

Three Abkhazian Tales (Plus One More)

[B.] George Hewitt

In 1997 the late Abkhazian ethnographer Sergej Zyk^wba published in Aq^w'a (aka Sukhum, capital of Abkhazia) a solid collection of Abkhazian folktales entitled *Apswa Lak^w'k^wa* 'Abkhazian Folktales' (602pp.) with a print-run of 600. Three stories contained in this volume appeared two years later in Tbilisi (capital of Georgia) in a pocket-edition of three paperback booklets (apparently aimed at children, to judge by the nature of the slip-case and internal illustrations) with a print-run of 500. Each of the three booklets in this mini-edition carries the statement in both Georgian and Abkhaz: 'The publication was prepared within the framework of the Programme to Establish the State-status of the Abkhaz Language (the Programme's author and Overseer is Zurab Shengelia), with the financial assistance of the Embassy of Gt. Britain'. Many more foreigners visit the Republic of Georgia than visit the Republic of Abkhazia, and so those with an interest in the Abkhaz language are more likely to have acquired the Tbilisi publication than Zyk^wba's substantial tome. It is only fair to point out that the Georgian-produced booklets must have been poorly proofed, because they are sadly far from being error-free, which will present considerable difficulties to anyone tempted to use them when trying to study or learn the language. Given this state of affairs, I have decided to present the three tales according to the texts in Zyk^wba's publication (though the minor spelling-reforms that were introduced after this volume, as well as the Tbilisi edition, came out will be introduced and typos corrected), appending my translation to the texts¹.

The 'Plus One More' is the lengthy 'Xabzhyn's Tale', which was published by Zyk^wba in his earlier 1976 collection, also entitled *Apswa Lak^w'k^wa* 'Abkhazian Folktales' (223pp.) and which was published in Tbilisi with a print-run of 2,000. The story in question can be found on pages 88-103.

How The King Would Ask After Stories

(Sergej Zyk^wba, 1997, *Apswa Lak^w'k^wa*, pp.513-517)

¹ In fact, these three stories along with my translations also appeared in the bilingual *Pages from Abkhazian Folklore* by Zurab Dzhapua and myself which was published in Sukhum in 2008 with a print-run of 1,000, but this volume too, like Zyk^wba's works, is unlikely to be easily accessible outside Abkhazia.

Ах ажэабжъкэа дышразцаауаз

Дыкан ажэйтэан ахак, итэылафэ ахас дрыман имацара.

Зны ари ах итаххеит ажэйтэ ажэабжъ бзиақэак иахарасы, игэфыбъра алаихигарц. Иара изкэикуаз наигзар акэын уеизгы.

Зны ах дрыпъханы еизигеит инапатака инхоз ажэлар хэычла дула зеггы.

Ажэабжъ бзиак, ахатара злоу, ашьха ныкэареи ага ныкэареи иаххэаны исазхэо хамта бзиак истоит хэа реихэеит.

Уи ашьтахь ажэлар неихэапъшы-ааихэапъшуа, еилазырѳуа иаанхеит пьытраамтак. Атыхэтэан тахмадак даагылан ус ихэеит:

— Ах, ухаткы сцеит, азин сутозар, ашьха ныкэарала сизниахьоу ажэабжък уасхэауан.

— Ихэа, — ихэеит ах.

— Сара сыхьчан, арахэ срыцын. Аапънык азы сырахэ сыманы ашьха скылсит, аха сара ахьчаразы дук цыбаа сдырбомызт, иахарак сшэарыцауан. Ёнак ашарпъазы сѳагылан, сыпъсуа шэакъ атыхэтеи змамыз ашьтых, скаштатла азна ахи ахэшэи сыманы, слабашья ду аасыцарс, шэарыцара хэа ашьха цэхэыра снафалеит. Даара акыр сныкэахьан, амрагы нтагьалеит.

Саапъсан ахрафэ хахэык сныкэтэеит, суапа сыбѳа инацастдан сынкыдиаалт, сшэакъ сшэамхыбжьара инабжьаргыланы, сылацэа нтааит, аха иаразнак сцэырхан саафыхеит. Снапъшы-аапъшит. Ажэдан ахь сшыпъшуаз акэымкэа, уама дук пьырны ишааиуаз збеит. Изакэызеишь хэа сшыпъшуаз акэымкэа, иббаза ишааиуаз, агэапъхэа аеаасыкэнажьын, сшэакъгы, суапагы, саргы хайдкыланы кыт смырхэакэа, саашьтнахын, саманы-ипьырны, жэдангэыла идэыкэлеит.

Ицоит иаанымгылазакэаны, ашьхақэа акакала сырхыганы сагоит. Ус-ус мацара бжь-шьхак сырхыганы, саманы ишнеиуаз акэымкэа, хра дук, харакык афэ саманы илатэеит. Убра шыақьастаны икан, абас штакы акара. Уака снышьтанатан, иара наскьан, аеырбабаны, хахэы-харак дук иаакэтэеит сара сахь иаапъшуа. Саргы саапъсаны, насгы сшэаны сышьтоуп.

Ашьшьыхэа сышьтахька санынапъш, ауаа рыбаѳкэа еикэкакэа икажьны избеит. Саргы уака сацнацоит убоу хэа сгэы иаанагеит, аха ирласны сгэы аасыпъсахын, иарахьы сыпъшуан. Ахы хэычык аварахь иарцэир, ма ашьтахька, уеизгы арака сацъал ыкоуп, сакэшэеит, ипъыскуазеи, сеихсып хэа сѳазыкатаны сиан, иара уака сахьышьтанатаз атыпъ афэ.

Ус акэымкэа, иара аеааршэшэан, мацк акара ашьтахька инхэапъшит. Убри аамтазы сыпъсуа шэакъ снапы иныкэырсны, агэышпъы иарбаны афэнасырхеит

апқаѳхәа. Мыц зымхәоз сшәақь хәычы ахы шиашаз инеит иахьасырбаз. Иакәшәеит изгарыз, иара уацәкьа аәаитнахит, саргы ох гәышьа схәеит, сыпсы аасшьеит. Нас сдәықәлеит сызцозар хәа, аха сабацахуаз, хра хыцәкәак, зынзаск уаѳ дахьамышьтуаз акәын, иакәыршаны ихахә тәцаран, азы ахьытәцәа илеиуан. Уахьадыпшыло ицырцыруа, ула хнакуа иқан, уаѳпсы дахәомызт уантәи албаара.

Нас ус схасабит, абни исшьыз ацәа ахыхны, исхарпжаны, спырни сцап хәа. Снеины ашьшьыхәа сшәақь сыма снахагылт ауаѳы дызфоз. Сшәақь апынтца надсыргылан, снагәтас-нагәтасит, мацк акара апысы тазар дырѳегьых игылар, саѳоит хәа сацәшәаны. Аха ишыпсыра ипсыхьан.

Иаразнак ала сахәызба аатыспжаан, сласны али-апыси рыбжьара ацәа аахьсхит. Иааитыхны амра инцәыстан, иаапышшеит. Нас иласхасырпжан сѳышьтыптеит, аха сызымпжрит. Иаразнак ала саалаган ахахә хараккәа икакәаз снарыкәгылан снапкәа ааитыхны, ани исшьыз ацәа шысхарпжас сынкапж мацара, хәычык акара сазыманшәалахеит. Нас ицегь иахьахаракыз амыкәкәа срыкәгыланы, сыпжан сынтало мацара, истеит апырра хәа ухәаратәы.

Хәаха-хәымш рышьтахь сацәымшәаратәы еипыш апырра аныста, енак шыжьымтан, исыхьлакгы сыхьааит схәан, исшьыз ацәа ласхарпжа, сымтәыжәѳакәа ааитыхны, ахра ахыкәцәкәа срыкәгыланы, хланцы сынталт, сыпсыгы ѳеин скыркы инкылагылт, аха сыпсы ааивызган, сымтәыжәѳакәа кьо ахауа салан, ѳаха-ѳымш спыруан.

Атыхәтәан қытак аѳы така адгылт акны сылкахаит. Акыр аамтагы сзымгылт, аха сыпсы анааивызга, сѳагылт машәыр смыхкәа, сеибгаза, исхарпжасгы аасхьсхгәышьан, сдәыкәылт сыѳныка. Адырѳаены шыжьымтан еипыш сыѳны сааит.

Егы сара санырымба, стаацәа дтахагәышьеит рхәан, ацәыуара карцеит, сырцәыуеит, сырхьит, сырцабеит, сагырхаштхьан ауп сшааиз. Сара сеибганы санырзаа, стаацәа ласын ачара еитыхны ируит. Апысраан изархәаз зегы адырра рыртеит, еизеит ауацәа, ақәлацәа зегы, цыракыр уа дхамазар. Исеигәырптеит, ицаршьеит сзыкәшәаз анраха. Саргы абыржәы сахьубо сыкоуп, — ихәеит атахмада амыкәмабара зхызгаз.

Уи даналга ашьтахь, дырѳегьых дѳагылт даәазәы.

— Ах, ухаткы, ажәа сымазар, саргы иуасхәарц стахьуп агатәылала сара схатала сзыниахьоу ажәабжь, — ихәеит.

Нас зегы ааилазырѳит, акыр ихәозар хәа ишихәапышуаз, даакәыпсычхан, дналагеит ацәажәара.

— Ҳақан хэбык айкэлацэа, даара бзиа еибабоз, еикэгэыбуаз, ацэгъарагы иацэымшэоз.

Зны иакэахкит хдарцы ныкэара мшынгэыла хыхынзацо хэа. Дук мыртыкэа хагдэыкэлеит ишақэахкыз еипштэќы. Афатэ иагымкэа ирацэаны ишьтахкит. Флыкала хдэыкэлеит зегы хаиманы. Хцо, хцо мацара, хныкэеит даара акыр, абас ымз-хымз раќара.

Ҳашнеуаз цъара дгылк иахымдыруз акны хаазхытит. Уаќа дэы пшзараны, икаршэраны иќан. Цлас игылаз зегы каламын, ашыыц хаскынла еитќаќаража ушьамхы иаатасуа ихќазан. Акалам тлаќэа хэа игылаз зегы гэафан, ашьха ртан, цхала итэын кэапеишэа ихыхэхэа. Егы адэы хэа иќаз мѳакы алгамызт, ауразоуроу кэазараны акэын ишыќаз. Цъара шытакты умбо еилазазауа ахаскын гылан.

Анс ацха рацэаны ианаабэгышыа, хласны ацха хпшит. Изтахтэарыз аматэахэќэа ихамаз зегы хартэит. Ҳаргы уаха нахзацымтцо ацха хеахаркит.

Нас хаматэахэќэа зегы афлыкахь иаагеит. Ҳара хакан хэбык. Фыца уа иангылеит, егырт ххбык ус иакэахкит цќа иеилхаргарц иќоу закэу убри адгыл акны.

Хдэыкэлеит ххбыкгы. Халапш ахыназоз уаха дырра хамакэа мѳагы хамбазо, ажэырт абри абна ду иабоз хазцарацы. Ҳашнеуаз акэымкэа, иаабеит шытаќэак даара идуны.

Урт ашытаќэа хархысуа мацара хашнеуаз, иаабеит арахэ рышыаќыаста. Аха рахэ ыќамызт, уаагы ыќамызт.

Уа хнархысын арахэ рышыта ххыланы хашнеуаз, апсаса хнарылагылт. Арахэ ханырба, агэыркь дырган, ирхан идэыкэлеит.

“Ҳаи, хай” ихэан, ахьча дѳагылт. Хлаихэапшызар, ддауын, хгэеитан, ирахэ хларапшицеит. Ҳаргы уи химпытыцны хабацагэышыоз? Ҳеаахарххар, иара уаќацэќы ххэитэуан азы акгы хамхэеит.

Адауы ирахэ иман ашыбжэон дангэарлоз, харгы арахэ хрылакны хгэареитцеит. Ҳахэнеиз, хап дук афы еихатэ гэашэк фаны иќан, убри агэашэ ааиртын ирахэ харгы хрылапхязаны халтеикит. Иаргы ашэ акны афнутќала длаќалатэеит, аихатэ гэашэ фкыдижылан ахап дууза афнутќа хаатахеит.

Ус амца ааикэитан, еихатэ дуузак убрахь цъара иаавтихын, илага амца илыехэеитцеит. Нас иара уа ахэыштаара дныехэатэан, ипсы ааишыеит. Ус итэы иехэеитазгы аашит иќапшы-уаркалеиуа, узахэампшуа. Уи аамтазы адауы дѳагылан, абни атэы ааехэихын, иманы днейны сѳызцэа азэы илаифришыын, дшыхэхэоз амца длаќэжны, дцэырбылны дифеит.

Ҳаргы иабон, аха икаҳтагәышььозыз? Уи данилга, ацәы дырфегых иеҳәеитцеит. Ус ишит икаҭшььза. Ибыеҳәихын, инаганы сөыза инаифришьын, дшыхәхәоз амца длакәижьын, дцәырббылны дифеит.

Уи данилга, ацәы неиган иныеҳәеиттан саргы сьфаразы, нырцә ахәыштаарахь дниасын днатәеит. Ус илацәә нтаан, дынхышәтын, дынкыдиааланы дыцәеит.

Ацәы каҭшььза ианшы, усгы сьцәынхом, ськазаргы избозеи схәан, снейн ацәы ааеҳәысхын, ила интасыршьшьит иахьынзасзышьтуаз. Илақәа аатысхит. Абас ала акгы имбазо дкалеит, аха сабацоз? — агәашә аркыуп.

Уажәы илақәа ихысхит, аха, иазыуазеи? — имч шимац имоуп, симҭыхьашәар, сеилаиркәыцуеит. Ус, акыҭхәа дөытыфрын, дааи арахә дгьежьюа даарылалт, аха уафы ишимбац ала, арахәгы рхан каамет карцеит, аха цьаргы изцом. Саргы цьара сьҭыхьашәар хәа сшәоит, арахә сыерыласкит такә наскья. Нас саагылан сахәызба аатысҭаан, уасак сшьын, ацәа аахысхын, ацәа сынталт, ус адауы ауасақәа акакала напыла ианкылан иҭхьазаны адәахы иоуижьюа далагеит. Саргы ауасақәа сыерылакны снейт. Уажәы ауасақәа сыерыцарзны сцап хәоуп. Дааскысын фынфәжәа рхыҭхьазара хәа сноуижьт суасыз цышьяны.

