



# Epic Interpretations of the Image of Trees in Uzbek Folk Tales

*Rustamova Gavkhar Bahronovna*

*PhD student of Bukhara state university, Uzbekistan*

**Annotation:** It is known that in Uzbek folk tales there are many figurative trees such as maple, mulberry, poplar, walnut. In the plot of fairy tales, real events are expressed in a way consistent with extraordinary events and magical motifs, in which the trees are interpreted as the foundation, the core, the pillar of the world and the way that unites the worlds. This article also contains epic interpretations related to the image of trees in folk tales.

**Key words;** uzbek folk tales, primitive ideas, totemism, cosmogonic views, maple, mulberry, walnut

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## Introduction

Mankind has been living in harmony with nature since the beginning of time. Man has been inspired by various natural phenomena, the creation and structure of the universe, celestial bodies and their movements, changes in the animal and plant kingdoms, and as a result, the first primitive ideas about the universe have emerged. These preconceived notions, based on the mythological understanding of the world, later began to be interpreted in a unique way in the genre of folklore.

In the upper part of the "Tree of Life" Semurg or an eagle sits, under the roots of a dragon or snake lives, in the middle part hooves or a man rescues a child Semurg.

## The Main Part

As described in the fairy tale "*Odilbek and Khurrambek*", the protagonist "goes somewhere, a giant plane tree steals to the sky, in the shadow of which four hundred people lie." Odilbek is still sitting in the shade of a plane tree. As he sat dreaming, he suddenly heard the chirping of birds on the top of a plane tree. He looked up and saw that on the top of the plane tree was a nest of Semurg's birds, and the children in the nest were chirping. He saw a dragon wrapped around a plane tree and approaching a bird's nest.

The image of the plane tree in the fairy tale is reminiscent of mythological notions about the "tree of the world". Because we have already mentioned that the vertical structure of the "tree of the world" consists of three parts - the upper, lower and lower parts. The plane tree in the fairy tale "*Odilbek and Khurrambek*" also consists of three parts: in the upper part there is the legendary Semurg (bird), in the middle part Odilbek (man), and in the lower part there is a dragon (snake).

This description of the vertical plane tree in the form of a "tree of the world" can be interpreted as follows. If the upper part of a tree, that is, its branches, is stolen by looking at the sky (the world of goodness), the lower part of it, its roots (the world of evil), will go to hell. If the legendary Semurg helps them in the struggle between these two forces, that is, between good and evil, on the contrary, the dragon, which is a symbol of evil, will harm the people.

In the fairy tale "*Odilbek and Khurrambek*", the dragon wants to feed the children of Semurg, who is a symbol of goodness, but Odilbek kills the dragon and does not allow the evil force to achieve its goal. In return for this kindness, Semurg Kush helps Odilbek and takes him to his epic destination.

As described in the Arpapolvon tale, "Arpapolvon saw that at that moment Semurg was flying, and a snake was climbing a plane tree trying to swallow his two children. The snake was killed by Arpapolvan and thrown to Semurg's children".

Epic motifs associated with the plane tree are also mentioned in the fairy tales "*Odilbek and Khurrambek*", "*Guliqahqah*", "*Kenja botir*", "*Kahramon*". For example, in the fairy tale "*Guliqahqah*" the old man looked at the young man:

"Otherwise, follow this road, there is a plane tree on the road." A bird flew over the plane tree. There is a dragon on the throne. If he dies, then the bird will take you to your destination. "

In the fairy tale "*Kenja Botir*" he said, "Son, this is the way to be careful. A plane tree can be seen in the distance. There is a bird's nest in this plane tree. On this day, Semurg will be born. "Every day when Semurg goes to feed his children, a dragon comes and eats one of them."

The fairy tale "*Kahramon*" ("Hero") also tells stories about the plane tree, Semurg and the dragon. "The hero walked and finally reached a mountain. The mountain was very high, and there was a big plane tree on top of it. Semurg's nest was at the end of that plane tree. When Semurg was not at home, the dragon would eat his children"<sup>1</sup>.

In fairy tales, the maple is the equivalent of the "tree of life", while Semurg is a mythological helper who brings the hero to his goal, and the dragon is interpreted as a symbol of evil.

