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AKBUTHAT

1. A long time ago a boy whose name was Hauban lost his parents: his father died and his mother disappeared when he was five or six; so he lived the life of an orphan. He was still a little boy and could not do hard work, so he had to beg for food going from house to house and wiping his eyes as he did so.

2. Once he walked over to a field to enjoy a brook on a meadow, and the croaking of frogs making a hubbub like a wedding party, and wild onions and sorrel as if those were delicious foods. While he walked he heard a *kurai* playing and turned where the music was coming from, across the swamp over to the *Ithel* valley. He met Taraul, an old man who herded cattle for Yrghyth, a *bei*. Old Taraul greeted the boy and asked him about his stock and his native place. Hauban told him everything beginning with his father's death and ending with his mother's disappearance. Old Taraul gave a sigh of compassion as he heard this story, because he was sorry for Hauban.

"My life is too hard as it is, my child, but it breaks my heart to see and hear your kind," - he said.

He lapsed into silence for a while, lost in thought, and then began to prepare his fishing tackle.

"Let us go, my child, to the lake, maybe we'll be lucky to catch a pike", - he said and took Hauban along, holding his fishing loop in one hand and his flintlock in the other. While walking Old Taraul told Hauban about his life:

"My child, the *bei*'s wife is greedy: she gives me only a bowl of *qatyq* and a head of *qorot* for a whole day's work. One can't last long on such food, so I have to roam around shooting fowl with my flintlock and catching pikes with my fishing loop. When I come back home in the evening I hook a frog to catch a sheatfish. This is how I make ends meet, my child", - he said.

3. Following Taraul Hauban was wondering at the tackle the old man was holding in his hands, and he said:

"Grandfather, if I had a flintlock like this I would also learn to shoot fowl. I would shoot fowl and wouldn't go hungry.

Taraul said: "I am sure you wouldn't", and he walked on in silence. He had come by that flintlock from Hauban's father, so he was wondering if the boy knew something about it.

"My child, your father was a good hunter, a sharp shot. As I remember, he had a good flintlock, it must have been lost", - said the old man.

"Yes, he did have a flintlock. They say, when my father died my mother had nothing to exchange for a burial shroud, so my poor

mother had to give away my father's flintlock to buy linen for a shroud", - said Hauban, and the old man wiped a tear and replied:

"If she had no linen for a shroud she might just as well have buried him in his rags, but, of course, she wanted to bury her husband properly, as befitted him, so, she had no choice after having shared her life with him."

Hauban said:

"Oh, grandfather, it is quite true. They say, when my father died, my mother had no food for funeral feast on the third, seventh and fortieth day. So she went out, in tears, to beg for something from the people, and nobody has seen her since. I was too little when it happened, so I do not remember it myself. With my mother gone I only wish I had that flintlock. I would know what to do with it, I would learn to hunt fowl."

4. When he pronounced these words Old Taraul did not speak for some time, deep in thought. Then he made up his mind and said, stopping:

"My child, I have lived to be sixty. I cannot live twice as long. You are a child yet. And I say: You have had your share of suffering. Here, take this flintlock and keep it in my memory. But see you tell no one who has given it to you. Nobody in the Urals has such a flintlock", - and he handed his flintlock over to Hauban.

Hauban was beyond himself with joy and thanked Old Taraul. They caught a pike, boiled it and ate it till they were full and lay down on the ground for a rest. In the evening they parted and each went their own way.

5. Hauban was growing year in year out and day in day out. He turned seventeen or eighteen and began hunting with his flintlock

Once when he was roaming along the lakeshore he saw a gold duck. Without a moment's hesitation he aimed and shot it; then he swam up to the duck and he was just about to take it to the shore, when the gold duck spoke in a human voice:

6. "Though you've shot me as a game bird

I am not a duck for shooting.

Fond of ducking, bathing, frisking

On this lake, I am the daughter

Of the glorious lake-shah Shulgan.

O my yeget, don't remove me

From this lake where is my homeland,

From my home don't separate me,

For my home will be in grief then,

So, whatever you demand me,

I will give you with my blessing,

Herds of cattle, worldly treasures,

Give as much as you desire!"

7. Having heard these words, Hauban swam closer to the shore where he could stand with both feet and stopped there thinking hard. As the duck went on pleading Hauban told her his story, as he continued to keep her in the water:

"Both my father and my mother
Spent their life in destitution,
That is why they did not last long,
Leaving me a famished orphan
With no home, no place to go to,
Humiliated and unwanted,
And today a hunter's fortune
For the first time has turned on me,
So I won't release you, ducky,
Hard as you may try to dive in!"

8.The duck answered him in this wise:

"Round beyond my father's palace,
Full of precious stones and jewels
And as high as *Iramal*-mountain,
Of the various hairs graze horses
Able to turn rocks to ashes
Simply by the vigor of breathing,
Horses for the mightiest *batur*s
Making up my father's army.
But the lake ruler, my father,
Has a favorite horse for riding,
Of my father's herds the leader,
One that's worth all worldly treasures,
Able to get fire and water,
To procure whatever needed,

Like a bird of feather able

To fly over boundless billow,
With his long mane white and silky
And his skin of light gray color,
With his black hooves nicely rounded,
Edging legs as thin as needle,
With his ears upright as corn-stems,
With his both eyes shot with bronze tones
Glittering beneath white lashes,
With his high neck, and his body
Wiry, like a pike's, wide nostrils
On his nose thin as a falcon's,
Front teeth scooped and doubled his molars,
Narrow-muzzled, the lower jaw pointed,
With his fringe on both sides parted.
So this *Akbuthat* I'll give you
That we may remain contented,
As you are bound unto your Urals,
I myself unto my lake life."

9.Hauban heard out the duck and replied in this wise:

"So you promise me your wonders?
But you don't have what you promise!
I, enchanted by your stories,
May remain just empty-handed!"

10.The duck responded in this wise:

"Would the shah's fair daughter fool you,
 Wind you round her little finger
 For the sake of worldly treasures,
 Would I rather die off water?
 Mind: this water is my kingdom,
 As a fowl I bathe here daily,
 Swimming to and fro and frisking,
 Plying, gamboling at daybreak.
 O my yeget, if you take me
 Off the water I shall perish,
 If you treat me as a game-bird
 I'll be just a piece of roast-meat.
 Two ways are before you, yeget:
 As you take your pick be careful.
 For in case you make an error
 You'll indeed go empty-handed!
 Let me go, and go your own way,
 Don't look back over your shoulder
 Until various-colored horses
 From the water come out trooping,
 Until cows, their udders bulging,
 With no calves along low softly,
 Until bleating sheep with no lambs
 Slowly come out from the water,
 Until Akbuthat, their leader,
 Splashing, cleaving the lake water
 Raising whirlwinds on the lake-shore
 Comes out last of all the cattle.
 Don't look back until he comes out,
 Only then approach and stroke him
 On the forehead, and he'll speak up
 Ready to fulfill your daydreams,
 Realize your utmost wishes.
 Fastened to his gilded saddle
 There's a lash and there's a bridle
 Nicely worked of Bulgur leather
 On his head, and there's a saddle-girth
 Closely tied up to a sweat-cloth
 Purposefully fixed together
 Lest they should come off in riding.
 When the grass is young and sappy
 At his own sweet will directly
 He will go without permission
 To be back at your disposal
 Once you burn a long hair taken
 From his mane, to call him backwards.
 Even if you lose your cattle
 Akbuthat will never leave you,
 A companion in your travel,
 A courageous friend in battle.
 Let me go, pray, to arrange this,
 As this is the only way out
 For the underwater beauty
 To stay happy in her kingdom."

11. Hauban told the duck as follows:

"Now that I have heard your story
I will tell you my proposal:
You and I will go together
For to see the cattle come out.
Once you are a water creature,
I'll put some into a saryq
And will keep you there in water
To protect you from the sunrays.
If your story turns out honest
There and then will I release you,
So that you retrieve your freedom,
All the happiness I'll wish you."

12. The duck answered Hauban in this wise:

"But the cattle won't come out then,
To my call they will respond not,
Not until I'm in the water,
Not until I've seen my father!
If you take me home, my yeget,
There is little profit on it,
For at night you can perceive me,
In your arms you can caress me
Only in my bird apparel,
In my raiment of dove feather.
On the shore I'll fade and wither,
On the shore I am no beauty.
For a yeget, earthly creature,
It is natural to love earth,
While a water maiden's body
Is of sunshine, fire created.
Basking in the sun you're happy,
While I melt like butter from it,
And a drop of melting fire
May scorch all the earth like poison.

13. After that Hauban believed the duck and let her go. He went back on shore and ahead the way the duck had instructed him. Hardly had he made a few strides when he heard horses neighing, sheep bleating and cows mooing, a wind blowing and a tempest coming suddenly on. Hauban could hardly move, and he was quite confused. At last he could resist the temptation no longer and he looked back. He could hardly believe his eyes: herds and flocks of cattle were coming out of the lake covering the whole steppe. It was right the moment when Akbuthat was neck-deep in the lake water. As soon as Akbuthat noticed Hauban turn round he hid in the lake again, and all the animals seeing him dive, all and sundry, crowding, dived into the lake following him.