Нас сыҭсы ансоугәышья, иаразнак суасацәа исхарҭаз лкасыжьын, сөызцәа рахь сдәықәлеит. Сөызцәа ахыҭказ санней, ирасхәеит икалаз, сөызцәа ирыхьыз, насгы сара сыҭсы шаазгазгы.

Иаразнак хафлыка хталан, азы ханхылан хдәықәлеит. Җытк хнаскьяхьан еиҭш, зылақәа тысхыз адауы ифызцәа адауцәа аахықәгылт амшын, аха изтамлеит. Апкаф-апкафхәа иҳаихсит, аха ахы хмаахакәа хайқәхеит. Хара зыҭсы еикәхаз хаҭсы хаманы хааит.

Абас сақәшәахьейт ага ныкәарафь, сөызцәа ртахашьягы абас ишшәазхәаз ауп, саргы насыҭла сыҭсы ацәаха нхейт, — ихәеит агәафра иакәшәаз ауафы.

— Даеазәы акыр зхәо уқоума? — ихәан, дцааит ах. Аха уафы акгы имхәеит. Уи аамышьтахь ах даара ачара бзиа рзиуит, хатыр ду рықәйтцеит. Ажәабжь иазхәаз афыца ирықәнагаз ахамтақәа рытаны, ауаа рыцеыжәца ирыцтаны дасу рыфныҭакәа ишьтит.

Абас афыца анхацәа иреиуаз атахмадацәа ажәабжь иархәеит, ускантәи аамтазы нцәахәыс ирҭхьазауаз, рах.

How The King Would Ask After Tales

In olden times there was a king; in his country he was the only king they had.

One day this king conceived a yearning to hear some fine old tales in order thereby to relieve his *ennui*. And, come what may, he simply had to fulfil whatever he would set his heart upon.

One day the king summoned and gathered together all the people who lived under his control, both young and old.

‘I’ll give a decent present to whoever tells me a fascinating story, with a ring of authenticity about it, concerning mountain or coastal journeys,’ he said to them.

At that the folk remained for a little while looking round about them, listening for one of their number to speak. At last an old man stepped forward and spoke thus:

‘Your majesty, by your grace, if you give me leave, I shall relate to you a story which I have experienced while on a journey to the mountains.’

‘Speak!’ said the king.

‘I was a shepherd accompanying the flock. One spring I went up to the mountains with my flock, but they didn’t cause me a great deal of trouble as regards shepherding — I mostly hunted. One day I rose at dawn, took up my Abkhazian rifle, which had no case, and, using my large staff for support, headed up to the mountain-pasture to hunt with my pouch full of shot and gunpowder. I had walked a really long way, and the sun was on its descent.

‘I grew tired and sat down on a high rock. Placing my felt-cloak beneath my back, I lay against it, having positioned my rifle in the space between my knees; my eyelids began to close, but I suddenly awoke with a start. I looked all around. As I was looking up at the sky, I saw flying towards me a large, wondrous spectacle. As I was gazing, sunk in thought as to what it could possibly be, it came on with all its mighty bulk, deposited itself on me with a thud, gathered up my gun, my cloak and me all together without giving me chance to make a squeak, took me up and set off in flight into the depths of heaven with me in tow.

‘On it goes without making a single stop, taking me over the mountains, one by one. In just this manner did it carry me over seven mountains, and, as it journeyed with me in its grip, it landed along with me on a large rock, a tall one. Just there was a flat expanse, like this, the size of a yard. It was right there that it put me down, and then it shifted away, ruffled itself up, and perched on a large, tall stone, looking over at me. I too, exhausted and frightened into the bargain, am lying down.

‘When, gingerly, I shot a glance behind me, I saw human bones lying in a pile, one on top of another. It occurred to me to think that it would certainly be adding me too to the pile right there, but suddenly I pulled myself together and began looking at it. I realised that, come what may, my fate would be decided right here, and, thinking I had nothing to

lose, lay there in the very spot where it had put me down, having prepared myself to shoot at it, if it should twist its head a little to the side or to the rear. Thereupon it shook itself down and glanced just a touch behind it. At that moment I flicked my Abkhazian gun into my hand, took aim at its breast and fired off the bullet with a bang. The bullet from my ever trusty little gun went off straight in the direction in which I had aimed. It hit its target; then and there the bird stretched itself out on the ground, and I, letting out a sigh of relief, took a rest. Then I set off to see if I could get anywhere, but where on earth was I to go? — the place was a rocky pinnacle where it would permit no man at all to pass; all around there was crystal rock, and water was flowing down it in sheer descent. Sparkling brightly wherever you looked at it, it was such as to blind anyone's eye — no man could manage to descend from there.

‘Then I calculated as follows: I would strip the skin off the creature that I had killed, wrap it over myself, and fly off. I went carefully with my gun and stood over that man-eater. I lodged the tip of my gun against the creature and nudged it a number of times, fearful that, if even a small amount of life still coursed in its veins, it would rise up again and eat me. But it had died its death.

‘I at once took out my knife, set to and skinned it in the twinkling of an eye. Having stretched it out, I laid it in the sun, and it dried out. Then I wrapped it over myself and jumped up off the ground, but I could not fly. Immediately I took my stand on the high boulders that were around, stretched out my arms, and somewhat got the hang of things by just jumping down wrapped in the skin of that thing I had slain. Then again, at a high point, I took my stand on the mounds and by simply jumping up and down mastered it sufficiently well for one to call it flying.

‘When after five days and nights I learnt to fly so as not to be fearful, one day in the morning I determined that whatever was going to happen to me should happen to me, wrapped over myself the skin of the creature I had killed, stretched out my wings, took my stand on the rocky pinnacles and launched into a headlong plunge; and my stomach rose and stuck in my throat, but I recovered my spirits and, flapping my wings, was in the air and flew for two days and nights.

‘At long last I fell down to earth in a village. For quite a time I could not get up, but, when I composed myself, I stood up, having suffered no ill effect and all in one piece, and, poor me, I took off what was wrapped over me and set off home. On the morning of the next day I arrived home.

‘A further thing is that, when they didn't see me, my family expressed the thought that I, poor thing, had died and so arranged the mourning-ceremony — they wept for me, grieved over me and mourned me, and they had gone and forgotten me by the time I

came back. When I returned to them safe and sound, my family set to, arranged and laid on a celebration-party. They gave out the information to all of those whom they had informed at the time of “the death”; all the relatives and friends of my generation gathered from wherever we had any kin. As for me, I am where you see me now,’ said the old man who had endured the tribulation.

After he had finished, someone else rose to his feet.

‘Your majesty, by your grace, if the word is with me, I too wish to tell you the story of what I myself experienced in a territory by the sea,’ he said.

Then everyone pricked up their ears, and, as they were looking at him in expectation of his tale, he let out a sigh and began to speak.

‘We were five comrades; we very much loved one another, investing hope in one another, and with no fear of anything bad.

‘Once we made up our minds to go off on a journey to see how far we could get crossing via the heart of the sea. And, without any long delay, we set off just as we intended. We took along plenty of food so as not to run short. All of us together set off by boat. Just travelling and travelling, we covered quite a distance in this way for about two-three months.

‘As we were journeying, we landed somewhere in a country which we did not know. It was in the form of a lovely meadowland, all flat. All the trees standing there were bamboo; they had a covering of really bright green meadow-grass that brushed one’s knee. All the bamboo-trees standing there were hollow with bees in them and were brim-full to overflowing with honey. Moreover, not a single path led out from what I’m calling a meadow — it was just a huge expanse, stretching far and wide. Grass stood gently swaying so that you couldn’t see a single track anywhere.

‘Thus, when we in our plight caught sight of so much honey, we set to and sorted out the honey. We filled all the vessels we had into which we might pour it. And we gorged ourselves on honey to such an extent that we couldn’t fit in another mouthful.

‘Then we brought all our vessels to the boat. There were five of us. Two remained at that spot; the other three of us determined to find out properly what that land might contain.

‘The three of us set out, having no knowledge other than what our eyes told us about what was in sight and seeing not a single path, in order to make for this large forest of reeds that we could see. As we were on our way, we noticed some remarkably large tracks.

‘As we continued onwards just tracing those tracks, we caught sight of a hollow area for livestock. But there was no livestock, nor were there any people.

‘As we continued tracking them there, passing along the livestock-track, we found ourselves among a flock of sheep. When the animals detected us, they stampeded and bolted in alarm.

‘The shepherd jumped up saying: “What, what?!” The moment we saw him, we could see he was an ogre; he noticed us and drove us forward in front of his livestock. As for us, even if we had eluded him, where were we supposed to go in our situation? — if we had refused, he’d have made a meal of us right there, and so for this reason we said nothing.

‘When the ogre at noon was entering his stockade with his livestock, he drove us in too, holding us amongst the livestock. There was an iron gate suspended at the spot we entered a great cave; he opened that gate and locked us inside, counting us amongst his livestock. He too sat down amongst us inside by the door; he slammed the iron gate shut, and we remained inside this quite massive cave.

‘Thus, he lit the fire, took a huge, great iron skewer down from somewhere thereabouts, moved it over and placed it in the fire. Then he sat down there in front of the hearth and rested. Thus did his skewer, which he’d placed in the fire, heat up so irridesciently red that you couldn’t look at it. At that moment the ogre got up, removed the skewer from the fire, went with it, thrust it down into the midriff of one of my friends, screaming as he was the while, plunged him into the fire, gave him a quick roasting and gobbled him up.

‘And we were viewing this, but what were we supposed to do in our plight?! When he had finished him off, he plunged the skewer a second time back into the fire. Thus did it heat up bright red. He removed it, took it, thrust it into the midriff of my second companion, and, as he was screaming, plunged him into the flames, gave him a quick roasting and gobbled him up.

‘When he had finished him off, he took the skewer and put it back in the fire in order to eat me too, moved across to the hearth and sat down. Thus, his eyelids become heavy, he flopped down, and, lying propped up, fell asleep. I thought that, when the skewer heated up bright red, I wouldn’t escape him anyway, and, even if I did stay alive, I could see no means of escape, and so I went and took the skewer from the flames, stabbed it into his eye as far as I could make it penetrate. I plucked out his eyes. In this way he became incapable of seeing anything, but where was I to go? — the gate is still closed.

‘So, I have now removed his eyes, but, what’s to be done about it when he still has as much strength as he ever had? — if I were to fall into his clutches, he’d squash me flat. Thereupon, in a flash he rushed forward, came and, whirling round, got amongst the livestock, but, in a way no man had seen, the livestock too took fright and created a real

commotion, but there was nowhere they could go. I too am fearful of falling somewhere into his clutches, and so I kept myself amongst the livestock a fair distance away. Then I stood up, took out my knife, killed a sheep, flayed it and donned its pelt; the ogre meanwhile restrained the sheep one by one by hand and, counting them, began to let them go outside. I went up still keeping myself in amongst the sheep; the thinking was that, having now hidden myself down beneath the sheep, I'd escape. He felt me and let me out as the forty of their number, believing me to be a sheep.

'Then, when I, poor thing that I was, had recovered myself, I quickly cast off my fleece in which I was clothed and set off for my companions. When I reached the spot where my friends were, I told them what had taken place, what had happened to my comrades, and then how I had saved my soul.

'At once we boarded our boat, launched into the water, and set off. As we had moved a little way off, the ogre-friends of the ogre whose eyes I had gouged out came and stood by the edge of the sea, but they couldn't go in. They fired at us with a volley of shots, but the bullets failed to hit us, and we survived. Those of us who survived came home with our lives.

'Such is the experience I have had in a coastal journey, and such is the way my friends died, just as I have related it to you, and, as for me, luckily my puny soul remained intact,' said the one who had suffered the misfortune.

'Is there any other among you with anything to say?' asked the king. But no-one said a thing. After that the king laid on a really large celebration for them and paid them great respect. He gave the both of them who had told him their tale suitable gifts and despatched each to his home with grooms in attendance.

In this fashion did both the old men from the peasantry relate their story to their king, whom at that time they considered a deity.

Аеа-џа Цъамхэыхэ

Дыџан шэарыцаџ бзиа, мыцхэы ашэарыцара бзиа избоз, иара убри иагыашьтаз.

Енак, ашэарыцаџы иџызцэа иманы хара, енагы дышчалоз еиџш, шэарыцара дцеит. Дшышэарыцоз акэымкэа, ибеит инахараны бынеак² ахэарақэа ацны, амрахэага ишцэтэалаз. Ашэарыцаџцэа, абынеа шырбаз еиџшцэџа, хаихсуеит хэа ршэакыкэа надырххеит, аха реихабы, шэаагылшь зны, акрынабжьюуп, ицегы хазнеип, — ихэан, иџызцэа ашэарыцаџцэа имырхыскэа иааникылт. Ашьшьыхэа инеиуа, аеа аџацэа аманы иахьтэаз акыр ианазааигэаха, ашэарыцаџцэа реихабы иеынеитыхны данынаџш, дибейт чкэынак, иан дшаалыхшаз еиџш дџантазза ахэарақэа дышрылатэаз, насгы иџызцэа инадирбейт.

Ари закэузеи рхэан, зегы даара иџаршьейт. Ашэарыцаџцэа реихабгы изымбатэбарахан иџызцэа иреихэейт — дшэымшьыкэа ачкэын дышэкы, дзакэу еилахкаап хэа. Ашэарыцаџцэа, реихабы ишреихэаз еиџш, ачкэын ишьталаны дыркит.

Ари ачкэын дзакэыз уи акэын: анкэа зны ақэларақэа аныџаз, цьюуки қэланы ажэлар ақыта иахцаны иахькарцоз збаџы этэымыз џхэыск дрылазаарын, амџан џа длоузаап. Хшара зоуз аџхэыс лычкэын моу, лара лхы лызгомызт аџнытэ, лычкэын амџан дкаршэны дцеит³.