Ancient motifs associated with the plane tree, preserved in fairy tales and heroic epics, played an important role in the formation of poetic thinking. This feature, which is evident in the works based on the plot of fairy tales and epics in the treasury of folk art, can be clearly seen in the story "*Semurg yoki Parizod va Bunyod*" by Hamid Olimjon. This epic fully preserves the epic spirit of the folk epic, the exaggerated depiction of the battles of the heroes, the importance of the high nationality of Uzbek folklore, historical and ethnic identity. The ancient form of contemplation is seen in the adventures of Ertaximon, in the epic traditions of celestial concepts and myth poetics.

In the Kyrgyz epic "*Er Tushtuk*" a bird named Alp Kara Kush saves the South from the Earth<sup>2</sup>.

The image of the giant black bird is used in the epics of the Kazakh, Karakalpak and Altai peoples as a protector and savior of the heroes. As VM Zhirmunsky points out, "this fairy-tale plot is based on very ancient mythological notions about the journey of the heroes to the underworld - the realm of the dead."

Another piece of evidence that the maple is the equivalent of the "tree of life" is found in the tale of the "*Kok kochkar*". According to this story, the stepmother is hostile to Bakhtiyor and wants to kill the boy's guardian - the blue ram. Then the blue ram mounted the boy and carried him to the top of

<sup>1</sup> Ўзбек халқ эргаклари. 2-том. Тошкент: Ғ.Ғулом номидаги Адабиёт ва санъат нашриёти, 1995. – Р.213.

<sup>2</sup> **Жирмунский В.М.** Введение в изучение эпоса «Манас» // Киргизский героический эпос «Манас». М., 1961. С.153.

a big plane tree. After the winter, the stepfather searched for his father Bakhtiyor, begged him, took him down from the plane tree and put him down seven times so that he would not find a ram. The seven-story bored boy shouted three times, "Blue ram!" After shouting, the patron quickly arrived and took Bakhtiyor into the world of light. The Seven Floors - Bakhtiyor's seven-story landing in the fairy tale - is the culmination of the stepmother's activity, an epic interpretation of the boy's death sentence.

The semantic interpretation of the "*Kok kochkar*" ("Blue Sheep") motif in the fairy tale "Seven Floors Underground" is as follows: Bakhtiyor's journey after leaving home is based on ancient views of the three worlds. The blue ram is a mythical patron saint, a mythological figure in the form of an animal. It is a journey to the heavens, where the child is chased by a rival character (stepmother) and thrown on a plane tree. In this case, the plane tree is an artistic expression of the "tree of life". Thanks to the stepmother's pressure, the father drops his son seven stories underground - the hero's underground world - a journey to the realm of the dead.

In the fairy tale "The Prince and His Sister", the image of a plane tree at the junction of four streets symbolizes both the horizontal structure of the universe and the artistic expression of the "tree of life". The prince told his sister, "Don't go under the big plane tree at the corner of the four streets." Her sister broke the taboo and went to a forbidden place. He saves the demon, and the demon worries the girl's head a lot. In our opinion, the four streets are a symbol of the horizontal-semantic structure of the universe, the giant is a representative of the underworld, so the four streets are a symbol of the world. The huge plane tree at the four corners is the equivalent of the mythical tree of life, and the cave under the plane tree is the path to the underworld.

One of the traditional elements of Uzbek folk tales is the motive for girls to fall in love with animals such as snakes, wolves, dragons, and bears, and to marry. It is known that in times when totemistic beliefs were strong, people who worshiped certain animals tried to disguise themselves as patrons during symbolic ceremonies. The appearance of a totem was considered to be one of the symbolic ways to enjoy that sacred help, that is, to have a separate magical power.

In the fairy tale "*Mohistara*" there are four growing in the four corners of the pool.