14. The tempest subsided. Hauban stood amazed and puzzled. He came up to the water-edge and looked down into the water, but it was all quiet, and there was no one in there. He sat on the ground for a while, lost in thought, and then walked home dejected. He returned

to the *yaylau* to find out all the *kibitkas* swept by the tempest; the frightened children and grown-ups clustered around talking. Leaning on his stick, with his long whip slung over his shoulder Old Taraul approached them and joined in.

15. He inquired for his dispersed herd and said:

"Not far from here I was grazing cattle when a storm burst out, and my animals scattered, beside themselves with fright, and I also ran for it. That's how I came on your *yaylau*, searching for my cattle".

When he was thus telling his adventure, Hauban came over and stood for a while listening to the old man and then asked him casually: "Grandfather, have you ever heard of such a storm, unseen and unheard-of before?"

Old Taraul told him as follows: "Yes, brother, it is quite a mystery. I've never seen such a tempest in my life before. But the wise old men know about such things. They say that a long time ago the whole world was flushed by water. It was before our forefathers came to this land, and before Ural-mountain sprang up, and this land saw no living soul of four legs except devs serving the shah of the Big Water. Then a batur, Ural by name, came to launch a war against them, and where his horse Akbuthat rattled along, the Ural Mountain emerged, and where he extinguished devs the waters dried and mountain ranges came up. When the water shah felt he was losing the battle he found a bottomless pool and dived into it making his way to a nearby lake. This lake has no bottom either as it interflows with an underground river. That is why Ural-batur could not capture the water shah whose name was Shulgan. Hence Shulgan became the name of the lake too. When Ural-batur died Shulgan-shah ordered his Akbuthat to be stolen. Ural's sons died, too, and the water-shah used to come on Ural-mountain riding Akbuthat. They say that Akbuthat, pining after his batur-riders, would come out of the lake and gallop along flapping his wings and his stroke would cause a storm sweeping mountains and rocks and turning everything upside down. This is what I heard long ago, and maybe today's storm is of the same kind."

16. Hauban made sure now that the water-maid had told him nothing but the truth. He did not feel like telling, though, either Old Taraul or anybody else what he had seen. He thought they might get angry and accuse him for evoking the storm.

When Old Taraul finished his story of Akbuthat he was about to go on his way, but Hauban stopped him. "Grandfather, who are you?" - he asked him. When Taraul named himself Hauban recalled him and asked: "Do you recognize me, Grandfather?" Old Taraul examined him from top to toe and sighed: "No, brother, I can't recognize you, because my eyes are bad, oh my eyes!" Then he added: "Before I go let me ask you, in turn, who you are. What is your background? You look like a yeget. You are not Sura-batur's offspring, are you?"

17. Hauban reminded the old man of everything, even of the flintlock. Taraul embraced Hauban and said: "Brother! Sura-batur was as brave as a lion, and while he was alive the water-shah did not dare to

step a foot on the land. By the way, do you still keep the flint-lock I gave you?"

"Yes, I do, grandfather, and I cherish it as the apple of my eye. Here is the flint-lock!" - and Hauban showed it to Taraul. Old Taraul took it in his hands, looked at it affectionately for some time and kissed it. Giving it back to Hauban he said:

18. "Brother, when I gave it to you, you were still a child and I could not confide it to you that it was your father's flint-lock that he kept in memory of Ural-batur's sons. It is this flintlock that the water-shah is afraid of. Keep it properly and keep it a secret," - he said and went his way. Hauban did not tell him about the golden duck.

19. It took Hauban a long time to track down the golden duck. Months and years passed. Not once did he spend the night on the lakeshore, vainly tracing the duck. He shot a lot of game and wildfowl and he always gave a share to Old Taraul visiting him, but he never told him the story of the golden duck.

20. Once when Hauban was visiting Taraul he asked the old man to tell him about the lake-shah. Old Taraul spoke as follows:

"I know nobody who has seen the shah of the lake. Once when I was walking along the lakeshore I met a woman. She said: "There is a golden duck swimming in the lake. I wonder what it is like". We both approached the water-edge to look at her. But as soon as the duck saw us she dived and disappeared. I tried to track it later, but in vain. When I met that woman for the second time she said: "Since that time the duck has never shown up, for all my watching, though every month on the fourteenth night the devil's daughters, shaped as doves get out of the lake, and they bathe and splash and laugh". I have heard about it too."

"What kind of woman is this?" - asked Hauban, and Old Taraul answered: "She used to attend to Masem-khan's children. When his daughter came to this lake for a bathe she was attending to her, that's what she said. The khan's daughter disappeared in a twinkling. So the khan forbade that woman to return to his palace without his daughter, to leave the lakeshore, starved as she might be, until she found his daughter. Since then she had been roving there, starving, said that woman, starving and shedding bitter tears. Much time has passed since I saw her last".

21. After Hauban took his leave he never forgot what Old Taraul had told him and he began to wait for the fourteenth night of the month. When the night came he went to the lake. The night was cloudless and still, nothing disturbing the silence. Long did Hauban lie in wait, until suddenly he heard a splash on one spot of the lakeshore. He crawled nearer to the water edge and spotted a maid, not a duck, seated on a gold throne, with a swarm of bluish doves frisking around. Slowly Hauban stole up to her and seized her by the hair winding it on his hand. The maid was frightened, and the doves took wing. Keeping the maid firmly by the hair Hauban spoke:

"Now the beauty's changed her aspect,

Turning from a duck to a maiden!"
This maid turned out to be the daughter of the lake shah, and she addressed Hauban and said:

"How, in spite of my protection,
Being on the watch for danger,
How on earth can you have traced me
At this weirdest hour of midnight?
Let my hair go, o yeget,
Don't prevent me from my pastime!
All my doves have flushed and homeward
Are now flying with the message.
If my father learns about it,
It will cost your head, remember!"
Hauban spoke and told the maiden as follows:
"What's your name, my beauty, tell me,
And with pride will I pronounce it!
Maybe you'll agree to take me
For your man to live together?"

23. The maid answered him:

"Make no noise, my yeget, calm down,
Don't demand my name and even
Tell nobody you have seen me
When you are home, to keep it secret.
I am no match for you, my yeget,
So you mustn't think of marriage,
For I'm made of light, of sunrays.
On the earth I may but suffer,
And a son of Earth, a yeget,
Matches not a maid of sunrays.
Living in the steppe befits not
Maidens brought up in a palace.
Don't waste time on talking, yeget!
If my father comes here, furious,
He will fight and turn to ashes
All your tribe, your native country".

Hauban made this answer:

"Long I searched for you, long waited
For a full moon in the sky-dome.
So, despite your grief and weeping
I will not release you, beauty.
As I think myself a yeget
With a heart that fits a batur,
Nothing daunted, fearing nothing,
I fear not a braggart's bragging!
Even if your father fights me,
I will not give in unto him,
For my land is called the Urals,
And my land will ne'er desert me!"

24. When the yeget said this, the maid thought: "What a strange yeget! He is not daunted though I threaten him with my father's might". Then she spoke and said in this wise:

"Now you call yourself a batur
Strong enough to crash a mountain,
But of devs that guard the country
Of my father you know nothing.
I made good my word of honor
Driving herds of horses for you,
Calling Akbuthat, the white steed,
The true leader of the horse tribe.
Didn't you hear the horses neighing?
Hear the sheep's bleat, and the mooing
Of the bulls and cows out coming
Covering the steppe all over,
Like the khan's enormous cattle?
Out came Akbuthat, the white steed,
Racing round lake Shulgan, neighing,
Hoofing vehemently the water,
With his breast the water cleaving,
Passionately, in a hurry,
For he longed to meet you, yeget!
As the wind raised by his pinions
Shook the mountains of Ural.
You, unable any longer
To endure the strain, fell downward
Thus disgracing and insulting
Akbuthat who started backward.
Who are you to threaten Shulgan
That has saddled such a *tolpar*
And controls all devs and peries,
Keeps in hand all water creatures,
Reigning in the lake as great-shah?"

25. Having heard this Hauban spoke and said in this wise":

"Yet, despite your father, lake khan,
Who controls all devs and peries,
Having gathered them around him,
Who rides Akbuthat, white *tolpar*,
Causing whirl-winds, causing tempests,
Yet my heart will never tremble
Like an alder leaf from horror!
With your devs of twelve heads blowing
Blazes, for to burn my country,
For to devastate us, humans,
Spilling man's blood in abundance,
I will never fear your father,
Though he pierce my heart with arrows!
Born into a stock of baturs,
Taking o'er from Sura-batur
I have sworn to let no person
Hurt the miserable and orphans!
You are too proud, my beauty, thinking
That lake Shulgan is the deepest,

That your father is the greatest
Of all shahs with devs around him.
If the orphans in the Urals
Start to weep they'll make a billow
That may flush the graves of baturs
So this land can be a desert!
How then you, the water-maiden,
Can supply yourself with water?
If the ashes of the baturs
Make lake Shulgan small and shallow
Where will all your devs two-headed
Find the deepest pool to dive in?
For the Urals, my sweet country,
Stretching far away, my Ithel,
Running swift, my limpid Yaiq
Will unite and get your father
Leaving him no peace and comfort".