Ачкэын дахькаршэыз ааигэара акэзаарын иахьгылаз убри ахэарақэа зыцны ашэарыцаџцэа ирбаз абынеа.

Енак абынеа ахэарақэа аманы иахьынтыцыз ачкэын иааигэа инеизаап, ахэарақэа адэы ихыкэыз ачкэын дрылашэейт; аеа аџацэа дрылакны даазейт.

Абас акэын ачкэын аеа иаазаз абна агэта аеа ахэарақэа дышрылашэаз.

Ашэарыцаџцэа реихабы ачкэын иџныџа дигейт. Аџны дахьааигаз, ашэарыцаџ ачкэын диаазейт, дарџысхеит, абызшэа итцейт: аџны данааига бызшэа издырзомызт. Хьзысгы ихьзырцейт Цъамхэыхэ аеа-џа хэа, аеа дахьаазаз аџынтэ.

² Ог бнаеак.

³ In place of дкаршэны дцеит, the Tbilisi edition has дылцэызит 'he was lost to her'.

Аеа-пѣа Цѣамхѣыхѣ акыта дызланагалаз акны зегы дрылччо, хшыѡлеи, дырралеи, сахъалеи ухѣа зегъ рыла зегы дреиѣыны дѣкалеит. Избахѣ рылазит зегы иаразнак. Икытаѣы усцѣгъак каларгы уажѣшьта Цѣамхѣыхѣ иакѣын раѣхъа инарѣхъоз.

Цѣамхѣыхѣ дзааз ашѣарыцаѡ даара амал рацѣаны измаз, къафла инхоз азѣ иакѣын. Уи ашѣарыцаѡы пѣа-затѣык диман, аха уи ипѣа-затѣы акы иаѣсаз уаѡымызт, дгазан, дуаѡаган.

Убас ишыѣказ акѣымкѣа, зны ашѣарыцаѡ дычмазаѡхан аѣсра далагеит.

Ашѣарыцаѡ дшыѣсуаз анидыр, ичкѣын кашѣарах ииааз дааипѣхъан ус иеихѣеит: — Дад, Цѣамхѣыхѣ, ура уоуп иахъа сара сзыкѣгѣыѣратѣы чкѣынс исымоу. Сѣа дзеипѣшроу убоит, смал сѣа инапы ианыстѣар, иѣхастеитѣеит, — ихѣан, имазара зегы ахылакѣаз, иахыѡнакѣаз, дѡагыланы Цѣамхѣыхѣ иирбеит, рѣаѣхакѣагы иитеит, убасгы нацѣаны; — Сара уажѣшьта сыѣсуеит, аха сычкѣын ус ихѣашт: — Ура уоума саб чкѣынс имаз, зегы ура унапы ианитеит, рѣаѣхакѣагы уитеитеи, сара акгы сзакѣитымзеи? — хѣа; даара дгѣаашт, уаргы уиргѣаашт, аха игѣы кѣацала иахынзаулшо. Имузошѣа убозар, днаганы ирбакѣа, ауатахкѣа зегы рѣаѣхакѣа ит, абри ауатах иумырбан, избан акѣзар, иурбар, иѣсы мацхоит, — ихѣан, уатахк иирбеит. Убри ауатах акны иѡнагылан амраташѣарахъ инхо, амза еипѣш илашоз, быжъѡеишыѣѣа рахѣшьа-затѣ лсахъа.

Ашѣарыцаѡ данѣсы, иѣсы антаз ишихѣаз еипѣш, ичкѣын имѡо-имжѣуа далагеит.

— Цѣамхѣыхѣ зегы ура унапы иануп, сара акгы ахыѣкоу сыздыруам хѣа ескъынгы диеын Цѣамхѣыхѣ ашѣарыцаѡ ипѣа.

Аеа-пѣа Цѣамхѣыхѣ игѣы анѣѣѣаза, ачкѣын дааипѣхъан ауатахкѣа зегы дрыѡнеирѣшит, ари ак апатрет зыѡнагылоу ада. Иирбеит ахыы, аразны, иара убас амал ахытѣахыз. Аха ашѣарыцаѡ ипѣа ауатах инхазгы дыѡнамѣшыр имуит. Ианимуза, днаганы ашѣ аартны даныныѡнеирѣшы, быжъѡеишыѣѣа рахѣшьа лсахъа аниба, ачкѣын иѣсы мацхан иара уатѣкъа дкахаит.

Ачкѣын иѣсы анилала, абри зсахъоу лхата пѣхѣысс данысзаумга, сеысшьуеит ихѣеит. Иагъиашатѣкъаны ашѣарыцаѡ ипѣа аешърахыы ихы анирха, Аеа-пѣа Цѣамхѣыхѣ икѣыршѣны ддѣыкѣлеит абри зсахъоу дыѣшааны даазымгакѣа сшымаауа хѣа хѣаны.

Цѣамхѣыхѣ имѡа дыкѣеланы даара акыр дныѣѣахъаны дышнеиуаз акѣымкѣа данынапѣш, азѣы ацѣѣѣаста дхыланы, ахахаихѣа анышѣгѣалкѣа шифоз, насгы, дырѣегыых Амла хѣа шихѣоз ибеит. Цѣамхѣыхѣ иибаз даара иѣѣеишыѣеит,

краамтаггы дазышанханы даанхеит, аха нас днаидгылан ус диазцааит: — Адгьыл аархэны анышэгэал икэжью зеггы афара уаёуп, аха иара усггы Амла хэа ухэоитеи, узакэ-уаёузеи уара хэа.

— Сара сьазшьаз, уара Аёа-гъа Цьамхэыхэ дубар, егъа дьёушьарын, ихэеит анышэ зфоз.

— Аёа-гъа Цьамхэыхэ захьзуггы сара соуп, аха анышэ, ари уара иуфо акара моу, агъамаггы сьзбом!

— Цьамхэыхэ захьзу уара уакэзар, уахьцалакгы суьызоуп! — ихэан, аьыцьаггы еицны рёынархеит.

Еицны ишнеиуаз дырбеит азэы зырфашк дацагыланы ажэра даёны, дырфегь — Азба! Азба! хэа ахэхэара дшаёыз.

— Икоуцо закэузеи хэа, ицьашьаны ианизцаа, — Икастозеи, азба сакуеит ауп ихэеит. — Ари азы иужэуа зеггы узымхазои хэа ианцьаршьа, ус рхэеит: — Сара сьазшьаз, Аёа-гъа Цьамхэыхэ дыжэбар, егъа дцьашэшарын хэа. — Аёа-гъа Цьамхэыхэ хэа ззырхэо сара соуп, аха азы тёыцак азнаггы сзыжэуам.

— Цьамхэыхэ хэа изышьтоу уара уакэзар, уахьцоцаалакгы суьызоуп! — ихэан, уиггы дрыцны рёынархеит.

Еицны ишнеиуаз акэымкэа, дырбеит азэы алуқэа ишьацаны ажьакэа дышрыцыз; ажьакэа рыпъхьазараан абахэқэа дыгъо дшырёагъалоз.

— Икоутозеи хэа ианиазцаа, — Алуқэа сышьасымтар, сласцэахоит, ихэеит. — Сара сьазшьаз, Аёа-гъа Цьамхэыхэ дыжэбар, егъа дцьашэшарын ихэеит, алуқэа зшьаз.

— Цьамхэыхэ захьзу сара соуп, аха алу ахькажьюггы исзыртысзомеи, — ихэеит Аёа-гъа Цьамхэыхэ.

— Цьамхэыхэ захьзу уара уакэзар, уахьцоцаалакгы суьызоуп, — ихэан, уиггы дрыцны рёынархеит.

Еицны ишнеиуаз, дырфегьых азэы ихы раҳаны ажэфан ахь дшыпъшуаз рбеит. — Икоутозеи хэа ианизцаа, ус реихэеит:

— Цыпъх, абырстэи сиасны сышцоз, хэыхэқэак пьырны ишцоз збан, тцлак аахжэаны ирыластан, уажэраанза икамхацт, абыржэы икахарц икоуп, абжыы гоит, — хэа. Цыпъх иуршэыз уажэыггы ишпъакамхац! — рхэан ианаацьаршьа, ус ихэеит: — Сара сьазшьаз Цьамхэыхэ дыжэбар, егъа дцьашэшарын хэа.

— Цьамхэыхэ захьзуггы сара соуп, аха уи акара злоу азэ сакэым, — ихэеит Цьамхэыхэ.

— Цьамхэыхэ захьзу уара уакэзар, уахьцоцаалакгы суьызоуп, — ихэан, уиггы дрыцны, зеггы еиманы рёынархеит.

Ахэбыкгы еицны ишнеиуаз дырбеит азэы, адгьыл илымха адкыланы дшызырфуаз. Цьамхэыхэ ибызцэеи иарей ари ауаф икаитцоз цьаршьан, изцааит, Уазызырфуазей хэа. — Ф-шышкамск адгьыл атака еисуеит, ирхэо, изхибаркьо еилыскаауеит, — ихэеит, адгьыл злымха адкыланы изырфуаз. Ашышкамскэа ирхэо моу, агэылара быцья еисуазар, рышьтыбжь хэауамай, уара ашышкамс хэычкэа ирхэо злеилургозей хэа ианцьяршьа, ус ихэеит: — Сара сьазшьаз Аеа-пья Цьамхэыхэ дыжэбар, егья дцьяшэшьарын хэа.

— Цьамхэыхэ хэа изышьтоуггы сара соуп, аха ус акы злоу сакэзам анихэа, адгьыл злымха адкыланы изырфуаз — Цьамхэыхэ захьзу уара уакэзар, уахьцоаалакгы суфызоуп ихэеит.

Афбыкгы еицны ишнеиуаз дырбеит даеазэы. Уи ахэыхэкэа зыкэтэаз атла дыкэтэан. Ахэыхэкэа иргэамыртазакэа, ак ахэы алхны даеакы алатара дафын. Цьамхэыхэ ибызцэеи иарей атла икэтэаз икаитцоз цьяшьаны ихэапшуа ианалага, ус ёааитит: — Хай, сара сьазшьаз, Аеа-пья Цьамхэыхэ захьзу дыжэбар, егья дцьяшэшьарын хэа.

Цьамхэыхэ дахьгылаз ус ихэеит: — Уи сара соуп изыхьзуггы, аха ус акгы сылшазом хэа.

— Цьамхэыхэ уара уакэзар, суфызоуп, — ихэан, абжьбыкгы еиманы Цьамхэыхэ рапхья днагыланы рёынархеит.

Ус ишнеиуаз акэымкэа, азэы фн-дуззак ихы икэыргыланы дышнеиуаз рбеит. Афны зхы икэгылаз иааипылаз дышцьяршьаз аниба, ус ихэеит:

— Сара зака сьяшэшьаз, Аеа-пья Цьамхэыхэ дыжэбар, егья дцьяшэшьарын хэа.

— Аеа-пья Цьамхэыхэ сара сакэгэышьоуп, аха афны дузза моу, ари афны иёоу ашэцэкья сзышьтыхуам — ихэеит.

— Цьамхэыхэ уара уакэзар, уахьцо суфызаааит! — ихэан, аа-быкгы еицны рёынархеит.

Ицо, ицо даара акыр иныкэахьан еипш, инеит Цьамхэыхэ дзышьтаз апхэызба лашьцэа адауцэа рёы. Инеиз адауцэа ирархэеит рахэшьа дырмоур, ишхэартам, изаазгы убри азы шакэу, дырмоурггы шыкамло.

Адауцэа ари еипш анраха, еилацэажэан ус рхэеит, Цьара акала хреисап, хзыриааир, нас дагырызгарым, хара хаиааит; шэара шэиааиндаз, дыжэгарын хэа раххэап хэа.

Адауцэа зеггы Цьамхэыхэ хыс дызларымаз ала идырцеит, айсарафэы инеиаанза, раштафэы итажьыз ахахэ ду икамала дасны агэта еифирпярц, ианеифирпья рахэшьа диртарц.

Ари адауцэа Цьамхэыхэ идырцаз рахэшьа ианлаха, лгэанала ус лхэеит: — Сыхцэы хэыцк алхны имазар, икама инафэшьы-аафэшьны ахахэ дасыр ишпэиофиршэарыз хэа. Ари афэхэызба лгэы италкыз иаразнак ашышкамскэа ирзызырфэуаз иахаит, насгы, ахэыхэкэа идмырбазакэа рхэы рылызхуаз еихэан, афэхэызба лхыцэхэыц илмырбазакэа изаны иааганы Цьамхэыхэ иртеит.

Адырфэены, адауцэа ишырхээз еипш, аамта анааи, Цьамхэыхэ икама аатфэаны, ахэыц иафэшьны ахахэ днахагыланы даннас, акарахэа акы иакзамшэа агэта ааифэеит.

Афэхэызба ари анлаха, даара лгэы иахэеит, аха адауцэа уи афэы иаанымгылт, ари азгы дхазшэытом хэа мап ркит, аха Цьамхэыхэ икаитцазгы даара рыбфа иаатсит. Ари афэы ианатаха, адауцэа ус рхэеит:

— Хаиха кэац зфо димазааит хэа.

Нас ацэкэа, ажэкэа шыны афатэ рацэаны идырхиеит.

Акрыфарафэы Цьамхэыхэ ифызцэеи иарей атахозма?!

Амла! Амла! хэа анышэ зфоз дынрыддыртэалан, Амла! Амла! шихэоз адауцэа ркэац зегы иара ифеит.

Адауцэа ара(к)агы ианатаха, ус рхэеит: — Хаиха афэы зжэуа димазааит хэа.

— Ара(к)агы Цьамхэыхэ ифызцэеи иарей изларыхэартахзи, Азба! Азба! хэа арфаш иацагыланы изжэуаз данрыддыртэала, изхара фы имоузакэа “Азба!” шихэоз, адауцэа аршыны дфагылт.

