse; if magic grow at all common, there will be no wonderful art remaining. Let us, therefore, take this horse and slay him.”

The magicians paid the price demanded for the horse, and tied him in a stall; and that he might not escape out of their hands, they fastened him, ready for slaughter, by the head, by the tail, and by the feet. “Ah!” thought the horse to himself, “my elder brother hearkened not unto me, and therefore am I fallen into such hands. What form shall I assume?” While the horse was thus considering, he saw a fish swim by him in the water, and immediately he changed himself into a fish.

But the seven magicians became seven herons, and pursued the fish, and were on the point of catching it, when it looked up and beheld a dove in the sky, and thereupon transformed itself into a dove. The seven magicians now became seven hawks, and followed the dove over mountains and rivers, and would certainly have seized upon it, but the dove, flying eastwards to the peaceful cave in the rock Gulumtschi, concealed itself in the bosom of Nangasuna Baktschi (the Instructor).

Then the seven hawks became seven beggars, and drew nigh unto the rock Gulumtschi. “What may this import?” bethought the Baktschi to himself, “that this dove has fled hither pursued by seven hawks?” Thus thinking, the Baktschi said, “Wherefore, O dove, fliest thou hither in such alarm?” Then the dove related to him the cause of its flight, and spake afterwards as follows:—“At the entrance to the rock Gulumtschi stand seven beggars, and they will come to the Baktschi and say, ‘We pray thee give us the rosary of the Baktschi?’ Then will I transform myself into the Bumba of the rosary; let the Baktschi then vouchsafe to take this Bumba into his mouth and to cast the rosary from him.”

Hereupon the seven beggars drew nigh, and the Baktschi took the first bead into his mouth and the rest he cast from him. The beads which were cast away then became worms, and the seven beggars became fowls and ate up the worms. Then the Baktschi let the first bead fall from his mouth, and thereupon the first bead was transformed into a man with a sword in his hand. When the seven fowls were slain and become human corpses, the Baktschi was troubled in his soul, and said these words, "Through my having preserved one single man have seven been slain. Of a verity this is not good."

To these words the other replied, "I am the Son of a Chan. Since, therefore, through the preservation of my life, several others have lost their lives, I will, to cleanse me from my sins, and also to reward the Baktschi, execute whatsoever he shall command me."

The Baktschi replied thereto, "Now, then, in the cold Forest of Death there abides Ssidi Kur; the upper part of his body is decked with gold, the lower is of brass, his head is covered with silver. Seize him and hold him fast. Whosoever finds this wonderful Ssidi Kur, him will I make for a thousand years a man upon the earth."

Thus spake he, and the youth thereupon began these words: "The way which I must take, the food which I require, the means which I must employ, all these vouchsafe to make known unto me." To this the Baktschi replied, "It shall be as thou demandest. At the distance of a berren (a measure of distance) from this place you will come to a gloomy forest, through which you will find there runs only one narrow path. The place is full of spirits. When thou reachest the spirits, they will throng around you; then cry ye with a loud voice, 'Spirits, chu lu chu lu ssochi!' And when thou hast spoken these words, they will all be scattered like grain. When thou hast proceeded a little further, you will encounter a crowd of other spirits; then cry ye, 'Spirits, chu lu chu lu ssosi!' And a little further on you will behold a crowd of child-spirits: say unto these, 'Child-spirits, Ri ra pa dra!' In the middle of this wood sits Ssidi Kur, beside an amiri-tree. When he beholds you, he will climb up it, but you must take the moon-axe, with furious gestures draw nigh unto the tree, and bid Ssidi Kur descend. To bring him away you will require this sack, which would hold a hundred men. To bind him fast this hundred fathoms of checkered rope will serve you. This inexhaustible cake will furnish thee with provender for thy journey. When thou hast got thy load upon thy back, wander then on without speaking, until thou art returned home again. Thy name is Son of the Chan; and since thou hast reached the peaceful rock Gulumtschi, thou shalt be called the peaceful wandering Son of the Chan."

Thus spake the Baktschi, and showed him the way of expiation. When Ssidi Kur beheld his pursuer, he speedily

climbed up the amiri-tree, but the Son of the Chan drew nigh unto the foot of the tree, and spake with threatening words: "My Baktschi is Nangasuna Garbi; mine axe is called the white moon; an inexhaustible cake is my provender. This sack, capable of holding a hundred men, will serve to carry thee away, this hundred fathoms of rope will serve to bind thee fast; I myself am the peaceful wandering Son of the Chan. Descend, or I will hew down the tree."

Then spake Ssidi Kur, "Do not hew down the tree; I will descend from it."

And when he had descended, the Son of the Chan thrust him into the sack, tied the sack fast with the rope, ate of the butter-cake, and wandered forth many days with his burden. At length Ssidi Kur said to the Son of the Chan, "Since our long journey is wearisome unto us, I will tell a story unto you, or do you relate one unto me."

The Son of the Chan kept on his way, however, without speaking a word, and Ssidi began afresh, "If thou wilt tell a story, nod your head to me; if I shall relate one, then do you shake your head."

But because the Son of the Chan shook his head from side to side, without uttering a word, Ssidi began the following tale:—

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