26. When the maiden heard Hauban's words she felt frightened and said:

"Let it be your own way, yeget,
So I'll swear a solemn oath now,
To prevent a war between us,
That I'll take you to my country,
To the kingdom of my father
And comply with your desires.
In my gold house with my own hands
I will make your bed of feather,
And whatever you require,
All your want I'll give you straightway.
You can look around my homeland
And my palace to determine
If you love me, maiden Narkas.
If you find you do, you'll stay on
And in case you do not like there,
Don't like Shulgan's place, his homeland,
And the houri named Narkas
You'll take Akbuthat, the tolpar,
Take your fortune in your own hands
And away race to the Urals."

27. Thus, on hearing the maiden's words Hauban learned that her name was Narkas. To make sure that Narkas would keep her word he made her swear a second time. Then they were ready to go together to the lake shah's country. Narkas told Hauban to shut his eyes. He obeyed her. Then she told him to open his eyes again, and as he did so he found himself standing in the maiden's gold palace. He spent a few days there. The palace maidens treated him to food and drink singing, but he could neither eat, nor drink. Seeing that Hauban was sad and fretting Narkas went to see her father and told him what had happened from beginning to end:

"Here, in the lake of Shulgan,
In my safe abode since childhood,

Knowing neither grief, nor mischief,
Till eighteen I'd met no hunter
Who dared lay his hands upon me
By entrapping or by shooting,
Though a lot would try to do so,
And no hawk of earth could spot me,
In my duck attire of feather,
Even the sprightly breeze of evening
Could caress my black hair never,
For among the black-edged bulrush
It could never find a passage,
Even the otter of the black reeds
Never knew when I was bathing.
Last time as I changed my image,
Changed myself into a lake duck,
Bathing, ducking in the moonshine
I was shot, alas, and captured,
To the lakeshore drawn to perish.
So I had to take a *big oath*
To avert war that the hunter
Get whatever he desires.
Here's the hunter who has got me
Visiting my place, my homeland,
Though I tried to keep it secret
So that not to break my promise.
O my father, say your word now
That is worth the oath I've given,
Of your worldly treasures share some
To this shot, this sharp-eyed batur,
Give whatever he desires,
For if you don't give your treasures
I will give myself unto him".

28. The shah was surprised to hear his daughter speak so. He thought over a way to get rid of that yeget and advised his daughter the following:

"O my daughter, most unfortunate
Was your latest nightly outing!
For my country knows no hunter
That would dare to shoot your raiment,
That would rough it in the twilight.
To perceive your golden hair-dress,
There's no creature so sharp-sighted!
There's but one thing you can do now,
Just one way to rid you of him:
Slash this yeget into pieces,
So that Shulgan-kul, lake Shulgan,
N'er again will see the shooter
That will shoot at you, my daughter,
That will give you any trouble".

29. Hearing her father say such cruel words concerning Hauban Narkas tried to mollify his heart and said the following:

"O my father, trusting fully

His security he's come here,
 And it wasn't his fault he shot me,
 For it was a duck he shot at.
 In his hands he held me firmly,
 And the warmth of his bare hands
 Reached my heart and gave me pleasure,
 And the tender words he told me
 Also reached my heart and warmed it.
 If he dies slashed into pieces
 Cramped will be my soul and body!
 Father, leave alone this yeget,
 For the Urals will revenge him
 If you spill his blood, undo him,
 And there's little he requires,
 He desires not your kingdom,
 Doesn't cockroach on your treasures,
 So a part will satisfy him.
 If you treat me as your daughter
 Do not spill his blood, o father,
 Do not kill a man defenseless,
 Do not earn an ill name for it,
 But show Akbuthat, the white steed,
 To the yeget, try his valor:
 If he manages to catch him
 He'll find glory in the Urals".

30. Long was the shah deep in thought after he had heard his daughter's entreaty. Then he summoned his viziers and a dev of twelve heads named Qakhaha to ask them for advice. Qakhaha gave the shah the following advice:

"You will make a fatal error
 If you give this steed of magic
 To this yeget, for directly
 All your power will escape you,
 And your one-head strong *azhdaha*
 Will be like a bean before him,
 And your three-head strong *azhdaha*
 Will be no more than a *saba*,
 No more than a common badger
 Shall be I, vizier Qakhaha.
 Let me give good counsel to you:
 Daughters of the earth you have here,
 For example, Masem-khan's one,
 Isn't she prettier than your daughter?
 Should this yeget chance to see her
 With no close consideration
 He will take her quite forgetting
 Wondrous Akbuthat, the white steed".

31. The shah heeded this counsel and resolved to send Hauban together with Narkas to the palace where the abducted maidens lived. So he called Narkas and told her:

"Set your mind at rest and comfort;
 For I'll satisfy your yeget;

And, my wealth appreciating,
I'll appreciate you higher.
Show him all around my country
An the maidens in each palace
So that he can talk at freedom
With the beauties all and sundry".

32. Narkas obeyed her father and went about showing Hauban around the kingdom's palaces. Having visited quite a number of such places they walked towards a gold palace across a large orchard. When they reached the palace Narkas said:

"In this palace there's a tolpar,
Akbutthat, the steed of wonder,
You have heard of him already.
Look him in the eyes, when, neighing,
He inhales air through his nostrils,
Move not as you watch him nearing,
Move not as you watch him prancing.
Stroke him on his croup when kicking,
When he lays his ears back laugh out
Saying that you are a batur
Of the earth, and as he nears you
Pat him on the back, caressing,
From his mane two horsehairs pull out,
Round upon your wrist you wind them,
From his tail two more hairs tear out
And attach them to your ankle".

Then she unlocked the portals of the palace and let him see Akbutthat.

33. On seeing Hauban Akbutthat pranced and neighed drawing the air noisily through his nostrils. But Hauban was not scared. He looked fixedly into Akbutthat's bronze glaring eyes, and the steed, shaking his head and hoofing, edged away. As the devs guarding Akbutthat heard him hoofing they began to descend from the palace roof. Seeing support coming from the devs Akbutthat made a furious pounce, shaking his head vigorously, and meaning to kick Hauban, but the latter, undaunted, stepped forward, facing him. So Akbutthat failed to scare Hauban and turned round to kick him with his hind legs, but Hauban gave him a tender pat on his croup. His trick failing, Akbutthat laid his ears back and was just about to leap at Hauban, but the youth, staring at him, spoke and said in this wise:

"I'm a batur of the Urals,
Skilled in training not one stallion,
Used to slaying, eating horses
Disobedient to their riders.
At one shot I've hit with arrow
The invulnerable Narkas,
And I bear the name of Hauban,
The defender of the Urals!"

Akbutthat resigned himself to his fate, and, meekly, the devs, his guards, one by one began to get out of the palace.

Acknowledging Hauban's baturhood Akbuthat approached him and bowed his head to him, in private. It was then that Hauban believed all what Narkas had told him about. When he pulled out some hairs from Akbuthat's mane and tail the steed addressed him as follows:

34. "As a batur of earth, the Urals,
Let me match you, Hauban-batur,
As a tolpar, steed enchanted,
King of herds of round-hoof stallions.
With my mane my might of magic
You shall gain to hold a saber.
Should you burn in fire my tail's hair
I will come to you directly
To become your horse in battle".
35. Thus spoke Akbuthat, admitting Hauban to be his batur, and as he was so speaking Hauban touched him lovingly, affectionately behind his ears. Then he patted him on the back and left, because Narkas was waiting for him to leave the palace. When she saw Hauban safe and sound she gave him a joyful smile and, without a word, took him to the palace of the earthward maidens. As she came up to the palace portal she spoke and said in this wise:
"You shall see a lot of maidens
Indescribable in beauty
And shall choose one maid among them,
One whose face is fair as moonlight,
One with dimples in her peach cheeks,
With her eyebrows arched and coal-black
O'er her black eyes bright and smiling,
Ornamented with black lashes,
With a high breast, like a falcon's,
With her black hair nicely plaited,
With her tender smile uncovering
All the dazzle of her pearl teeth,
With a waist, small as a bee's waist,
You'll be pleased to see this maiden,
This fair maid, whose name is Aihylu,
The fair daughter of khan Masem
From the Urals abducted.
Should you come to love this beauty
Straight demand her of my father,
To the Urals take her straightway,
Take her to her father's lodging
And become his son-in-law then.
There is one more thing to tell you,
One strange thing you must remember:
Scarcely you have left this palace
You shall meet an ancient woman
That will start to fawn upon you,
And will flatter and entice you,
Keep your hands off her, don't touch her,
Do not let her wipe your foot-wear.

If you act the way I tell you
You will reach the lakeshore safely.
Burn a tail's hair of the white steed
And meet Akbuthat directly
In the peace of day before you".