— Шэара шэахыгы азэы далшэыз, харгы азэы далаххуеит; убарт рыуа, рафхэа ага ицаны иаауа димазааит. Шэара афхэа шэаар, дшэахтоит хэхэшьа, хара хтэы даар, шэара шэацахоит рхэеит. Аригы бзиоуп рхэан, Цьамхэыхэ ифызцэа далырхит агахь дцарацы алуқэа зшыацаны абахэкэа ирфэафалоз. Адауцэа далырхит такэажэык...

Афыцэагы еиманы ицеит. Ианцоз, атакэажэ мазала иаалхэеит шырз пытки кэтыки. Иахынейшаз ианней, атакэажэ ус лхэеит: — Цьоукы аказын еисоит хэа хара хэахшыуама, утэа ара, хафсы хшыап хэа. Лыза Ииашатэкэоуп ихэан, данынатэа, атакэажэ днеин, ихы лырфэыгэуа далагеит.

Атакэажэ, лыза ихы далафшуа данлырцэа, ахэыз ихы иналафсаны, акэты иадыртэаланы лара ашырхэа лымфэа дықэлт.

Атакэажэ лыза дшыцээз, лара адауцэа рыфны дазааигэахеит. Цьамхэыхэ ифызцэагы иаргы хыза данбааришь хэа уажэы-уажэы ишпэшуаз, ианынафш дырбеит атакэажэ ашта агэашэ дшаадгылахыаз. Цьамхэыхэ ифыза, ашышкамскэа ирзызырфэуаз, ицээз ихэда абжы иахаит. Нас атла ыршэны шыкэсык ашытахь иаауеит хэа иацагылаз рфыза дшынхаз аниба, адауцэа

рашта итагылаз атла ду хжэаны ианиршэ, иахькаһаз, агаҕа ицэаз рөыза амахэ анынеиҕаха, хай! хэа дөатҕкыаны даныҕа, адауцэа рмардуан днаҕаҕалеит, атакэажэ ашта дынталоны аамтазы.

Адауцэа ари рыбҕа ҕнатэазеит, аха дырөөгьых рахэшьа лытира рцэуадаөхеит. Ирхээз мап ацэыркын, Цьамхэыхэ ифызцэеи иареи ирыдыртеит рашта акьан ду (уатаҕшыр, ухылҕа ухшэаны икашэартэ еиҕш ихаракны итагылаз) ачанах азыршы антэаланы рхы икэыргылары икамтэакэа икэгаланы илбааргарцы.

Ари аҕгы Цьамхэыхэ ифызцэа еиттахаргы, иара дыҕкамзи, ихы ачанах ыкэыргылары цэыкэбарк камтэазакэа дыкэлеит. Ацэкэанза днеины данынаҕш, ибеит дзаазаз аҕа абгакэа ишырфоз.

Ари аниба, Цьамхэыхэ изымчхакэа илабырзкэа аттахэа, изнымкылакэа изыы инахыжжны инкатэеит цаҕа.

Ари анырба адауцэа, — Азы ицэкатэеит, хара хаиааит, — рхэан, даара игэырбьеит. Данылбаа, иибаз анреихэа, ихарымтеит. Ишхарымтаз аниба, Цьамхэыхэ дырөөгь ичанах ихы иныкэыргылары, цэыкэбарк цыара икамтэазакэа, акьан ацэкэан днеины дылбааит.

Нас, адауцэаҕы уаха егышырзыҕамтоз анырба, ус рызбеит, ных арт хара хазларыхэартуо егыҕкам, хэшэык рытаны ихамшыуазар, хахэшьа дахцэыргоит хэа.

Афатэ бзиа дырхиеит. Цьамхэыхэ ифызцэеи иареи рзыхэан хазы рхэы ахэшэ атаны икэдыргылт. Акыррфарц зегы тэеит. Аха ари ирхээз ашышкамскэа ирзызырөуаз иахан, ифызцэа иреихэеит. Ахэыхэкэа рхэы дмырбазакэа иҕсахны ирылазтоз ари аниаха, ифызцэа ргэы ирбэбьеит, Шэымшэан уи мариоуп хэа реихэеит.

Астол ианахатэатэҕкыа, ахэыхэкэа идмырбазакэа рхэы рылызхуаз даалаган, афатэкэа зегы иҕсахт; адауцэа ирымтаз рымтхны ифызцэа ирымтеитцеит, ифызцэа ирымтаз адауцэа ирымтеитцеит. Адауцэа ахэшэ злаз анырфа, рынцэара уи акэхеит. Цьамхэыхэ ифызцэеи иареи аҕхэызба изызнеиз ддэылаагап, ахытэцара еиҕш дзыоноу абаа ду анырхэа, ахан зхы икэыргылары ирҕылаз иааникылан, ус ихэеит:

Аҕхэызба лымала лоума иааго, данаагах лыонгы ларгы еицаагап хэа. Нас днеин, аҕхэызба дзыоназ ахан ихы иныкэыргылары ифызцэа раҕхыа днагылеит.

Аҕхэызба дааганы ачкэын ҕхэысс днаитаны ажэлар ааизырган, чара ду руит. Цьамхэыхэ илшази иҕаитцази зегы даара ицэаршьеит.

Dzhamx^{wyx} Son of the Hind

There was once a fine hunter who loved hunting to distraction and who spent his time in pursuing this passion.

One day, he went hunting a long way off with his huntsmen friends, as was ever his wont. During the hunt, he saw in the distance a hind resting with her fawns in the warming rays of the sun. As soon as the hunters descried the hind, they drew their guns intending to shoot at her, but their leader said: 'Just hold on a while, there's a fair distance separating us — let's get closer!' and restrained his huntsmen friends without giving them a chance to fire a shot. When, advancing slowly, they came quite close to where the hind was seated with her offspring and the hunters' leader stretched out and took a look, he noticed that a child was seated amongst the fawns quite naked as the day he was born to his mother, and then he shewed the sight to his friends.

They were all absolutely amazed, wondering what this could be. It struck the hunters' leader as something quite extraordinary, and he said: 'Capture the infant without killing him, and then we'll discover what he is.' The hunters, as their leader had instructed them, set off after the child and seized him.

The child's history was as follows: once not long before when raids were taking place and some attacks had been made, there was apparently a pregnant woman among the folk where, driven out of the village, they were being herded, and on the road she was apparently delivered of a son. Because the woman who had given birth couldn't look after herself, much less her child, her boy was left abandoned on the road.

Close to where the infant lay abandoned was apparently where that hind whom the hunters saw with its fawns had taken up position.

One day, there where the hind emerged with her fawns, they apparently went up close to the infant, and thus did the infant find himself among the fawns there in the meadow; the hind kept him among her offspring and reared him.

This is how the child whom the hind raised found himself in the thick of the forest among the hind's fawns.

The leader of the hunters took the child to his home. The hunter reared the child in the home to where he had brought him; he grew into a youth; he learned how to speak; when he had been brought home, he had no knowledge of language. And for a name they called him Dzhamx^{wyx}, Son of the Hind, because a hind had raised him.

In the village to which fate had taken him, Dzhamx^{wyx}, Son of the Hind, outdoing everyone for brilliance, became the best of all in every way — intelligence, knowledge,

looks, etc... His fame spread at once to all. And in his village, should anything bad happen, Dzhamx^wyx^w was henceforth the one they summoned first.

The hunter who raised Dzhamx^wyx^w was a person possessed of a great deal of wealth and who lived comfortably. The hunter had a one and only son, but that one and only son was not a person of any worth; he was an idiot and a fool.

Such is how it was when one day the hunter fell ill and felt that he was close to death.

When the hunter recognised that he was dying, he summoned the abandoned child he had reared and spoke to him thus: 'Dzhamx^wyx^w, my lad, you are the only child I have in whom it is possible for me to invest hope. You see what my son is like: if I put my fortune in my son's hands, he'll ruin it,' he said, rose, and shewed Dzhamx^wyx^w where all his possessions were located, where they were housed, and he gave him the keys to them, adding the following: 'Now I shall die, but my child is certain to utter these words: "You are the one my father had as a child; into your hands he committed everything, and he even gave you the keys to everything — why did he give me charge of nothing?"' He is sure to grow very angry and sure to make you angry too, but console him as best you can. If you see that he seems not to be responding, take him and shew him everything; give him the keys to all the rooms; but do not shew him this room, because, if you do shew it to him, he'll swoon,' he said and shewed him a room. Inside that room stood the portrait of the only sister of seven brothers living in the west and who shone brightly like the moon.

When the hunter passed away, his child, as he had predicted while still alive, began not eating or drinking.

'Dzhamx^wyx^w, everything is in your hands; I don't know where anything is' were the words with which the hunter's son was forever pestering Dzhamx^wyx^w.

When the heart of Dzhamx^wyx^w, Son of the Hind, was ready to burst, he summoned the child and gave him a conducted tour of all the rooms apart from that single one in which stood the portrait. He shewed him where the gold, the silver and all the other treasure was hidden. But the hunter's son refused to accept the restriction on his looking into the remaining room also. When he absolutely refused to accept this, Dzhamx^wyx^w led him there, opened the door and, when he allowed him to look inside, no sooner had his gaze fallen on the face of the seven brothers' sister than the child's heart drained, and he collapsed on the spot.

When the child came round, he said that he would kill himself, unless Dzhamx^wyx^w brought him as wife the very woman whose picture this was. And straightaway when the hunter's son set himself on the path to suicide, Dzhamx^wyx^w, Son of the Hind, took off

with determination, having promised that he would not return without finding and fetching the one whose face this was.

Dzhamx^wyx^w set out on his journey and had travelled quite a considerable distance when, in the course of his travels, he took a look and saw that someone was moving over the furrows eating clods of earth with relish and then still exclaiming ‘Hunger!’. Dzhamx^wyx^w was utterly amazed at what he saw and remained a good while lost in wonder at it, but then he went and stood beside him and asked him this question: ‘You spend your time eating all the clods you throw up as you turn the earth, but you are still insistently exclaiming ‘Hunger!’ — what sort of person are you?’

‘If you who have found me cause for surprise were to see Dzhamx^wyx^w, Son of the Hind, how amazed you would be at him!’ said the earth-eater.

‘I am the one called Dzhamx^wyx^w, Son of the Hind, but as for earth, never mind this amount that you eat, I can’t myself see any taste in it at all!’

‘If you are the one called Dzhamx^wyx^w, I am your companion wherever you go!’ he said, and the two of them set off together in the same direction.

As they were moving on together, they observed that someone, standing down-flow of a stream, was busy drinking and then constantly yelling ‘Thirst! Thirst!’.

When in consternation they asked him what it was he was doing, he said: ‘What am I doing? I’m just thirsty.’ When they expressed their surprise with the question: ‘Isn’t all this water you are drinking sufficient for you?’, he replied thus: ‘If you who have found me cause for surprise see Dzhamx^wyx^w, Son of the Hind, how amazed you would be at him!’

‘I am the one whom they call Dzhamx^wyx^w, Son of the Hind, but I can’t myself drink even a glass-full of water.’

‘If you are the one named Dzhamx^wyx^w, wherever you are going I am your companion!’ he said, and they set off together with him.

As they were moving on together, they saw someone wearing millstones for shoes among the rabbits and that, while counting the rabbits, he was scaling rocks with leaps and bounds.

When they asked him what he was doing, the millstone-wearer said: ‘If I don’t wear the millstones, I become too light. If you who have found me cause for surprise see Dzhamx^wyx^w, Son of the Hind, how amazed you would be at him!’

‘I am the one called Dzhamx^wyx^w, but there’s no way I can even shift a millstone from where it lies,’ said Dzhamx^wyx^w, Son of the Hind.

‘If you are the one named Dzhamx^wyx^w, wherever you are going I am your companion!’ he said, and they set off together with him.

As they were moving on together, once more they saw that someone had lifted up his head and was gazing at the sky. When they asked him what he was doing, he replied as follows: ‘Last year, as I was on my way passing by here, I saw that some pigeons were flying past, I snapped off a tree and launched it amongst them, and until now it has not yet fallen back down. It is now about to fall back — one can hear it.’

When they expressed their amazement with the question: ‘How has what you threw up last year even now not yet fallen back down?!’, he spoke as follows: ‘If you who have found me cause for surprise see Dzhamx^{wyx}, how amazed you would be at him!’

‘Well, I am the one named Dzhamx^{wyx}, but I am not a person with so much power,’ said Dzhamx^{wyx}.

‘If you are the one named Dzhamx^{wyx}, wherever you are going I am your companion!’ he said, and all together, they set off with him too.

As the five of them were together moving forward, they saw that someone was listening with his ear held against the ground. Dzhamx^{wyx} and his companions were surprised at what this man was doing and asked him what he was listening to. ‘Two ants are arguing beneath the earth; I am finding out what they are saying, what blame they are laying upon each other,’ said the one who was listening with his ear held against the ground. When they expressed their surprise with the question: ‘Never mind what ants are saying, if two people are arguing in the neighbourhood, we don’t hear their voice(s) at all — how do you work out what tiny ants are saying?’, he spoke thus: ‘If you who have found me cause for surprise were to see Dzhamx^{wyx}, Son of the Hind, how amazed you would be at him!’

When he replied: ‘Well, I am the one named Dzhamx^{wyx}, but I am not one in whom there resides any such power’, the one listening with his ear held to the ground said: ‘If you are the one named Dzhamx^{wyx}, wherever you are going I am your companion!’

As the six of them were moving forward together, they noticed someone else. He was seated on a tree on which pigeons were perched. Without giving the pigeons a chance to notice it, he was busy plucking the down from one and planting it in another. When Dzhamx^{wyx} and his companions began looking at him in surprise at what the man seated in the tree was doing, he shouted down thus: ‘Hey, if you who have found me cause for surprise were to see Dzhamx^{wyx}, Son of the Hind, how amazed you would be at him!’

From where he was standing, Dzhamx^{wyx} replied thus: ‘I am the one so named, but I can do nothing like that.’

‘If you are Dzhamx^{wyx}, I am your companion!’ he said, and all seven of them set off together with Dzhamx^{wyx} at their head.