The tree is described as follows: "There is a large marble pool in the middle of the yard. The water in the pool is as clear as glass. There are four trees in the four corners of the pool. Shavkat had never seen such a tree before. The fruit of the tree was not real, but one of rubies, one of emeralds, one of pearls, one of gold, and one of emeralds".<sup>3</sup>

According to the mythological notion of our ancestors about the horizontal cosmic structure, the four trees by the pool are a symbol of the world. The variety of fruits means that the parts of the world are unique or different from each other. Therefore, while relying on ancient Peruvian myths about the red, white, black and yellow trees growing in the four corners of the world and the "golden tree" in the center of the world, the four trees in the pool in the fairy tale "*Mohistara*" are also the tree of life. a conclusion can be drawn.

It is said that the horns of the golden poplar, described in the Uzbek folk tale "*Baxtli Kal*" ("Happy Kal"), are emerald, and the leaves are made of pearls: "The king ordered the Kal to bring a throne. The sofa was made of gold, next to it was a golden pillar, and under the poplar there was a bed and a pillow made of emeralds. The horns were emerald and the leaves were pearls. The location of the fairy-tale golden terrace near the platform is reminiscent of the mythological notion that the "tree of life" grows in the world.

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<sup>3</sup> Ўзбек халқ эртаклари. Тошкент: Ўзбекистон, 1990. –P.121-122.

In the fairy tale "*Bulbuliguyo*", the king also ordered to make a precious maple tree in his garden. It says that the trunk of a plane tree should be made of rubies, its branches should be made of emeralds, its leaves should be made of emeralds, and its fruits should be made of pearls and candles.

In some fairy tales, the mulberry tree is described as a strange tree with the characteristics of a "tree of life". According to the story of "*Ahmadjon and Lukmanjon*", "two children were walking in the desert and a few days later came under a smoke. Ikkalovi fell asleep under the smoke. This single tree in the steppe is home to birds. The first bird:

"Comrade, the man downstairs will shoot me and make me king," he said<sup>4</sup>. The fact that the fairy-tale mulberry grows alone in the steppe, its size and the presence of birds in the upper part of it show that it has the characteristics of a "tree of life".

In Uzbek folk tales, the image of a tree uniting the lower and upper worlds is also found in the tales of the Five Girls and the Prince and His Sisters. In the fairy tale "*Besh kiz*" it is said that the underground road is the place of the devil: I thought, "If I cut down this dead tree, I will sell it for some firewood." As I was about to chop down the tree and put it in a sack, a cave appeared under the root. When I went inside to see what kind of cave it was, there was a way, in front of the door. When I opened the door, a girl was sitting. "

In the fairy tale "*Ajdarqush*" ("Dragon Bird") there is a picture of an unnamed tree: "Near this cave lived an old dragon bird in a tree. One day the dragon fell in love with a bird girl. When he left, he would leave the girl in the cave, put a big stone in the mouth of the cave and kiss her with a golden horn.

The old dragon bird has been living in the tree for many years. In fairy tales, the word "dragon" is added to the lexeme "bird", which, in our opinion, is associated with mythological notions of the zoomorphic representation of the "tree of life" is the basis for the origin of the image.

## Conclusion

In these tales, the following aspects of the image and interpretation of the tree of life are of particular interest: First, its opposition to disease and death; secondly, the healing properties of the roots and leaves, and the treatment of diseases when boiled; third, the existence of demons on earth, among human beings, even though they are said to grow in the country; to come to him not directly from the cannon, but by means of epic helpers (by means of a magician's old man, in order to save the children of a fat man on a plane tree) from the underworld to the surface country); fifthly, that the tree of life grows in the mountains, in the sunrise; sixthly, that the head of the tree of life is large enough to reach the heavens; seventh, that demons lie in the shade of the tree of life and prevent it from being enjoyed; that man defeated the demons and brought the tree of life from the mountain to the royal palace; Ninth, the real owner of the tree of life is the common man, the farmer.

There are also places in these tales where the use of a tree is reflected in situations such as falling off a rope from the remains of various plants and trees, climbing into a well, and ascending. Thus, in Uzbek folk tales, trees such as maple, mulberry, poplar, and walnut are interpreted as the basis of the universe, its core, the pillar of the world, and the way that connects the worlds.

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<sup>4</sup> Қари наъматак. Ўзбек халқ эртаклари. Тошкент, 1972. –Р.46.

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