36. Having heard this from Narkas, Hauban stood for a while, puzzled, and then spoke, looking at her intently:
"You've disclosed to me a secret;
Now speak candidly, my beauty,
Is it out of friendly feeling,
Or affinity, or passion
That you have confided to me
What you have kept from your father,
From the lake-shah and his lake folk?
Is it, beauty, for the trial
Of my heart that you've disclosed it?
Unreservedly and frankly
Tell me your ulterior motif:
Should I love you and not Aihylu
Tell me how you'll feel about it?
Beautiful's the moon in heaven,
For the sun her visage fondles,
And the sunlit flower never
Will let anybody kiss her,
Likewise, Aihylu, whose visage
Lit by smile is light as moonshine,
With her soul so cold, is nothing
But a nightly luminary."

Narkas kept silent for a while, as if trying to make up her mind and then said as follows:
"Hark, my yeget, to my last word:
I shall never be your sweetheart,
For my father will n'er match me
To a man of earth, a batur.
I've my own beloved, my equal,
For his heart has passed all trials,
For he's proved indeed his merit
And has proved himself a he-man.
I will not forsake my own one,
Never will I give away him,
Or his name to anybody,
In my heart I will retain it".

Hauban did not argue, and Narkas accompanied him to see the palace maidens. On meeting the maidens Hauban made some small talk while studying them one by one. Aihylu stood out remarkably against the others. She came up to Hauban and spoke:

"Judging from your aspect, yeget,
You must be an earthly dweller
Overcoming the enchantment
To come over to this kingdom,

And I wonder how and what for
 You have come here to abandon
 Sweet and free maids of the Urals
 For the sake of withered captives?
 Can lake Shulgan's king have passed out?
 Can the sun have dried lake Shulgan?
 Can the tears of all Earth weepers
 Have the whole land inundated
 And extinguished, flushing, washing
 Batur of this land, skilled riders,
 Lovers of their land, the Urals,
 Turning heroes into fishes?
 I suppose, young blood must rise up,
 Having bathed in pools of blood spilt
 Of the Urals' ancient heroes,
 Blood from pools of wasted breast milk
 Of their mourning, wailing mothers,
 Of their lion hearts will rise up!
 Unafraid of devs, of sinking
 In the waters of lake Shulgan,
 Strong of arm they'll be and able
 To bring comfort to the Urals
 Drowned in tears and sunk in sorrow".

38. Hauban responded as follows:

"Can a lake of frogs be fearsome
 For a batur, can he drown there?
 Can one bear the name of batur,
 If he's gluttonous and drowsy,
 Turning in to sleep too early,
 If he knocks around the Urals
 O'er his land outstretched in all ways
 To amuse the maids light-hearted,
 Easily amused and merry,
 If he wings a harmless duck-bird
 Feasting everyone upon it,
 If he rides a horse obedient
 Even to the smallest children,
 If he steals into a night yourt
 To abduct a sleeping maiden,
 If he, lonely in a forest,
 Gives a cry of melancholy,
 Is he worth the name of batur?
 He who goes under the water
 To find beauties wailing, weeping,
 Living captive in their gold cage
 And who breaks their bondage straightway
 Is a batur of the Urals,
 Son and fulcrum of his country.'

After Hauban said his word all the maidens surrounded him
 crying bitterly. Tears welled up in his eyes from compassion
 for them, though he tried not to give way to feeling. Soon he
 said good-bye to the maidens and left the palace.

39.As soon as he went out an old woman approached him and said:

"You have proved a real yeget,
Having winged the duck of magic
On the Shulgan-kul, lake Shulgan,
Having reached this lake-shah's kingdom,
Having won his daughter's proud heart,
So her loving heart's bewildered,
For she has another yeget.
Learn a ruse to gain this maiden,
I will teach you how to do it,
How to get her with my cunning,
How to kick down, crush the lodging
Of your rival, but to do this
Let me kiss your hand and foot now
For to make you strong and stronger."

But Hauban did not give her his hand. He was deep in thought wondering which of the two things was true: what Narkas had said about the old woman, or what the old woman had said herself. He was about to inquire of Aihylu about the old woman, but he could not open the portal. So he did as Narkas told him to do, thus giving the old hag neither his hand nor foot, had instructed him. As she saw him leaving the old woman said:

"Brave as you may be, my yeget,
You do not catch on too quickly.
In the same breath don't compare me
With a maid in silk attire,
Wearing precious stones upon her,
Wearing strings of pearl and gold things,
With a maiden well protected
From snow-storm and from misfortune,
From the wet of rain and tear drops,
Don't compare me with a beauty
That will take care of her honor
And neglect the honor of others
Crying lakes of tear-drops for her,
Like the sun, superior to them,
Thinking them as dust beneath her.
What has waned my cheeks of ruby?
It's the eyes of wits that see it,
Not the eyes upon your visage!
Otherwise you wouldn't compare me
With a maid who sports in meadows,
Who will eat on golden dishes
And will sleep on downy pillows;
Half as much shall be your fortune,
Half for your mistrust and blindness."

For a long time Hauban pondered over what he had heard, then he approached the old woman and inquired of her:

"Mother, I can see the imprint
Of your suffering on your visage,

And your words of sorrow coming
From your naked heart bespeak this.
Tell your story to me, mother,
Tell it to a lonely stranger”.

41.The old woman spoke and said in this wise:

“To confide in a distrustful,
Haughty person is improper,
To confide a thing to a coward
Is endangering one’s own life.
With your hand in mine directly
From my heart you’d learn my story.
If I kissed your foot your future
To your eyes would open clearly,
But in words I could not say that,
For I’d have my tongue cut off then”.

42.Hauban stood still cudgeling his brain over what he had heard. At that time Narkas appeared, and the old woman stepped aside. Narkas approached Hauban and said:

“Come along this way, my yeget,
See my father waiting for you
In his solitary palace.
When he offers you a seat there
Take a seat upon his right hand,
When he hands you o’er a beverage
Take this beverage with your left hand,
Food to which he is to treat you
Take with both hands, before eating,
With your right hand take a meat-knife
Offered to you by my father.
When my father looks up smiling
Screw up just your right eye at him,
When his leg my father stretches
Fold your arms and look before you.
Rise not, when my father rises,
Rest awhile upon your right side.
When he takes his sword in fury
Pick your teeth and look on blankly.
When he stretches out his both arms
Just lean back upon your cushion.
Then the place will shake all over;
Give a smile and stay undaunted.
If you manage it exactly
Safe and sound with your Aihylu,
With your sweetheart, you shall reach land.”

Hauban agreed and asked Narkas, interrupting her:

“What’s the meaning of all this? Is it a rite established in this palace, or a mystery, if it is a mystery, please, uncover it to me.”

43. When Narkas heard this request she changed countenance, staring at Hauban, then she embraced and kissed him, tears streaming down her cheeks.

Suddenly Hauban fell asleep and slept like a log, and when he opened his eyes awakened by the sun beaming on his face he saw neither Narkas, nor the palaces around. He thought he might have been in the land of dreams, but when he looked around he saw, not far from him on the lakeshore, Akbuthat, moving his ears. He was still more amazed to see Aihylu sitting beside him.

"Narkas must have got angry with me, for she hasn't taken me to her father's place. I wonder what brings this maid and Akbuthat here, as I don't remember having summoned him by burning his tail-hair!" While he was thus racking his brain to solve this problem Akbuthat came up to him and said:

"Had you not asked Narkas straightway
You'd have got into the shah's place,
Overthrown him and replaced him,
Would have made the lake's new ruler,
Matched the beauty Narkas promptly
And your wedding celebrated.
In the hag you deigned no hand to
You'd have recognized your mother.
Of your father's death the mystery
You'd have learned if she had kissed you,
Kissed your foot, although with Aihylu
You'd for e'er be separated".

45. Hauban was amazed and puzzled, so he began to make inquiries, and Akbuthat said as follows:

"As a man to ride upon me
you must be upon the look-out,
On your guard, where'er you wander,
Let the wind not in your bosom,
Do not think that your beloved's mind
Is before you clear as crystal".

46. Aihylu felt sad as she heard Akbuthat speak so, but she remained imperturbable, and neither Hauban, nor Akbuthat noticed that. Hauban fixed the bridle and, mounting Akbuthat, placed Aihylu behind him. Thus riding one horse together they went to Masem-khan's palace. Approaching the palace Hauban stopped his horse and asked Aihylu if they would come in together or separately. Aihylu said:

"Am I safe? I can't believe it,
Can't believe my senses for it,
As it is so hard to take in,
So confusing and so puzzling
That I don't know how to enter,
Enter sundry or together.
If I wait to come in second,
After you, I shall be fearful

Lest again I be abducted.
If we both come in together,
I'm afraid that they may take you
For the villain, the abductor".

47. Hauban said to her:

"While I have my head upon me
You are safe from being captured,
And your father cannot blame me
If he sees us both, however,
Enter by yourself and fully
Tell your father of his enemy,
So that, having heard your story,
He may pluck up all his courage,
So eventually his country
May declare a war on Shulgan
To revenge this crime, this insult.
I will see your father later
When he's taken a decision,
When his baturs have assembled
For a *barymta*, cow-stealing".