As they were moving forward, they saw that someone was on his way with an almighty house set upon his head. When the man with the house on his head saw that those he had bumped into were amazed at him, he spoke thus:

‘If you who have evinced such surprise at me were to see Dzhamx^wyx^w, Son of the Hind, how amazed you would be at him!’

‘For my sins, I am Dzhamx^wyx^w, Son of the Hind, but never mind the enormous house, I can’t lift up even the door attached to this house,’ he said.

‘If you are Dzhamx^wyx^w, let me be your companion on your journey,’ he said, and the eight of them together set forth.

After they had covered a great distance in their constant journey, they arrived among the ogre-brothers of the girl whom Dzhamx^wyx^w was tracking. The new arrivals told the ogres that, if they didn’t acquire possession of their sister, there was no hope in the situation, that it was for that reason that they had come, and that it was impossible for them not to get hold of her.

When the ogres heard words to this effect, they had a debate and spoke thus: ‘Let’s have a wager over something; if we can gain victory over them, then they will be unable to take her anywhere at all — we shall have won; so, we’ll just say to them: “Supposing you are victorious, she would be yours to take away”.’

All the ogres laid upon Dzhamx^wyx^w in his capacity as the group’s leader the obligation, before proceeding to the wager, to strike with his dagger the large stone lying in their yard and to split it down the middle so that they might give their sister to him when he had split it.

When their sister heard this obligation that the ogres had laid upon Dzhamx^wyx^w, she spoke thus in her heart: ‘If he had a single hair taken from my plait and were to strike the stone after drawing the hair up and down along the blade of his dagger, how finely he would split it!’ The one who was listening to the ants straightaway perceived this thought that the girl held in her heart and then told it to the one who took the down from pigeons without giving them chance to detect it; without giving the girl an opportunity of seeing it, he stole a hair of her plait, brought it, and they presented it to Dzhamx^wyx^w.

The next day, when the time came according to the words of the ogres, Dzhamx^wyx^w drew his dagger, and, having drawn the hair along it, stood over the stone; when he struck it, with a tinkle he split it down the middle as though nothing was holding it together.

When the girl heard of this, she was absolutely delighted, but the ogres did not stop at this and gave their refusal with the words: ‘Just for this we cannot give her to you’, but what Dzhamx^wyx^w had done really got under their skin. When they lost at this, the ogres said these words:

‘He can’t possibly have someone who eats more meat than we do!’

Then they slaughtered their bulls and cows and prepared an abundance of food.

Was it imaginable that Dzhamx^{wyx} and his companions were going to suffer defeat in an eating contest?! They seated opposite them the one who had been eating earth and crying that he was still hungry, and, shouting out ‘Hunger! Hunger!’, he scoffed all the ogres’ meat.

When the ogres lost out here too, they spoke thus: ‘He can’t possibly have someone who drinks more wine than we do!’

By what means could they possibly have got the better of Dzhamx^{wyx} and his companions here too?! When they seated opposite them the one who, standing down-flow of the stream, had been drinking it up while crying ‘Thirst! Thirst!’, he eventually stood up after getting the ogres drunk, constantly crying ‘Thirst!’ without ever obtaining enough wine to satisfy him.

‘You on your side choose someone, and we on ours shall choose someone; from those let whichever goes to the coast and comes back first have her! If you return first, we shall give you our sister; if our champion comes first, you’ve lost,’ they said. Having replied that this too was fine, Dzhamx^{wyx}’s companions chose as their champion to go to the shore the one who, wearing millstones for shoes, had been scaling rocks. The ogres selected an old woman...

The two set off together. When they were on their way, the old woman secretly bought a little grain and a chicken. When they reached where they had to go, the old woman spoke thus: ‘Are we killing ourselves simply because some folk are having a wager over something? Sit down here — let’s have a rest.’ When her companion said: ‘Quite right!’ and sat down, the old woman went up and started rubbing her knuckles against his head.

When the old woman, while tending her companion’s head in this way, put him to sleep, she scattered the millet over his head, sat the chicken up against him, and quietly resumed her journey.

As the old woman’s companion slept on, she neared the ogres’ house. As Dzhamx^{wyx} and his companions kept constant watch wondering when on earth they would see their friend, they looked out and saw that the old woman had already got as far back as to be standing against the gate to the yard. Dzhamx^{wyx}’s companion, the one who listened to the ants, detected the snoring of the one who’d fallen asleep. Then the one who had tossed up the tree and had been standing beneath it saying that after a year it was on its way down saw that their companion had been left behind; when he snapped off the tree standing in the ogres’ yard and tossed it up, the branch, at the place where it fell,

landed full in the face of their companion sleeping on the shore. When, having woken with a start and yell of 'Hey, hey!', he took a leap, he jumped onto the ogres' stairway just at the moment when the old woman was entering the yard.

This was absolutely the last straw that broke the ogres' back, but yet again they found it hard to trade their sister. They reneged on what they had said and laid upon Dzhamx^{wyx} and his companions the obligation to pour boiling water onto a saucer, stand it on their head and scale and descend without it falling off the tall pillar that stood so high in their yard that, if you looked up at it, your hat would slip off and fall to the ground.

In this too, even if Dzhamx^{wyx}'s companions were defeated, was there not always Dzhamx^{wyx} himself?! He placed the saucer on his head and went up without spilling a drop. When he got to the very top and looked out, he saw that wolves were devouring the hind that had reared him.

When he saw this, Dzhamx^{wyx} was unable to bear it, and being incapable of holding them back, tears streamed down onto his cheeks and fell to the ground with a pitter-pat.

When the ogres noticed this, they expressed their great joy with the words: 'He's accidentally spilled the water — we have won!' When he came down and told them what he had seen, they did not believe it. When he observed that they did not believe it, Dzhamx^{wyx} for a second time placed his saucer on his head, went up to the top of the column and came down without spilling a drop anywhere.

Then, when the ogres saw that there was nothing more they could do, they came to the following decision: 'Heck, there is no way we can worst them; unless we are going to kill them by giving them some poison, they are going to take our sister away from us.'

They prepared a fine repast. They put poison in the food for Dzhamx^{wyx} and his companions and set it apart on the table. Everyone sat down to eat. But this conversation of theirs had been overheard by the one who listened to the ants, and he had warned his companions. When the one who switched pigeons' down and planted it in others without giving them a chance of detecting it heard this, he stiffened the resolve of his companions with the words: 'Fear not, it's an easy matter!'

As soon as they sat down at the table, the one who filched their down from pigeons without giving them a chance of detecting it set to and switched all the meals; he snatched from the ogres what was laid before them and placed it in front of his companions — what his companions had laid out before them he placed before the ogres. When the ogres ate the poisoned food, it was the end of them. When Dzhamx^{wyx} and his companions spoke of fetching home the girl for whom they had gone there and of the

huge, gold-and-crystal-like castle in which she resided, the one who had met them with a palace set on his head stopped them with the words:

‘Is it the girl alone that we are taking back? If we take her back, we might as well fetch her and her house together!’

Then he went and set on his head the palace in which the girl lived and stood in front of his companions.

They brought back the girl, gave her as wife to the lad, gathered the folk together and put on a great wedding-feast. All were absolutely astounded at the ability and exploits of Dzhamx^wyx^w.

The Three Brothers
(Sergej Zykha, 1997, Apswa Lak'ka, pp.496-500)

Хөык аишыцэа

Дыказаарын шэарыцаф бзиа, уи иман хөык аҗацэа. Иара данҗсуаз, ахөыкгы даарыҗхьан ус реихэеит:

— Сычкэынцэа, сара сыҗсуеит, аха шэара ескынагы шэаб иеиҗш ауафра шэыланы шөыказ, апатуи, ахатыри закөыу жэдырузаант, иагыкшэцэала. Ашэарыцараан фы-мөак ахьеиҗагылоу шэармарахьтэи абнахь бзанцкык шэымцан, арҗарахьтэи абнахь шөныкэала ескынагы.

Өнак аишыцэа аихаби агөыбжьаньтэи аб ихэатэи харымтакэа шэарыцара хэа фы-мөакы ахьеиҗагылаз армарахьтэи абнахь ицеит. Акыр аамҗа ишэарыцон, аха акгы рымбеит.

Афыцэагы амла иаргэакуа ишнеуаз, ианынаҗш, абна агэтаны дэы җшзarak аҗы астал гыланы ирбеит. Астал икэын җык иаанагара афатэ хккэа зегы. Инаҗшы-ааҗшын, аха уаф дрымбеит.

Акы хнацхап ргэахэын, астал ахь рөынархеит.

Убри аамҗазы уака иаразнак даацэырцит тахмадак, иҗаца кэашза.

— Бзиала шэаабеит! Шэааи арахь, какалк шөкып, — ихэан, аишыцэа астал ахь днарыҗхьеит.

Аишыцэагы мап рымхэакэа астал инахатэан, рызхара рфеит. Астал ианаахьц, ауафышла афыцэагы ачын аархикьан, иаразнак аишыцэа цэы тоуфанкэаны, ртэыөакэа рак-рак иакараны, икэаш-кэашза иаҗхьа иаакэгылт. Ахкаарахь иган иҗеитцеит аф-цэыкгы.

Амшкэа акыр цеит рашьейцбы аоны дтэаны иашьцэа дырзыҗшижьтеи, аха ианымааза, акы рыхьит ихэан, дрышьталт.

Акыр аамҗа дыҗшаауан, аха уаф димбеит, рызбахэгы цьаргы имахаит.

Өнак дышнеуаз абнаҗы данынаҗш, ахаскын ду аарлахэа иалыхэхэо уҗык ацэ тоуфанкэа, ртэыөакэа кэҗшь-кэҗшьза ихэуа ишылагылаз ибеит, афадахьы данынаҗш, астал фатэыла ирхианы ишгылаз гөеитцеит.

Днаҗшы-ааҗшит, аха уафҗсы дыкамызт, иааҗьейшьеит. Дтэеит, дыҗшит, аха уафҗсы дыкамызт, хы-мш дыҗшын. Амла дыҗсуа далагеит, аха астал ахь днеиуамызт.

Уаф данимбаза, дцарц иеазикунаны еиҗш, иаҗхьа азэы даацэырцит, иҗаца кэашза.

— Бзиала уаабейт! Уара абрака утэоуижьтеи хы-мш цуеит, кыргы уфом, амла уамки? Уааи арахь, какалк кы, — хэа дикит, аха иага замана изиузаргы акыримфейт.

— Нас гэакра умоума, узышьтоузеи? — хэа диазтааит ауабы шла. Даныхтеикза, ус ихэеит арпыс:

— Ыыца аишьцэа сыман, шэарыцара иахьцаз икылмсит, срышьтоуижьтеи акыргы цуеит, аха рхабар хэа егысмахаит. Избаанза срышьтазароуп.

— Уааи арахь зны, акрыфаны уца, — хэа деитаикыхт ауабы шла, аха ипъсрахы кайтан имуит.

— Ус акэзар, абарт ацэкэа шыкэсык руаара устоит. Шака утахыу, урмеигзакэа аус дырула, амала иумшьын, даеакы иутахыу дыркатала. Уца иуманы, уашьцэа рыпшаара уакэытц, — ихэан, ацэкэа иитан, аоныка ддэыкэицеит.

Аишьцэа рашьейтбы аоны данааи, табыргны ацэкэа дырмеигзакэа, даара аус ду дируит ашыкэси ашыкэси рыбжьара. Атыхэтэаны иашьцэа рыпсхэыгы ибзианы ирзиуан, ацэкэа рыфхэара анынтэа, изтэыз изааицеит.

Ацэкэа рыхэдакэа амса рыкэланы икан. Ацэкэа зтэыз даацэырцит, астал хианы ишгылац игылан.

Атахмада иааиз даайдгылан, акруфароуп хэа дикит, аха иара амла дшакуазгы, — мап, — ихэан, акримфейт.

— Афырхатца, — ихэан, ацэкэа зтэыз ауабышла ицэкэа ачын анаархика, аиашья ишибоз иашьцэа иапъхья иаагылт, ацэкэа рцымхэрас.

Даашанхейт ачкэын.

— Шэара исашэхэа, — ихэан, урт ыыца даарыдгылт ауабышла, — иарбан зегы раткыс шэзеилахауа ишэоурыц?

— Зегь раткыс, амал ду, апъара хаилахауеит, — рхэеит аишьцэа аихаби агэыбжьанытэи.

Иаразнак иаарымтахаит урт амал ду, ахы аразни.

— Уара зегы раткыс узеилахауазеи? — хэа дтааит ауабышла аитбы даайдгылан.

— Сара акгы стахзам, ухаткы сцеит, — ихэеит.

— Акгы утахымкэа ушпакэоу? Ихэа иутахыу, — хэа пьскы дикит уи ауабышла, аха аитбы, акгы стахым хэа дгылт.

— Амал стахыуп хэа иоухэар иауазеи, уара афы зысыз, амал шпэаутахым? — хэа дырсит иашьцэа.

— Ихэа иутахыу зегы раткыс, — хэа таха иитомызт уи ауабышла.

— Нас ианумуза, сзеилахауа абри ауп, ауабы иҕы ахымзэ сызмыргаша, ауаѳбзиара злоу аҕхэыс дыстахыуп зегы рацккыс, — ихэеит аитѳы. Ари анихэа, иашыцэа изгэааны рмал иацаланы аѳныҕа ицеит.

— Хаи, закэытэ хымзэбузеи сызтоуцаз?! Ус иҕоу ҕхэызба зацэык лакэын издыруаз. Уи амал ду змоу азэы дихэан, уаха дигоит, — ихэеит уи даахэыц-хэыцын.

— Уца ушиашоу уи лыѳныҕа. Уаҕа ачара рымоуп уажэы. Ашта ушааталалакцэҕыа, ахэхэара уалага, сыҕхэыс дызго дызуста хэа. Иусышт, урыҕкашт, аха уахыкажыугы уаҕэымцкэа ухэхэала, сыҕхэыс дызго дызуста хэа. Уара дызлауҕхэысузеи хэа иузцаар, абас хэа: — Шэааи, ахэыштаараҕы сыхызала иасырсуеит иѳоу ацэамахэ, шэара шэымахэ ихыз ала иаирсааит иазоу ацэамахэ. Раҕхыаза зцэа пытны, иаразнак иазханы, ацэакэа наҕаланы, иартны акаҕсара иалаго, убри дитэуп аҕхэызба хэа.

Аитѳы дцеит аҕхэызба лыѳныҕа. Ашта данынтала, ачара уаа аниба, акыукыухэа ахэхэара далагеит: “Сыҕхэыс дызго дызуста, сыҕхэыс дызго дызуста?” хэа.

— Хаи ачча, наҕ уца! — рхэан ихыччеит. Нас даагылан аҕахмада шла ишиеихэаз еиҕш, ацэамахэ ахарсып ихэеит. Нас амахэ ихыз ала цэамахэ азак аарган, аехэаҕы иадырсит. Иаргы цэамахэ ѳак ааганы ицаиркыакыеит ихызала.

Ишыҕшыз, ацэамахэ ѳа иаразнак иааптын, иаразнак иазхан, ацэакэа ҕассы иааҕалан, иартны акаҕсара иалагеит.

Зегы цыашыатэыс иҕхыазаны аҕхэызба диртан, аѳныҕа дааигеит.

Ачара ҕаитарц иаҕеикит. Иашыцэа, еихбаала инхоз, аҕаруаса иахыкэтэаз днеин, дрыхэеит уасак иртарц.

— Хаи, ачча амал утахымызт, уажэы иутаххама, уца наҕ, — рхэан, итаҕыан ддэыкэырцеит. Нас ддан, цыара рбаҕык ҕшааны ачара алаиуит. Қэацек ҕаитан, иҕхэыси иареи уа иныцалт, жэы бжала азэы имырхит.

Шықэсык цит. Хшара дроуит урт.

Уатэы мшаҕны иахыа еиҕш аешыеитѳы деитанеит иашыцэа рҕны. Дрыхэеит аныхэазы шытэыс сыск иртарц. Акыр данрыхэа ашытахы, асыс иртан аѳныҕа иааигеит. Аены рхэычы дыҕсит. Иҕхэыси иареи ааилатэан, ирызбит идмырзарц аныхэа ашытахыынза, аныхэаха ауаа дмыргэаҕрацы.

Мшаҕы аены аихабы шытэак нкажыны ишыит. Икнаханы ацэа шахикуаз, агэашэ аартны ашта дааталт уаѳышлак, агэыжы дақэтэаны, иҕатца ҕэашза.

Аиҳабы ашьтәа ацәа ахыхра дакәымтцзакәа ипҕхәыс илызфитит, асас аоныка днаг хәа.

Ашьтәа ацәа ааыххны, акәац иманы аоныка игеит, инапы изәзәеит.

— Ари уара узы аныхәазы иушьит, аха асас изы егьумшьзои? — ихәеит асас дахыччашәа.

— Хәи, ари зегы асас моу, хгәылацәа рлакәеи дарей ирызхоуп, — ихәеит аҕшәма.

Ауафышла игәыжь дөакәтәан, аитбы иахь дцарц ифынеихеит.

Аитбгы исыс хәычы ишьын, ацәа ахыхра дафын. Ипҕхәыс асас иааиуаз данылба, ус лхәеит:

— Асас дааиуеит уара, асыс уакәытны, унапы зәзәаны, уиҕыл лассы!

Аитбы иус даакәытын инапы зәзәаны, асас дааипҕылан, “Бзиала уаабейт!” хәа инапы ааимихын, даафыжәихит. Нас аоныка дааигеит.

Аҕшәма исыс ацәа ааыххны, дыфны иашьа еихабы ифы днеин, диашьапкит, “Сыск сыт” хәа, аха аиҳабы дыпҕхейтеит.

Нас агәыбжъанытә ифы днеин, дихәеит, аха уигы мап икит.

“Сыжә затә абжа устоит, асыс сыт” анихәа, “Шьахәуп”, ихәан, сыск кны аитбы иитеит.

Аоныка иааганы, ишьны, ацәа ахыхра дшафыз, асас даайдгылан, ус ихәеит:

— Уара усыс шьны икнахауп, ариггы зхыушьаазеи

— Хәи цыушьт, уи хара хзоуп, уи даласгзома асас? — ихәеит аҕшәма.

Зегь акрырфеит. Асас агара хәаны игылаз аниба, ахәычы дгарылхразы дыхтеикит аҕшәма-пҕхәыс.

Аҕшәма-пҕхәыс уи ахәычы дышпҕсхяз лмырзакәа, — Ухаткы сцеит, ахәычы уажәы аакыскыа ауп дангарастца, — лхәеит.

— Сара сымсит, дышгарбхра, абриггы наиркы, — ихәан, акәтафь каҕшь ицыба иаатыхны иналикит. Апҕхәыс илгәампҕхо ахәычы данаапҕлыртла, ахьырхьырхәа даччо, инапкәа рхахо, акәтафь дназыфит.

Хатей пҕхәыси акыргы игәырбъеит, аха акгы камлазашәа реыкацаны итәан афыцагы.

Пҕытрак ашьтахь асас дцарц дөагылеит.

— Итабуп апату исыкәышәтаз азы. Шәара ииашатәкьаны ауафра здыруа шәакәзаап. Уашьцәа уафра хәа акгы рылам. Амал ирымоу акгы иаҕсам. Ари нахыс уснәта барақьатрахаит, урт уашьцәа уаха рмоуааит, — ихәан, дыфыжәлан, дцеит.

Убри инаркны айтбы есымша имал азы еипш иазхауа, иашьцәа иаха-иаха иҕархо иалагеит.

Ус, аҕыхья иара дышҕарыз атккыс еицәахан иашьцәа, иара амал ду иманы, урт иара иҕаҕшуа, ахыз икеитәо ржәуа иаакалеит.

Three Brothers

Apparently there was a fine hunter; he had three sons. When he was dying, he summoned all three of them and spoke to them thus:

‘My sons, I am dying, but you always preserve your humanity like your father; know the meaning of honour and respect, and always act accordingly. When hunting, at the place where two roads meet do not go towards the forest on your left; always walk towards the forest to your right.’

One day the oldest and middle brothers, disregarding their father’s advice, went to hunt towards the forest on the left at the spot where two roads met. They hunted for a considerable time but saw nothing.

As the two of them were moving forward suffering the pangs of hunger, they took a look and saw a table standing in a beautiful meadowland in the midst of the forest. On the table was every kind of food that one mouth could consume. They looked this way and that, but they saw no-one.

The idea occurred to them that they should snatch a bite, and they moved towards the table.

At that moment there suddenly appeared there an old man, his beard all snowy white.

‘Welcome! Come here, have some breakfast,’ he said and invited the brothers to the table.

And the brothers, offering no refusal, sat down at the table and ate their fill. When they rose from the table, the white-haired man struck both of them with his cane and in a flash the brothers stood before him in the shape of sturdy bulls, their horns each a cubit long, all gleaming white. He drove them to a pen and placed both of the bulls inside.

Many days had passed since the youngest brother had begun his wait for his brothers, sitting at home, but when they did not come, he set out in search of them, convinced that something had happened to them.

He was searching for quite a time, but he saw no-one, neither did he hear any news of them anywhere.

As he was advancing one day, he glanced in the forest and saw a pair of sturdy bulls, their horns bright red, grazing, standing in the tall grass, barely visible above it, and, when he looked up, he noticed that a table was set, all prepared with food.

He looked all around, but not a human soul was there — he was astonished. He sat down and waited, but not a human soul was there. For three days he waited. He began to feel he was dying of hunger, but he did not go up to the table.

When he saw not a single person, as he was on the point of deciding to depart, someone suddenly appeared before him, his beard all snowy white.

‘Welcome! Three days have passed since you have been sitting here, and yet you eat nothing — aren’t you hungry? Come over here, have a bit of breakfast,’ were the words with which he fastened on him, but, no matter how kindly he behaved towards him, he didn’t eat a thing.

‘In that case, is something upsetting you? What are you after?’ the white-haired man asked. When he persisted in nagging him, the youth replied thus:

‘I had two brothers. They did not return from where they had gone hunting. Quite a while has passed since I set out in search of them, but I have heard no news of them at all. Until I find them, I must keep on searching for them.’

‘Just come over here, have a bite to eat, and go on your way,’ the white-haired man again fastened on him, but he doggedly refused to respond.

‘If that’s the case, I’ll give you for a year the loan of these bulls. Without sparing them at all, make them do as much work as you want, only don’t kill them — anything else that you want, get them to do it. Go on your way with them; abandon the search for your brothers,’ he said, gave him the bulls and set him on his homeward track.

When the youngest brother arrived home, truly without sparing the bulls in any way he got a great deal of work out of them till the end of that year and the start of the next. At last he began paying a fine anniversary-feast in memory of his brothers; when the bulls’ term was up, he brought them back to the person who owned them.

The bulls necks were all calloused. The owner of the bulls suddenly appeared; the table was standing, as it had stood before, all prepared.

The old man came and stood before the new arrival and fastened on him, saying: ‘You must eat’, but, although he was in the grip of hunger, he said ‘no’ and ate nothing.

‘Champion!’ said the white-haired man, to whom the bulls belonged, and when he hit his bulls with the cane, before the very eyes of their brother his brothers suddenly stood before him in place of the bulls.

The lad was dumbfounded.

‘Tell me,’ said the white-haired man coming to stand in front of the two of them, ‘what is it that you crave to acquire most of all?’

‘Most of all we crave great wealth, money,’ said the oldest and middle brothers.

At once great wealth, gold and silver, tumbled down in front of them.

‘And you, what do you crave most of all?’ the white-haired man asked, standing before the youngest.

‘I want nothing, good sir,’ he said.

‘How can you be such as to want nothing? Say what you want,’ the white-haired man came and stood in front of the youngest and fastened on him like death.

‘I want nothing, good sir,’ he said.

‘How can you be such as to want nothing? Say what you want,’ the white-haired man fastened on him like death, but the youngest persisted in maintaining that he wanted nothing.

‘What harm would it do for you to say that you want wealth? How can you not want wealth, you thunderstruck fool?!’ his brothers fixed on him.

‘Say what you want most of all,’ said the white-haired man, giving him no rest.

‘In that case, since you are not going to give up, what I crave is this: most of all I want a woman of noble human nature who will not shame me among my fellow men,’ said the youngest. When he said this, his brothers lost their temper with him, hoisted up their treasure and went off home.

‘Ah, in what embarrassment you have placed me! There is only one girl like that I know in all the world. Someone possessed of great wealth has sought her hand in marriage and is carrying her off tonight,’ he said after a good deal of thought.

‘Go straight to her home. They are holding a wedding-celebration there now. As soon as you enter the yard, start yelling: “Who’s the one who is taking my wife?” — They’ll beat you, they’ll hit you, but, even down where you are lying on the ground, go on yelling without stopping: “Who’s the one who is taking my wife?”. If they ask you how she comes to be your wife, speak as follows: “Come on, I’m going to thrust into the hearth a dried up apple-branch in my own name; let your son-in-law plant in his name an apple-branch that is still full of sap. The girl belongs to the one whose stalk first sprouts, immediately starts to grow, fruits, ripens, and starts to drop its apples”.’

The youngest went to the girl’s house. When he entered the yard and saw the wedding-guests, he started incessantly yelling: ‘Who’s the one who is taking my wife? Who’s the one who is taking my wife?’

‘Hey, you beggar, be off with you!’ they said, making fun of him. Then he stood forth and, as the white-haired man had told him, said: ‘Let’s plant an apple-branch.’ Then in the name of the son-in-law they fetched an apple-branch full of sap and stuck it in the fireplace. He too brought a dried up apple-branch and planted it down in the ground in his own name.

As they waited, the dried up apple-branch at once sprouted, at once grew, fruited in abundance, ripened and began to drop them.

Everyone deemed it a wonder, gave him the girl, and he brought her home.

He made up his mind to put on a wedding-celebration. He went to the amber-palace where his brothers, who lived in filthy luxury, resided and asked them to give him a sheep.

‘Hey, you beggar, you didn’t want any wealth; have you now conceived a desire for it? Be off with you!’ they said, drove him off and sent him packing. Then he went, found a cock somewhere and with this put on the wedding-celebration. He made a shack; he and his wife settled in there, and they took from someone a half-share of a cow.

A year went by. They had a child.

On the eve of Easter the youngest brother again went to his brothers. He asked them to give him a lamb to kill for the festival. After he had pleaded with them a good while, they gave him a lamb, and he brought it home. That day their child died. He and his wife sat down together and decided not to reveal it until after the festival in order not to upset folk at a time of festivities.

On Easter-day the eldest cast down a sacrificial animal and slaughtered it. He hung it up and, as he was skinning it, the gate opened and a white-haired man came into the yard, seated on a mule, his beard all snowy white.

Without stopping the skinning of the sacrificial animal, the eldest called to his wife: ‘Take the guest inside!’

Holding the meat of the sacrificial animal he had slaughtered, he took it to the house and washed his hands.

‘You slaughtered this one for yourself for the festival, but aren’t you going to slaughter anything for the guest?’ said the guest, as if making fun of it.

‘Ha, not just the guest, all this is enough for the neighbours and their dogs!’ said the host.

The white-haired man mounted his mule and set off to go to the youngest. The youngest also had killed his little lamb and was in the process of skinning it. When his wife noticed the guest who was coming, she spoke thus:

‘Look out, a guest is coming — leave off the lamb, wash your hands and go to meet him, quick!’

The youngest left off his work, washed his hands, came out to meet the guest, bade him welcome, took his hand and helped him alight. Then he conducted him to the house.

The host, having skinned his lamb, went off running to his eldest brother and besought him to give him a lamb, but the eldest drove him away.

Then he went to the middle one and entreated him, but he too refused.

When he said: 'I'll give you half of my one and only cow — give me the lamb!', he said 'O.K.', caught a lamb and gave it to the youngest.