48. After that Aihylu decided to enter the palace of Masem-khan, her father, by herself. Hauban led her over hill and forest, across rivers and lakes. Akbuthat remained with them, but hardly had they made an appointment for next time, when he vanished into thin air. Utterly surprised Hauban was just about to call him back again by burning a tail-hair when he made his appearance bringing some secondhand clothes. Hauban put them on and, releasing Akbuthat, made for Masem-khan's country, following Aihylu.

49. When he reached Masem-khan's yaylau, he saw a crowd of people swarming like a hive of bees. Clustering around they stood discussing something. Hauban approached the people, greeted them and introduced himself as a traveler. He learned from the discussion the biggest news, the homecoming of the khan's daughter. Then he made for a crowd right by the khan's palace. At that time a middle-aged woman was seen to go out of the palace, and everybody rushed forward to hear news about the khan's daughter. The woman said nothing about it, she only waved her hand in disdain and said: "Get along with you! Better ask somebody else!" Then she elbowed her way through the crowd and went home. Hauban decided to follow the woman, and she saw him and started inquiring about his name and background, taking her time. Hauban said he was a stranger from a far-away land and asked her permission to put up for the night in her cottage. She consented to let him spend the night at her place, as he was a stranger and had nowhere to go to.

50. No sooner had Hauban undressed to go to bed, than a number of lasses and young women, old men and women came in and showered the hostess with questions such as: "Have you seen

Aihylu?" "Has she lost weight?", "Did you ask her where she had been?" The hostess said: "Yes, I have seen Aihylu, but I only hailed her, I did not manage to ask her anything". But the maidens demanded: "Why didn't you ask her? You should have learned what has happened to her!" The hostess said: "I just started asking her, but she said: "Leave me alone, yenga! I can't believe that I am home, and I shan't be able to tell anything until a couple of days has passed". So I did not insist, I only heard the khan address his retinue: "Thank God, my child, thanks to my prayers and my sacrifice, has been saved by an unknown rescuer. It was Shulgan, the lake shah, who abducted her!"

An old man who was listening to the woman, with his head bent, said:

"That's all right, you know, I thought: maybe a slip of Sura-batur's captured her as a barymta to revenge his father's death. She is safe and home without war and bloodshed. It is a joyous event indeed! You know, Masem-khan has sworn to kill all Sura-batur's cousins seven times removed".

The hostess cut in:

"Who else's life will Masem-khan want of the stock of Sura-batur? He captured even his wife, as she was roving in the woods in search of food, and with her arms and legs tied up he had her drowned in lake Shulgan! What else does he want, I wonder?"

Another woman said: "That's right. Had she kept back that she was Sura-batur's wife when she met the khan nothing would have ever happened".

The same old man said: "Unlike you I saw her being drowned. I was standing aside and saw everything with my own eyes".

The woman said: "Well, what of it? We are talking about what we know, what we have heard about", and they broke off.

53. Having heard this Hauban thought: "Can Masem-khan have killed my father and mother?" After Sura-batur's name came up during the conversation, a brief silence followed, and Hauban asked the old man: "Grandfather, has this country seen one or two men bearing the name of Sura-batur?"

The old man answered:

"Brother, I have known but one man named Sura-batur, famous among the nation for preserving the nation's honor in purity. Neither in the Urals, nor beyond have I heard of any other Sura worth telling about. Before Sura-batur's wife was drowned, poor thing, I remember her imploring: "It's my child, my heart, I am leaving, my child that I am pining for! I know you have killed my husband and I have sworn to tell no one about it spreading the rumor that he has died from a disease. I have withstood all the sorrow no matter how hard it is, so why don't you let me live?" But the khan ignored her entreaty and had her drowned in the lake. When he learned about the child he was up to finding him, but could not do it, because their yaylau had moved from that place. Whether it was a boy or girl, I don't know", - said the old man, and Hauban was still more surprised and eager to unravel the mystery.

54. "Grandfather, - he said, - I have heard about two batur's bearing the name Sura. They say that when one of them died his wife exchanged his flintlock for a shroud, because she had no linen to make it. And she had nothing to arrange a funeral feast with on the seventh day after his death. So she left her house roaming from place to place, and no one has seen her since".

The old man spoke again and said in this wise:

"Brother, Sura-batur's wife disappeared and Sura-batur himself died just the way I told you. And it is just idle talk about exchanging the flintlock for a shroud. There was no selling the flintlock. It is said to prevent the khan from demanding it. The batur's wife knew who had that flintlock.

55. Hauban asked: "Why didn't the khan take it when he killed the batur?"

The old man answered:

"He would have taken it, but he didn't know where the batur had left it. The khan knows that this is the flintlock passed by Ural-batur to his successors. Once Sura-batur came home from his hunt very tired and gave his flintlock to Taraul, the old man that he used to take along with him hunting, and he sent him hunting while he himself decided to have a rest waiting for the old man to come back. It so happened that on that day Masem-khan and Akbulat-bey went hunting, too. I met Old Taraul on his way and decided to go and see Sura-batur, and so I went to his place and saw Masem-khan and Akbulat-bey happy to have gained on earth what they had been expecting from heaven, slaying Ural-batur awakened from his slumber. I heard them talking about how to act best next: should we throw the body into the water, they said, the people would not know if he was alive or dead and would still depend on him being against us; so to let the people know about his death they decided to get his wife to swear that she would spread rumor among the nation that her husband had died of a disease. When I overheard it I went to look for Taraul, but failed to find him and turned back home. Later I learned what had happened to Sura's wife. What could she have done, poor thing? She did as she was told. Her man had for long years fought against Masem-khan and Akbulat to defend the Urals. When he was alive folks in the Urals would swim in the water like fish and sing in the woods like birds. Oh that he were alive now!

Hauban thought: "Can the old woman I met at the lake bottom have been my mother?"

56. As Hauban was not content with what he had heard in that aul about his parents he visited neighboring auls, too, making inquiries about his father and mother, and everywhere he heard the same. He wanted to continue his inquiry when he learned that Masem-khan was going to arrange a big *tui*, and word of it had spread around, so he went back to the khan's yaylau. As he came there he saw *beis*, *aqhaqals* with their sons, *murthas* riding *argymags*, fast trotters, their runners holding them by

the bridle, all crowding the khan's yaylau. Apart from the beis and tarkhans a lot of people of various kinds were crowding in the *maidan*. Standing on one side of the *maidan* were baturs and old men without horses and fur-coats. Maids, young and old women and children, occupied the opposite side. In the center sat Masem-khan's wives, his three daughters and their husbands. The aghaqs and beis around the khan were waiting for the beginning of the festival, and wrestlers, having deftly wound their sashes round their hands were walking up and down in agitation, and singers were swallowing fresh eggs to improve their voices, and kurai-players were damping their kurais, and riders, one after another, were walking their fast horses round the *maidan*. At that time Hauban approached the *maidan* and looked attentively, but failed to see a maid resembling Aihylu. But after all the people had taken their places she appeared surrounded by a large group of parlor-maids. All the young men stared at her beautiful face. Masem-khan walked out to the center of the *maidan* and spoke as follows:

"To the glory of my country
With a joy that's overwhelming,
Overjoyed like on a high day,
I have called you to this *maidan*
To inform you that my daughter
Stolen by a dev is free now,
Free and back home, hale and hearty!
And I swear an oath in public,
Vow by God to give my daughter
To a temerarious batur
Who'll defend my throne and family
And revenge on Shulgan for me,
Who will slay this dev, behead him
And bring over as a trophy!"

58. As the baturs heard the khan say his oath they dared not utter a word, standing deep in thought. Then Akbulat-bei said looking at Aihylu:

"Dear Aihylu, will you tell us
Your mysterious adventures,
For the baturs here are wondering
How you've managed to escape death".

59. Aihylu spoke and said in this wise:

"Once I went out for a jaunt-ride
To the field upon a fast horse
And some maidens from the palace
Came along to have a good time,
To make merry on a meadow,
To pick flowers and twine garlands
By the waters of lake Shulgan.
There I saw a monster near me,
Bigger than a wolf and bear-like,
With his hair on end upon him,
And he made a bold rush on me,

Pawed me and I grew unconscious
From the horror and confusion
Caused by the unheard-of monster,
And I felt my body dying,
Numb and dead I felt my body.

When I came back to my senses
I saw maidens standing near me,
Standing horrified, dumbfounded,
Speechless, with their sallow faces
Of the tinge of yellow copper,
With their faces dismal, cheerless
From the grief of separation
And estrangement from their countries;
So I spoke to them and questioned
Of the countries where they came from.