He brought it home, slaughtered it, and, as he was in the process of skinning it, the guest came over to stand before him and spoke thus:

'You slaughtered your lamb and it is hanging up — why are you killing this one too?'

'Ha, just imagine — that one is for us; am I going to satisfy a guest with that?!' said the host.

They all ate. When the guest noticed the cradle standing covered up, he nagged the hostess to take out the child.

Without revealing that the child had died, the hostess said: 'My good sir, it's only just now that I placed the child in the cradle.'

'What harm can it do for you to take him up? And give him this to hold,' he said and, taking out of his pocket a red egg, he placed it in her hand. When the woman, to her displeasure, unwrapped the child, he ran for the egg with squeals of laughter and waving his arms about.

The man and his wife were overjoyed, but, restraining themselves as if nothing had happened, they both remained seated.

After a little while the guest stood up to leave.

'Thank you for the honour you have laid upon me. In truth you really do seem to be people who know what it means to be a human-being. Your brothers have nothing that could be called humanity. The wealth they possess is worthless. Henceforth let your family be blessed; let those brothers of yours acquire nothing more!' so saying,¹ he mounted up and departed.

Thereafter the youngest's fortune began to increase daily like a flood of water, whilst his brothers began to become ever poorer.

Thus did his brothers become worse off than the youngest had been during his previous period of penury, and it came to pass that, while he had great wealth, they had to watch him and drink the whey he poured away [sc. after making his cheese].

Хабжын илакэ

Аџсуа хатцак дыкан, џџџаакы, аха иара дахьынхоз, иара иџанакыз акны иара иатцкыс иеиџыыз ауаџы бзиа, ауаџы џџџаа дыкамызт. Нак иара иџанакыз адгьыл анахыс адауџаа иртэын. Адауџаа икэлар цџгья ирбомызт, аха ари иара дыџџџан, адауџаа иџаархаргьы, иара иџан ахь иааишьџуамызт, иџэшэон акнытэ икэлара рзыгџаџуамызт. Абас дшыказ акэымкэа, абри ахатца иаџьал

аан дыпсуа далагеит. Иара азбабцаа х-оык иман, аңа диман, иңа Хабжын ихъзын. Ари иара иаңал аан дыпсуа даналага, иңа Хабжын дааипъхъан убыс иеихэеит:

— Хаи, дад, сара уажэшыта ипсуа соуп, сыпсуеит, аха абарт уахэшыцаа, иахыцо умбазо, ицоит, ипхастахоит, угэы итаз. Ианызлакь ашытахь исыпшаауеит хэа урышытамлан.

Хабжын иихэоиз? — иаб иихээз аагэникылт ауп.

Ари аб дыпсит. Икэнага катаны дыржит, егыт, икоуп. Ус ишыказ акэымкэан, енак пстхэак аахылан, Хабжын иахэшыцаа аашьтцааны иагеит. Ари иахэшыцаа апстхэа иагеит, аха иахыагаз седру?

Хабжын иаб ионафы имацара даанхеит, иахэшыцаа ахыагаз издырзом, мышкы, оымш, хымш, ари акыргы ичхаит, аха иахэшыцаа игэы ицалазеит. Иара дычкэына бзиан, иаб иаткысгы дыбэбэан. Ианизымчхаза иаб иихэахыазгы агэхыаа мкыкэа иеааибитан, иахэшыцаа дрышъталеит. (Иаб “Уахэшыцаа анызлакь, урышытамлан” хэа иеихэахъан, аха изымчхаит умбо?!).

Ари иахэшыцаа ахыагаз хэа акагы издырзом, аха дцаа-пшаауа амба дыкэланы дцоит. Дцоит, дцоит, дцоит, иахыа, уатэы, уатэашытахь, дныкэоит, аха цыаргы азэгы димбеит — иабейбоз? Амбан иааипыло зегы дразцаауеит, аха иара иахэшыцаа рызбахэ хэа акагы иахауам. Абас акыр дныкэахъан, дышнеиуаз акэымкэа, уаха наиламкэан, иегы аапсан игылт, неихыркэак амамкэан икалеит, дэыпшзарак афы дынкылсит.

Ари дахънеиз адэы-пшзарафы акэпсха гылоуп, ифоуп ирацаазаны, ихыдхэо, икаланы ифоуп, атты, атты, атты хэа иалышэшэаны икапсоит. Абри акэпсха иаакэыршаны алраны, алтарра гылоуп. Хабжын днеин абни акэпсха днамцатэеит ипсишьарц. Ус дахынапшы-аапшыз цыара еыхэак алфэыс ахы ахышыуа ишгылаз ибеит.

Ари Хабжын иара дзыкэтэоу аеы гылахъеит, иаапсахъеит, иаргы уаха наиламкэа даапсаны дыкоуп. “Абри сеы абра инсыжып, абни алфэыс зхы ахышыуа игылоу аеы, еы бэбэак ауп, убри сакэтэаны сцап” хэа ихасабын, иара дзыкэтээз аеы нак инауижыын, акэадыр уа инышьтеитцан, ха цыракэакгы аашьтихын, ифо икэадыр днакэтэан, абни алфэыс иадгыланы зхы збыбуа аеыхэа дахэапшуеит уажэы. Дтэоуп. Абас дыштээз акэымкэан, ани аеыхэа аапшыын инаихэапшыын, дырбагыых алфэыс ахы ахышыуа игылоуп.

Хабжын ипсы анааивига егы ашытахь, иеы иахаз абэра аашьтихын, амни аеыхэа скуеит хэа днеин, иргыжыит, иргыжыит, аха изымкит иага азааигандазгы. Дашьтоуп, харагы ицом, аха изхэартоузеи, иага иундазгы

изымкит. “Ари сөы сақэтэаны савалар, издыруада исызкуазар” ихэан, иеы акэадыр фақэитчан (аригыы ҕы-ҕәҕәоуп, аха иааҕсахъеит, игылахъеит акэымзар), иеы дөақэтэан, ани аеы днавагылан, искуеит хэа анахъ ихэеит, аха уаха умҕсит, дырфагъ изымкит ари аеы. Аха иаргыы дашьтыцуам, алада икаицо, ааада икаицо, алада икаицо, ааада икаицо даара иргәаҕит. Ианиргәаҕза, данаҕырымтца, “хырр!” ахэеит аеыхәа. Аеыхәа “хырр!” анахәа, Хабжын азнык азы дахыҕоу изымдырзо адгыл длытафры дцеит. Адгыл дылкылкыан агәарахәа кыақараны цыара длеин длыкәхәит. Ани иара дзыкәтәаз ае рыцца ҕыххаа, ицкыа-шәкыа ицеит. Иара имацара адәы даакәхеит. Дахынаҕшы-ааҕшуа адунеи агәтаноуп дахыҕоу. Иахьабалакы аөнкәа гылоуп, уафҕсы хәа цыаргыы азәгыы дыкәзам. Дахьаанагаз издырам, дахьцо издырам, дыхраа-зраауа даакәхеит. Дангәаҕза, длеи-өеиуа, длеи-өеиуа, длеи-өеиуа дышнеиуаз акэымкәан, з-дук, зиаск абжыы иахаит. “Сцапишь, абри азы ахьцо збапишь убри ала ма аладеи ааадеи ахьакәу еилыскаап” ихэан, абри азиас абжыы ахьиахауаз аганахъ иҕынеихан дцо, дцо, дцо дышнеиуаз акэымкәан, аз ду ыиасны ицоит, дныҕҕынгылт. Данынаҕш, абни аз нырцә ҕацха хычык ибеит, аләа хәхәаза иөеиуеит. Ани аҕацха аниба, “Абра снеип, абра ауафы дыкоуп умбо, аләа өеиуеит икоу збап” хәа избеит. Егырахъ аөнкәа, акәацә-мацәкәа гылоуп, аха зегынцыара кыаҕтажәуп, уаф дыкәзам.

Хабжын афыр хәа иҕынеихан, азы днырит. Азы дырын ани аләа хәхәаза иахьөеиуаз аҕацхаҕы днеизар, дау ҕхәыск амца агәакы хәа иеикәцаны дыхәатәоуп, такәажәык. Атакәажә лыҕшра цәҕоуп, даниба, длыцәшәеит, егыт, аха ишьтахька дгыежыргыы дабагыжыуеи, цыаргыы цашьа имазам, иахьизеиҕыу хәа издырзом. “Сан, банацалбеит, исыхьыз абри ауп” хәа днеины илеихәрц избеит. Афыр хәа иҕынеихан атакәажә дахьтәаз днеит, днеин дналыдгылт. Атакәажәгы даахьаҕшын иара дылбеит.

— Ыы, аҕсуа чча, бзиа чыза умбааит, арахъ уабаказ, уаазгазеи арахъ? — лхэеит атакәажә дгәамтц-хамтца.

— Сааит, абааҕсы, банацалбеит, снатымуп, сбымфан, сбымырзын — ихэеит.

— Ыы, ачча, ҕсцәеирымга, зныктәи ҕатас укастцарын — лхэеит.

— Ибтахызар, ибтахыу катца, ибтахыу сызуу, бара бнапаҕы сыкоуп — ихэеит.

— Усфон, аха уажә уара сулаккысуам, сара сысас силаккысуам, дыҕхастастәуам. Уи бзиоуп, аха уабаанагеи уара насыҕда? — лхэан диазтааит.

— Ааи, сара сзыкэшээз убри ауп: аб дсыман, аихэшъцэа х-фык сыман. Саб даныпсуаз аламтала уахэшъцэа акы иагоит, изуеит, аха уара урт сыпшаауеит хэа урышьтамлан хэа сеихэеит. Иара дыпсит, дахжит. Хшыказ акэымкэан, енак пстхэак аахылан, сахэшъцэа агеит, иахьагаз седроу. Акыргы исычхаит, саб ипсымтаз иихээзгы сгэалашэон, аха сахэышыцэа сгэы итцалан, исзымычхазт абас абрахь саанагеит — ихэеит. Абас Хабжын дзыкэшэакээз зегы акакала ани атакэажэ илеихэеит.

Ари иихэашаз хэаны даналга, атакэажэ дахьтээз “Хых!” лхэеит. Ари иахэышыцэа ахьрымаз адгыл абрака акэзаап, аха иара иалид(ы)раауеи? Иахэышыцэа х-фык адауцэа аишыцэа ирымазаап. Аихабы, аихабы димоуп, агэбжьанытэ, агэбжьанытэ димоуп, аитбы, аитбы димоуп. Ари атакэажэ илдырузаап арт ахыкоу.

— Ари азы уаваланы ушнеиуа акэымкэан, апхьа умахэ аитбы ионы унадгылоит, уи унафсны ушнеиуа акэымкэа, агэбжьанытэ дынхоит, уи уахынаиафсуа, аихабы дынхоит. Умахэцэа зегы абри азы апшахэа иаванхоит. Абри иааубо зегынцэара ауаа нхон, икэырххэеит абарт адауцэа. Дара рымала роуп уажэ икоу, сара сырзыкэымхит, уахэышыцэа ах-фыкгы убарт адауцэа роуп измоу, абас ауп ишыкоу — лхэеит атакэажэ.

— Нас уажэышыта ишпазури, сымахэцэа хэа бызёу сырбар, сыршыуазар акэхап — ихэеит Хабжын.

— Даара уедаракны⁴ унеироуп, дара рёы анеира цэгьоуп, дара митэкэоуп, уафытёфса дзыхэо ракэу цыушьо! Даара ухы уамыцхраар, упхастартэуеит. Сара сасыс усыпхьазеит, сычкэынк иеипш иуасхэоит, ухы пхастоумтэын — лхэеит атакэажэ.

— Ибзиоуп, сан, бхаткы сцеит — ихэан, Хабжын иёы даасын, иёылеихан дышлеиуаз акэымкэан, имахэ (адауцэа рашьа еитбы) дыхынхоз ибан, уи иашта дьлталт.

Иахэшья лашья длымдыруази, данылба, акэыукэыу хэа дыхэхэан дипылт. Насыпла лхата даныкамьз иакэшэеит, умбо?!

— Уабаказ, уанацъалбеит, узлаазеи, иалудыраазеи, ушпакэшэеи — лхэан лнапы ыргыжьюа лашья дипылт иахэшья.

— Аа, шэыгэхьяазган сааит — ихэеит.

⁴ The meaning is clear (‘You must go there very carefully’), but the stem/root -дарак- is not known. Could it be a distorted borrowing from Georgian დარაკი- ‘guard’?

— Хай, уахьааз уи акы иеипгшымкэа сеигэырбьеит, аха изхэартоузеи, схатца дааир, уифар хэа сшэоит, уанацалбеит — лхэеит.

— Сифатцэкьярушь?

— Уифар хэа сшэоит, иалызд(ы)раауазеи, узлаикэгэыбуазеи адауы? — лхэеит ари Хабжын иахэшьа еитцбы.

Шэындыкэра дук лыман аиахэшьа, Хабжын дха-даагсаха дыкан, шака дныкэахьаз седроу, иахэшьа акрифалцеит, акрилыржэит, дылкэабан, дылшышыын, днаган амни ашэындыкэра ду илымаз дынталцеит.

Ус ишыказ акэымкэа ари лхатца (адауы) ахэылбыеа дааит. Дахьыказ аллах идырп!

— Агсуа ччаи фык сахауеит, абри закэыузеи? — ихэан ипгхэыс длазцааит дшааизеипгшцэкья.

— Дабатэи агсуоу, агсуа ара дабаказ, даазгои? — сара аффы акэхап иуахаз — лхэеит лара, Хабжын иахэшьа.

— Седроу, агсуак иффы сахауеит — ихэеит адауы.

— Моумоу, сара сакэхап зыффы уахауа — лхэеит лара еитах.

— Моумоу, ари зыффы сахауа ари бара бакэзам, дызустоу аасабымхэар калазом — ихэеит. Ари адауы иеанирыцэгьаза, лашья дааины дшыказ иалхэеит.