60. Then we saw a hag approach us,
 With a withered wrinkled visage,
And we clustered round the woman
That inquired us where we came from,
Of our backgrounds she inquired,
And each maid responded frankly
On her kindred and her country.
In her turn the woman told us
Open-heartedly her story
Of mysterious adventure:
"Everyone must know my husband
By his name, the name of baturs
Who have glorified their kindred,
Glorified all o'er the Urals.
You may not know of his death, though,
And you'll be distressed to know it.
So, my husband, Sura-batur,
Never gave way before Masem,
Never missed the mark and always
Was in this respect superior.
Once when he was in his slumbers,
Fast asleep, no one around him,
Unawares was he taken
By a foe who shot an arrow,
Right into his heart he shot him,
And for fear of rumor and scandal
I was sworn to keep it secret,
But was thrown into the water
To be swallowed by a creature
 That had jaws so big that inward
I passed safe without injury.
In his den the creature spewed me.
"Come, - he said, - get outward quickly,
It's the right place you have come to,
In this place you'll stay forever.
Once your husband preyed upon me
(A successful hunter was he),
Out he pulled his knife to butcher

And prepared himself to skin me,
But I begged him to take mercy,
So he took compassion on me,
Back removed his knife and told me:
"I disdain you, wretched creature,
Who has lived a life of slavery,
Separated from his parents
And his parents' ways and customs".
Though I bear the name Qakhaha,
Though I am a batur of Shulgan's
And, obedient to his orders,
I go out to scour the Urals,
To devour all the living,
But since then I have decided
Not to touch the wretched humans
Although I may starve and famish.
Now that you have made your way here
I will tell you of this country,
Where you're doomed to stay forever.
Tears of blood shed by the wretched
Gradually had flowed together,
Till a lake was thus engendered,
Shulgan-lake, a lake of mystery,
Ruled by Shulgan, once a nobleman,
Whose lake palaces are founded
On the bones of men he slew once,
Circled by luxurious orchards
Rich in flowers of rare beauty
Washed and watered by the blood-tears
Of the poor ones he murdered".
This is what the woman told us
Of the monster who had gulped her,
And the story of the monster
Who, it turned out, was the same one
That had scared me and abducted.

61. Then a yeget from the Urals
Came to visit our palace,
It was there that I first met him,
For the first time spoke unto him.
Shortly after his departure
I succumbed to sleep so sudden
That I knew not, on awaking,
How I'd turned out on a wild field,
And I jumped up quite astonished,
Gaped around, still unbelieving
What my eyes could see before me:
Enveloped in haze the Urals
Up rose high, as high as heaven,
Looming bluish in the distance.
As I peered around I spotted
Shulgan-kul, lake Shulgan near by,
Like a treacherous eye sparkling,
Leering at me through the bulrush.

I saw grass upon the meadows,
Grass that was in flowers buried,
Heard the singing of the wood-birds
Ringing clearly in the mountains,
Felt a fresh wind tousle my hair,
And admiring all the beauty
That I sensed with all my senses
Overflowed with joy my heart was.
I was wonder-struck to notice
Seated on the grass a way off
Where I sat a handsome yeget,
Jumping to my feet and trembling,
With a thumping heart and drawn by
Irresistible temptation
I came closer for a good look,
At the handsome yeget's visage,
And I recognized the yeget
That I'd met in the lake kingdom!
And before him stood a tolpar,
Like before a batur ready
To race headlong into battle,
Akbutat, the steed of magic,
With a saddle of gold and silver,
And a girth of Bulgur leather,
And a pearl-wrought shabrack on him
With stamped leather at the edges
And deer-leather for the buckles,
And his stirrups made of silver,
Made of gold and sard the pommel,
With a lash that winds a serpent,
And a hurjune at the edges
With Morocco trimmed and nicely
To the saddle strapped and tied up,
All so beautifully fitting:
Both a halter all silk-plaited
And a nicely done breast-collar
With a tail-gear* on the horse croup,
Both a bridle double-bitted
And a rein strapped to the saddle,
So indeed he looked a beauty,
With his fluffy mane and tough fur,
With a wiry pike-like body,
Sleek his ribs are, graceful long legs,
Like a hare's legs his legs are,
Rounded hooves, a pointed muzzle,
Ears like reeds, dilated nostrils
And a breast broad as a falcon's,
And a round neck like a rooster's,
Covered by a fringe a forehead
O'er his large eyes shot with copper.
He was talking with the yeget
That has got me from my lake lodge
Giving him advice and counsel.
Though the youth proposed no marriage

Liberties he didn't take with me,
Though I asked him to come with me
He would not come to the palace.

62. When the maid told this story everybody was surprised. There was an uproar (clamor), and everybody said that it must have been *Khyzyr*, the prophet, because no ordinary human was capable of doing it. Then Masem-khan said:

"Here, my daughter, take an apple,
So you choose a batur for you,
Who agrees to my condition
Shall accept from you this apple,
While the woman from lake Shulgan
You have seen will straight be sent for".

Then he sent his daughter to the baturs who were at the maidan.

63. Aihylu walked around all the baturs, but none of them dared to take the apple. Masem-khan allowed the baturs to put off the decision-making till next day. As soon as the maidan broke up Hauban walked a little way from the yaylau and called Akbuthat by burning a hair of his mane. Hauban ordered Akbuthat to bring the old woman living in the lake over to the next day's maidan. But Akbuthat said: "There is no getting anything from Shulgan without a fight". Then Hauban mounted Akbuthat and made his way to the lake. When the inhabitants of the lake heard the noise of the hooves of Akbuthat they made hue and cry? Akbuthat said:

"The shah's daughter with her guards came up to the surface, but when they sensed us they dived in. I say: I will swim across the lake from shore to shore while you keep slashing the water with your sword. Our waterway will create dry land that will cut across the lake and divide it into fragments, and the shah's daughter shall not withstand it, she will come out and fulfill all your desires. But see you don't fall off me."

64. Hauban did as Akbuthat told him to do. When the lake was divided into smaller parts Narkas could withstand it no longer, so she came on the surface and made a plea for mercy:

"O my yeget, what's the purpose
Of this war, this saber rattling?
Did you not receive my present,
Akbuthat, the steed of magic?
What am I to do now, tell me?
You've made islands, cutting, slicing
All my waterways in this lake,
Like they cut paste into noodles.
Separated from Qakhaha,
Thanks to you, my father's grieving,
As the lake is getting shallow!
Soon the bottom will be covered

By the sand and silt and mussels:
What an easy life for shellfish
Who will live like happy frogs now!
What am I to do then, tell me?
Pray, my yeget, do not ruin me,
I will meet your inmost wishes
And fulfill all your desires!"

65. Hauban answered Narkas in this wise:
"Overfilled with tears your lake is,
Overflowing grief and sorrow,
So I will not leave these waters,
Till it shallows will I stay here
To obstruct the brooks which feed it,
So they no longer subside it,
And to fight your monstrous father
Who is worse than just a monster,
To say nothing of Kahhaha,
That's a son of earth, an earthling,
So he won't stay in this water,
Unlike you, my water beauty,
Being born a water creature.
Now go home and tell your father:
"Take your crown with all its jewels
And your back with it you cover".
Tell Qakhaha to stop idling
Putting weight on in his slumbers
Looking forward to more blood-tears.
Tell him to release the maidens
Captivated by his evil,
Let him stop his threats and daunting
By his ill fame human beings,
Let him take his devs, deserters,
Who deserted once their homeland.
To cut out a mountain rock stall
For my Akbuthat, the white steed,
Let them also cut a channel
To a swampy lake he lives in.
After he is through with all this
He shall change to get his aspect
Of a hateful mouse-like creature,
Of a bat avoiding sunrays
Flying in the dark and twilight,
Let his ugly devs, blood suckers,
Be deprived of limbs forever,
So, no thicker than a finger
They wind serpent-like in bulrush.
Then this lake in peace and comfort
Makes a home for fur and feather,
Makes a habitat for plenty
Who will mate and settle down there.
As I said, the palace beauties
Must be free to go home straightway
For to live in joy and freedom.

And the woman, aged and wrinkled,
Living here under the water
Will go home at last to spend there
What remains there of her life-time
Breathing there the air of homeland."

66. Having heard this word Narkas went home to her father's place. Hauban dismounted, taking his time. Suddenly he saw the same old woman. He was eager to talk with her, but Akbuthat stopped him. Then Hauban instantly took the old woman to the aul where the maidan was held and let the horse go. He spent the night at the same place.

Early in the morning the whole yaylau was up and about. The women milked the cows and saw them off to graze. When the sun was up the length of a lance the horse herd was back, so the women fastened the fillies and milked the mares. And again everybody went to the maidan.

67. When the maidan was opened Masem-khan reminded the baturs of his order that the old woman be brought from Shulgankul. The baturs said nothing. At that time the old woman made her way from the crowd to the center and said: "O my khan, don't pester the baturs, don't send them to the lake searching for me. Allah has released me".

Everybody was surprised to see the old woman, and they showed her to Aihylu who recognized her at once. In the meantime the khan called the executioner and told him to behead the old woman, but he spoke to him under the breath so the people might not hear his order. When the people and the baturs saw the executioner taking the old woman away without listening to her they began to beg the khan to let the old woman tell her story. But the khan would not listen. Then Hauban, dressed in rags, stood in front of the khan and said:

"O my great khan, I will tell you
Of the yeget who has saved her,
If you only let this woman
Tell her story to the people".

To this Masem-khan said as follows:

"Last night all the *sheikhs* I summoned,
Called them from all o'er the country
So that we might pray to Allah
Pleading Him to make a wonder,
For the sake of holy prophets,
So this woman may come hither.
Allah ordered Khyzyr, His prophet,
That he realize my desire,
For this is a pious prayer
Of a righteous man like I am.
But the holy *sheikhs* advised me
That the woman be not present
At the *tui* to let the people

Know how Allah's mercy saved her.
And the sheikhs advised to treat her
In the house as a high guest,
For some time, before she goes back
To lake Shulgan where she's living".

69. The old woman obeyed the khan's order and was just about to follow the executioner, when Hauban stopped her and, addressing the khan, spoke in this wise:

"Once upon a time a batur,
Sura-batur, of the Urals
That made little of the power
Of the khans and beis, the rulers,
Went a-hunting, but he could not
Come back home before the nightfall
For his tiredness overcame him,
So he lay down for a short rest,
But the khan, the miscreant, happened
To be near to shoot an arrow
In his heart while he was sleeping.
In a while the batur's woman
Disappeared to make an orphan
Of their only son, named Hauban,
That had nobody to count on,
So he had to make a shepherd
Grazing calves of wealthy families
Though it won him no relation
To the people he was serving.
So he went to find his own way,
Long he knocked about the country
And met Taraul, an old man,
Feeling sorry for his ill luck
And, compassionate for his misery,
He did not grudge his possession,
Giving him his only flintlock
Saying just: "You keep it, sonny",
Though that old man was a poor man,
Doing grazing for bey Yrghyth,
Just as poor as Hauban was he.
After Hauban got that flintlock
He grew famous for his hunting,
As a sharp shot he grew glorious,
In his strength and mettle excelling
Batur of the past like Yaiq,
Sura-batur, Tukmas-batur,
Almaz-batur, and defeating
At the first attempt shah Shulgan.
He released the captive maidens,
Captive Akbuthat, the white steed,
Every living thing he set free.
It was he, not Hazyr, the prophet,
Who set free this ancient woman.
And last night he started warfare
Crossing swords with lake-shah Shulgan

Making all this lake so shallow
 And segmented into portions,
 Each as small-sized as a horse eye.
 And he made the evil creatures
 O'er night cut a mountain rock stall,
 For his horse, the steed of magic,
 That is equal to a palace.
 And he made a turtle of Shulgan,
 Made a bat of every dread-dev
 And thus put an end to evil
 That for long has been triumphant.
 And today this Hauban-batur
 Upon Akbuthat, the white steed,
 Is upon his way to speak out
 The complete truth of his parents,
 On his way for launching warfare,
 War against the murderous ruler,
 To take vengeance for his father
 And to make the ruthless murderer
 Pay in full, pay by his life-blood."

70. When Hauban finished speaking he addressed the maidan:

"Judging by her words this old woman is Hauban's mother.
 If you hesitate to let her have her say you will be nothing
 but day-dreamers and you will never see the old woman
 again".

The people were bewildered, while Masem-khan was taking
 counsel with his beis. Then he called Hauban and told him:
 "If you have told a lie I'll have your head chopped off".
 Hauban said he did not mind.

71. While Masem-khan's men were mounting their horses, Hauban stepped aside so that nobody could see him and called Akbuthat by burning horsehair. Akbuthat appeared instantly. Hauban asked Akbuthat how he was doing, and, with his armor on, he mounted Akbuthat and went to the maidan. The people were surprised to see him, and they asked each other: "Who is he?" and: "Who is this man?" But as Hauban upon Akbuthat approached the maidan center Aihylu and the old woman recognized the horse and by the horse the yeget that had saved them, and they put their arms round his legs in the stirrups and exclaimed: "This is that yeget!" and they both burst into tears. Hauban dismounted and embraced the old woman, then he mounted Akbuthat again and addressed Masem-khan stopping before him:

72. "Let me ask you, khan, two questions.

One's about the cause of blood feud
 Between you and Sura-batur,
 And the second is as follows:
 Did you make a raid on Shulgan,
 On the shah that stole your daughter?
 If you speak the naked truth now

If you give an honest answer

I will tell you what I'm up to,
And my word will be as honest".

73. Masem-khan replied as follows:

"There was no *qarymta* 'tween us,
Hence no cause for killing Sura,
There was no *barymta* 'tween us,
For he never stole my cattle.
As for Shulgan, he avenged me
For at one time I put poison
To the lake and burned the bulrush
In the water of his country."

74. To this Hauban said:

"First a miserable orphan,
Crying bitter tears in childhood,
Draining full the cup of sorrow,
Then a batur of the Urals
That has wandered round his country,
That has seen the worth of this world
And the worth of the lake kingdom,
I've been faced with one big question:
Who's the most rapacious spoiler
And my native land's sworn enemy?
If a wild bear being hungry
Kills a cow and breaks a bee-hive,
If a wolf fast and sharp-sighted
Kills a flock of sheep and more so,
If a fox that fluffs its tail up
And runs gamboling in a gully
Kills a hundred fowl with chickens,
None of them I'll call the villain
Both insatiable and greedy,
Devastating all my homeland,
None I'll shoot down by an arrow
To revenge for what they are doing.
Who's the miscreant that spills blood?
Who kills baturs and their women?
Who thus orphans harmless children
Doomed to live a life of misery?
Who drowns wives and blooming maidens
Tied up hand and foot in water?
Who's bloodthirsty, set on warfare
To disgrace the country's honor?
Who stands high above the nation
Living by the nation's labor?
It's a creature with a round head
And with two legs like a human,
Not a human, though, a monster,
That I've tracked down in my hunting,
That I've preyed upon to shoot down
By an arrow of a sharp shot,
Masem-khan that stands before me,
He, the poisoner of lake Shulgan

To exterminate the cattle
And their owners by the drinking
Of lake Shulgan's poisonous water,
He, the wild bear killing Sura,
Whose blood's innocent as cow's blood,
He, the wolf fast and sharp-sighted,
He, the dev that captivated
Qypsak-batur of the Ithel,
Qatai-batur of the Iramal,
Tuqlas-batur of the Yaiq,
Tamyán-batur of the Tora,
Of the steppes of the Irandek,
Yurmaty of the swift Noghosh,
Tabyn-batur of the Uthan.
Upon Akbuthat, the white steed,
I've come hither to avenge them,
In their name and in their memory,
To revenge the miscreant Masem
For enslaving his superiors,
Spilling, fattening on their life-blood,
Making their wives into widows".

75. And with these words he chopped the khan's head and set free all the people who had been serving the khan as slaves. The people appreciated Hauban's strength and valor and they stepped up to him to share their troubles. The people said addressing him as follows:

"Honor be to you, true batur,
You, the lion of the country,
For you've crushed the khan, the miscreant,
That has kept us all in slavery,
Kept by force subordinated.
In the past this land saw batur
Worthy as your true companions,
That will stand you by in battle.
But the khan, the treacherous villain,
Separated them from homeland
And deprived them of their women.
If you manage to return them
You'll be father to the orphans
Crying bitterly for their fathers
And the first man in this country".

76. Hauban promised to search and find those batur and, after thoroughly asking for the way, he set out in search of them. After a long journey he saw a big bird and approached her. The bird was unable to fly, and she told Hauban her story:

"I was perched on the top of a hill, and the horses of Masem-khan were startled to see me. So the khan told his men to shoot me and throw me down a rock with my wings cut off. For a long time I lay down there, motionless. Though my wounds have healed at last, my wings are no longer good

for flying. While I am staying alone here, grieving, my fledglings must be starving. Help me, yeget, put some lather from the mouth of your horse to my wing-ends so they may heal".

77. Hauban put some lather from Akbuthat's mouth to her wing-ends and they healed. Then the bird said: "Yeget, how can I reward you for your service? How can I help you? I've spent all my life in sorrow suffering from Masem-khan and Shulgan's devs, unable to raise properly my own fledglings. I am such a bird that makes a horse for a horseless rider, a companion for a lone traveler". "Then how would you be able to help me?" - asked Hauban. The bird replied: "I must help you - not only for myself, but also for releasing the captive nightingales in Masem-khan's palace, for releasing the captive maidens in Shulgan's palace, for having multiplied the singing-birds in my Urals". "How do you know about this?" - asked Hauban, and the bird answered: "These maidens are my children, and when you released them they brought me this glad news". "But you are a bird, and these maidens have a human aspect!" - said Hauban. The bird said: "Yes, they are human, and I used to be human, too, but I have turned into a bird".

78. Hauban asked the bird to unravel this mystery, and the bird told him everything she knew:

"Long ago there was a water shah who lived in these parts. When Ural-batur with his sons Ithel, Hakmar, Nugush and Yaiq came here there was only blue water all around. They started fighting against the water-shah floating on their steeds. Thus where Ural's steed passed, floating, mountains came up. These Ural Mountains are Ural-batur's Primary Way. When they came up the water shah's country divided, and as Ural-batur was killing more and more devs, more and more rocks rose up from the water, and the more they perished the more dry land appeared. So with the water subsiding the shah's army grew weaker and weaker. When there were only small lakes and pools left the water-shah, deprived of his might, settled in this lake, lake Shulgan. They did not manage to dry it, because it is fed by underground waters. So the shah has stayed here since. And the Urals were the ever first road that Ural and his sons took to go to war against the devs. I was Ural's wife, Homai. When my husband and his sons went to war my daughters-in-law stayed and I stayed at home. My sons came back for their wives, but I lingered thinking that I would follow them later. My sons came back again to track down Shulgan-shah who was still at daggers drawn with my husband. My husband took counsel with his sons and they decided to drink the lake: the water subsiding, there would be no hiding-place for the lake-shah. But Shulgan learned about that decision and, when Ural began to drink the lake, he ordered his devs to get inside him with the water, and they tore his heart to pieces. But before my husband died

he advised his sons: "Do not drink from the lake where Shulgan's force is lurching, go to another place for water". My sons cut the land asunder to let underground streams flow freely; hence four current rivers appeared: The Ithel, TheYaiq, Tha Hakmar and The Nugush."

"Why did you turn into a bird?" - asked Hauban.

79.Homai said: "Setting out on a long journey my daughters-in-law and I usually turned into birds. On reaching a destination the husbands kissed their wives and they retrieved their human aspect. But I could not do it the last time, because my husband died when I was flying. All of my sons had children and lived long before they died. Akbuthat, the steed you are riding now, belonged to my husband Ural. After his death Shulgan stole Akbuthat. One of Ithel's sons went to war against Shulgan to get the stallion back. But when he found himself in Shulgan's kingdom he fell in love with his daughter. The shah came to know about this and offered Ithel's son to become his vizier and live in his palace. The yeget consented as her hoped it would help him to gain the shah's daughter. But the shah did not let him marry her and called him, mockingly, Qakhaha. Qakhaha began to steal the best maids in the Urals, and it was he who stole my children. Ithel's other sons were the forefathers to seven baturs, while Qakhaha was the forefather to Masem. Masem became the khan suppressing the nation, taking the land by force, but those seven baturs stood up against him and fought him hard. Once Masem-khan offered those baturs to make peace and invited them to visit him. When they came he poisoned them, had them tied up hand and foot and sold to an overseas shah. Now you are after these seven baturs, as I learned from my daughters who brought me this glad news. I can get you there faster than your steed. If you take me you'll be able to do without fighting. But there is one difficulty. To be able to fly there and back my own flesh won't last long without food. You will have to feed me by the flesh from your thigh and the thighs of those baturs. When you are back home again you will have to treat your wounds by the lather from the mouth of your steed. If you rode on horseback you would have to fight in order to free the baturs.

Hauban thought for a while after the bird had finished speaking. Then he told her:

"Go back to your children. Birds as you are, nobody shall dare to shoot you or your fledglings. So there is a happy life in store for you"- he said and went on his way.

80.He went a long way until he reached the country of the water-shah. He went about fighting the shah's guards. After he was through with them Hauban approached the palace. The shah had left the palace to gather troops from all over his country and he stood out against Hauban, but could not defeat him. The whirlwind raised by Akbuthat alone felled

the shah's warriors. Hauban seized the shah and his beis and killed them. Everybody was astonished at the strength that Hauban displayed and at the whirlwind raised by Akbuthat and gave up.

Thus Hauban won the battle and took the seven batur along with him. When he was back home he arranged a big tui gathering all the people and wrestlers from all over the country. The seven batur defeated all the other batur taking part in the festival, and Hauban made them chiefs of the seven stocks. He made it a law, too, that swans, descendents of Homai, be never hunted. During the tui he allowed Aihylu, Masem's daughter, to choose a bridegroom for herself. Aihylu chose Kypsak-batur.

Then he made every batur a stock chief and sent them to all parts of the country, while he made his way to lake Shulgan, where he let Akbuthat go and called Narkas. She obeyed to his call and came out of the lake. When Hauban saw Narkas he told her:

81. "As a humble orphan I met you
For the first time in my poor life,
I saw naught but goodness from you,
For you put me on the right track
And you gave a wondrous present,
Akbuthat, the steed of magic.
Now I've freed my land from evil
And have made myself so happy
Once again I stand before you
Hanging on your word, your feeling,
For I want to hear your heart speak."

82. At first Narkas stood silent, as if she did not know what to say. Then she spoke:

"I was born a maid, but mother
Bore me with a manly spirit,
And I've tested many a batur
In the vast land of the Urals,
Vanquished even your grandfather,
Yaiq, in a single combat,
Though I look so young and fragile.
As the daughter of the lake-shah
I've kept back from eating earth food
And from walking along earth ways,
So my life is never ceasing,
And old age does not tell with me.
I enjoy a green old beauty
That excels the sun's perfection,
For behind a cloud the sun hides
Once I just unveil my visage,
And if somebody assaults me
I will show my face to blind him
By my rays and win the combat
That disgraces the assaulter.
But with you I did not combat,

For I was averse to do it,
For with all my heart I loved you
When I saw you for the first time,
Though I dared not to admit it
Looking forward for this meeting.
If you take me for your equal
To my fate I will surrender
As your wife, and to the Urals
I will follow you, my husband,
Where we'll settle to be happy".

She said her word, and unveiled her face, and smiled at Hauban. And Hauban admired her beauty as he saw it. After Hauban's proposal Narkas ordered all her father's herds of cattle to get out of the lake. Herds of light-brown horses came out spreading the face of earth. Hauban distributed them among the poor who had no horses of their own. Then he mounted Akbuthat and, together with Narkas, went to his country.

Glossary

Khyzyr - a prophet

Qatyq – sour milk

Tui – a wedding feast

Uthan – a river in North-East Baskiria

Batur – a hero in Turkic epic legends; a brave, temerarious man; this word is traced back to the Mongol word *bahatur* (*batur*), probably with the stress on the last syllable, yet in the English translation due to the primary stress stressed on the first syllable

Barymta – cattle-stealing

Bei (Bey) – 1) a chief, a leader 2) a distinguished representative of a tribe

Qorot – cottage cheese

Sukmar – a mace

Dev – a popular creature of the epic legends and fairy tales of the Middle and Central East – an ugly, huge, hairy, fabulously strong monster that can fly in the air and is capable of magic

Shah – (the title of) a ruler in the East, especially in Iran

Samrau — king of birds in Bashkir folk songs and legends

Padishah — a grand-shah (great-shah), see *shah*

Homai – a legendary bird of fortune in sagas and fairy tales of some peoples of the East that is said to bring fortune to anyone who manages to see it

Katil (Qatil) – literally “a hangman, a butcher”; the name of a shah notorious for his misdeeds

Yeget – a young man; a brave; a brave, temerarious man, see also Batur

Maithan – a place where people rally for public celebrations; a rally, a public celebration

Tangry – heaven; superior deity

Tora (Turah) – among the Bashkirs and other Turkic nations a person who enjoys a high-ranking position

Saba – a leather skin for kumiss

Kumiss – a beverage made of mare’s milk

Yiyin – a people’s rally, festival; see maithan

Qahkaha – in Bashkir legends and fairy tales head of evil forces, king of monstrous serpents

Azhdah(a) – a fabulous creature of the epic legends and fairy tales of the Middle and Central East – a giant-sized snake, living beyond Kaf-tau, a mythical mountain; according to the Bashkir popular belief an ordinary snake that has lived from 100 to 500 years is liable to turn into an Azhdaha

Tolpar – in epic legends and fairy tales of the Turkic peoples a winged horse

Azraka – in Bashkir legends and fairy tales head of evil forces, great-shah of devs, flying monsters

Hynsy — a soothsayer, a prophet, a fortune-teller, often taking the position of a high-ranking counsellor at court in the Medieval East to tell fortunes by heavenly bodies and to select the best horses in the sovereign’s herd

Akbuthat/Akbuth – literally “white-grey”; the name of the famous winged horse of Bashkir legends; see also Tolpar

Yetegan — the Great Bear, Ursa Major

Aihylyu – literally “moon-beauty”; the name of an epic maiden, the moon’s daughter

Bashkunak — a bucket for carrying water, made of horse head skin

Qolas — a unit for measuring length

Qaf (the Qaf-tau) – a legendary mountain haunted by fantastic characters in fairy tales and epics of the inhabitants of the Middle and Central East

Botmon – a unit of weight in the Ancient East, in different regions from 2 to 11 poods (one pood is equal to 16.38 kilos)

Yaman-tau – literally “bad mount”; a massif in the South Urals

Iramal – a range of mountains in the South Urals in the North-East of Bashkortostan

Qyrkty – literally “he cut it”; the name of a gorge in this legend; in reality Kyrkty-tau is a mountain in the South-East of Bashkortostan

Aq-Ithel – literally “white-river”; the major river in Bashkortostan; see also Ithel

myrthas Sheikhs Barymta – cattle-stealing

Khyzyr (Хызыр) a prophet

Qatyq – sour milk

Qorot – cottage cheese

Tui – wedding feast (?) (свадьба, празднество)

Uthan – река в северо-восточной Башкирии a river in North-East Baskiria

Bei (Bey) – 1) a chief, a leader 2) a distinguished representative of a tribe.

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