— Абас, абас, сашья затцэык дсыман, сыгэхьяааиган, дсышьталан даан, уара дуфар хэа сшэан абра ашэындыкэра дтартэаны дсымоуп, суыхэоит дысцэыумфан — лхэеит.

— Хай, бымцахэ ыцэааит, ибхэо закэыузеи, саргыы уаф дсымазамызт, абхэында затцэык дсымазар, дышпгасфо дысфартэ?! — иаггыпгхашьяроуп дытартэаны дахьбымоу, дытга арахь — ихэеит ари лхатца адауы.

Абри лашья ашэандыкэра даатылган, ауа асас дахь, ауа бзиа иеипгш акампаниа изыкарцеит.

Хабжын адырғаены ашьжымтан урт даарпгыртын, ифынеихан иахэшьа агэбжыаньтэ лфы днеит. Уигы диеигэырбьяны дипгылт. Азнык азы уигы “Схатца уифар хэа сшэоит” лхэеит, аха нас лхатца ианиалхэа, уигы абни аитцбы лхатца ишихэаз еипгш, “Абхэында дсымазар, сабхэында затцэ дысфома, дысшыама?” ихэан иалаухыузеи, уакагы акампаниа изыкарцан, хатыр, пату икэырцеит.

Адырғаены иахэшьа аихабы лыфны дахьнеизгы абант аитцбацэа реипгш длыдылкылт, уакагы имахэ акампаниа изыкаитцеит, агсшэа ду иеихэеит. Уакагы уахыки енаки дыкан.

Абас ала Хабжын иахэшъцаа дрылсны ибеит, иахаит, уажэы аихабза иѣы дыкоуп, аха ари игеитаз уи ауп, арт иахэшъцаагы имахэцаагы дара-дара еитанеи-ааизом. Ус досу рхазы икоуп. Ари Хабжын дахыкоу адгыл закэуы издырзом. Адгыл дкылкыан длеит, иалидыраауеи дахыкоу? Уажэышьта икастарызеи, ишпъазури хэа дхэыцуа дтэоуп. Арт иахэшъцаагы еинианы ибазом, иеитанеи-ааизом. Ари имахэ аихабы иѣы даангылан пьытрак анты, данапъшэымаха, имахэ пьытк данишьцыла, диазцааит: “Шэара аишьцаа шэзеибамбозаргы, шэыхэсақэа зеитанеи-мааиуазеи⁵?” хэа.

— Хахэсақэа еитанеи-ааиуа иалагар, ацэгъа хабжырхэоит, убри ауп изеитанеи-мааиуа⁶ — ихэеит амахэ.

Ибзиоуп, уигы еиликааит, ара дыкоуп Хабжын, сцоит ихэар, имахэцаа доурышьтуеит, дныркылома, аха сцоит абаихэо, дахыцо издырзоми⁷?

“Енак ари иаргы игы ҕыбъзо далагеит, иахэшьа аихабы ус иалхэеит:

— Сашьа! Сара сцоит уажэышьта, сызхара шэызбеит хэа умахэцаа уаарылаланы ирахэа. Ус анроухэалакы, арахэ, ауахьад ухэа амал рымажьуп, акы иеигзашам, иарбан иааутахыу, зака утахыу уахтоит хэа иалагашт. Урт арахэ ипъцэаны иурто удукылар, нас узцазом, ара уаанхоит. Уи аткыс, иага уахтоит хэа иалагаргы иумуын. “Еык рымоуп, Шахеслам⁸ ахьзуп, убри шэеы сышэт ак сышэымтар шэымуазар хэа рахэа. Уи ртизом дара, аха уара рабхэында затэы уоуп, исышэт хэа роухэар, иргэабыр калап. Иара уи Шахеслам захьзу аеы ус ауп ишыкоу, ауахьад иахьрылоу удырбоит, зегы иреицэаны, башазак акэны икоуп. Аха иуыртар, уанақэтэалакы, нас даеа формак аанахэоит, аеыткыа ззырхэо акэны икалоит.

Абас иалхэеит Хабжын иахэшьа еихабы.

— Ибзиоуп, ибхэаз еилыскааит — ихэеит Хабжын.

Ауха имахэ данааи, “Уажэышьта сымахэцаагы, сахэшьцаагы сызхара шэызбеит, уатэы сцоит” ихэеит Хабжын.

— Кох, хабхэында затэы иахзааиз иуахтарызеи? — рхэан, иааигэныѣын, имахэцаа адауқэа ахѣыкгы азэы шэкы пъцэаны иааигеит (арахэ), даеазэы ѣышэ пъцэаны иааигеит, егыгы хышэ пъцэаны иааигеит.

Апъара зака утахыу, арахэ зака утахыу уахтоит — хэа иархэеит.

⁵ The original text has зеитанамааиуазеи.

⁶ The original text has изеитанамааиуа.

⁷ The original text has издырзоми.

⁸ This is how the name of the horse is presented on the first several occasions that reference is made to it in this text, but later on the form Шахеслам ‘Shaheslam’ appears a number of times. I have ignored this second spelling, but who can say which is correct?!

Аха Хабжын имахэцэа изааргаз амал зеггы мап ацэикит.

— Арт зыстахгэышьоузеи, иабазгагэышьо, са сахьцо сыздырам, арт рыххо исыман сабадэыкэлагэышьо, мал хэа акагы стахым, амал азы смааит сара — ихэеит.

— Кох, ус шџаухэо, уара хэбхэында зацэы, амал умтакэа ус баша унапыркало удэыкэахцэома, иумгар калом хэахшьуеит — рхэеит имахэцэа.

— Нас ишэмузозар, аекэа усгы исышэтарц шэгэы итами? — ихэан дразцааит.

— Аа, иуахамтакэа, ишџауахамтои? — рхэеит.

— Нас ус акэзар, урткэа зеггы са истахзам, урткэа зеггы ракэымкэа, аоны саныказгы азбахэ сахахьан, Шахеслам хэа еык шэымоуп, исышэтозар, убри сышэт, абжьарак иарбанзаалакь даеакы стахым — ихэеит.

Ари ас анихэа, арт имахэцэа неихэаџшы-ааихэаџшит, рабхэында ихэаз ргэамџхеит, аха икарцоиз, ирымтар амуит, мап хэашья рзыкамцеит.

— Иуура удыруама? — рхэеит.

— Аа! — ихэеит.

— Хара иуахтоит ари, хабхэында зацэы усасны⁹ уанахтаа, иугэаџхаз шџауахамто, еык уаџахго хакам, аха уџхастанатэыр хэа хшэоит. Уашьтан машэыр узнаур, хара гэыбџан хаумтан, угэнаха хакэумтан — рхэеит имахэцэа адауцэа.

— Избан, сзыџхастанатэуазеи? — ихэан Хабжын имахэцэа ирхэаз џеишьан дразцааит.

— Узыџхастанатэуа, ушыџхастанатэуа уи ауп, Шахеслам убас кэзшыас иамоуп, ахьмызџ агар, уара уашьуеит, изакэзаалак хьмызџык амгароуп, ахьмызџ анага, иаразнак уашьуеит хэа ус иархэеит Хабжын имахэцэа.

— Ахьмызџ шџасырго?

— Ахьмызџ шаурго убри ауп, иара аткыс иаиаануа акы аџы ианнеи, иара аназымиаани, ахьмызџ аургеит ауп иаанаго, убыскан иџханашьоит. Ускан ма уара уашьуеит, ма иара ушьыр акэхоит — рхэеит.

— Исыхьлакгы, исышэтозар, изгоит, исышэымтозаргы иара ада даеакы шэымхны изгом, уаха акагы стахым — ихэеит.

Нас ари ианимуза, адауцэа Шахеслам аарган, акэадыр акэцан иртеит. Шахеслам убыс акэын ишыказ, иџыруан, ирашьын, ахьыз хэаны акамчы анааурха, “Сара абранза сга!” хэа ахьыхэаз атыџ аџы унанагар акэын.

⁹ The word усасны means ‘you being guest’; also possible would be ухасасны ‘you being our guest’.

Хабжын Шахеслам даакэтэан, имахэцэа “Шэымш аабзиахеит!” хэа аҕсшэа рахэаны, егыны даныодэықэла, аеы дацэажэеит.

— Шахеслам! Абааҕсы, сымахэцэа исархээз табыргызар, сара адгыл сытазцалаз аеыхэаҕы сга! — ихэан, аҕэақ хэа аҕамчы ааирхеит.

Ари ас хэаны, аҕамчы анааирха, Шахеслам ҕрит, дахьаа, дахьца имбазакэа, абни зны акэыҕсха ахьифаз адэы ҕшзараҕы дыҕкылнагеит. Уа данынкылкэа, даныҕшы, ани уаанжа иибахьаз аеыхэа наҕ алра итсны, инаскьаны даеа дэхэыҕш хэычык ыҕоуп, абни адэхэыҕш икэыуп.

— Умцахэ сырцаап уажэышьта са сеибгазар! — ихэан аеыхэа икырц дашьталеит. Ари аеыхэа агэаҕ имоуп, умбо, ихаштзом. Иҕынеихан днеит аеыхэаҕы. Аеыхэаҕы днеин, иргыжыит, иргыжыит, иргыжыит, аха изымкит, умбо, абга иафаша! “Хырр!” ахэеит, “Хырр!” ахэеит, аха изымкит. Аха иаргы имузеит, дацрымцит, данаҕэымтца, таха анеимтажа, ари аеыхэа ҕрит, Шахесламгы ҕрын иашьталеит. Аеыхэа ҕырни ишнеиуаз акэымкэа ханк ацэқэан акошька илтаҕка ицеит.

Аеыхэа ахан ацэқэаҕы акошька илтаҕка ишцаз аниба, “Уаангыл” ихэан, Хабжын Шахеслам ааникылан, иара дыҕеыжэҕан, шыапыла иҕынеихан абри ахан ахьтагылаз днеит. Дахьнеиз ажэлар еизан абри ахан зтагылоу ашта иазкуам, абра иказы-казуа икэжьуп.

Егы абрака Гэында-ҕшжа хэа ҕхэызба ҕшзак дыҕказаап, абри ахан ддэылтны дцоит дэыхэаханы, данааилакь, дыҕхэызба ссирха дааҕалоцаап. Абри лакэзаап Хабжын аеыхэа хэа дзышьтоугы. Лара даныҕхэызбахалакь, ла леиҕш ацэа зхаз, уи леиҕш иҕшзас адунеи ахьыршаз уаҕы димбацыт. Адауцэа лышьтан, аха дырҕыхьашэомыт. Абри лбацэа, лхэацэа роуп ари уажэ Хабжын абри аштаҕы иеизаны иибаз ажэларгы. Абас лара лбаразын ажэлар еизоит, абра итоуп, уи лҕы анеирагы ус ала-мала имариазам, аха Хабжын “Уа мшыбзиақэа” хэа длеин ажэлар даарылагылт. “Бзиа убааит” рхэеит даргы.

Шахеслам ара ианнеи, баша ҕны аеыҕанатцеит. Хабжын данақэтэалакь, даеа цэак, даеа ҕшрак шьтнахуан иара, абжьааҕны ҕабаак акэыушэа акэын ишыҕаз. Хабжын дызбаз ажэлар “Дабатэиу, дабатэиу?” рхэан, инеизцаа-ааизцаакэеит, дырзымдырит, илырдырауеи, зныкыр урт рахьтэ азэы дихахьазма?

— Абри аҕара ауаа абра шэеизаны шэзыҕоузеи, ишэызбозеи? — ихэан дразцааит.

— Гэында-пъшза хэа хэынтқарк дыкоуп абра. Абри лбаразын инеиуа ахы ртиуеит, аха лбарта рыздода? Ҳаргы убри лбаразын хаины ҳакоуп, ухацкы хцеит, ҳазнеиуам, ипъхашьаны изымнеиуагы рацаоуп, агэыбра удаоуп — рхэеит.

— Ус аума?

— Аа, ус ауп.

— Ус акэзар, убри Гэында-пъшза хэа зегы шэызфэынтэаауа абра асоф даакэшэыргылар, дыпъхашьаны лара лахь изымнеиуагы дйбап, ипъхамшьакэан инеирц зтахыугы дйбап, саргы дызбап. Абра асоф даакэгылар камлари — ихэеит Хабжьын.

— Ҳазцаап, икалозар аабап — рхэеит ари ихэаз заҳаз ажэлар.

Ани лара лахтнхэсақэа ыкамзи, адырра рыртеит, “Абас Гэында-пъшза дызбарц хэа иааз ауаа лара лахь анеирта роуам, амна асоф даакэгылар зегы дырбап” хэа ус рархэеит.

— Ибзиоуп, ишэхэаз лара ллымхақынза инаагап — рхэан, ахтнхэсақэа Гэында-пъшза адырра лыртеит. Ларгы урт ирхэаз дакэшахатхан, лыбзыцэашьцэа лывагыланы асоф ағы дааин даакэгылт.

Асоф даакэгылт, аха иаакэгылаз лоуп иухэаша! Агэлымтэах! Дкаччоит амза еипъш, дкапъхоит амра еипъш. Ахан асоф дшаакэгылазтэқьа ашта данаакэыпъш, Шахеслам ахьфахэаз лбеит. Иаразнак илдырт ани лара илышьтаз ахатца дзыкэтэаз ағы шакэыз, аха “Иара фахэоуп, сара ахан асоф сықэтэоуп” лымхэеи ура?! Убри аамтазыхэа ари Хабжьын ашышьыхэа, емыршьагала, дытышьшьны днеин Шахеслам дакэтэеит.

— Аа, абаапъсы, Шахеслам, уан лхы дааст, иахьазоуп узыстахыу — ихэеит. Акамчы ааирхеит, аха иааирхатэқьеит ифэфазаны. Баркылыгы маркылыгы, зегы еилапъыхханы, хыхь Гэында-пъшза дахыкэгылаз дыфхатэрылт. Лыжэа инапы аатхны, иеыхэда дакэыртэаны, есс, дыпърит. Гэашэгы машэгы акы дааннамкылазакэа дылтахэаша дцеит. Егырт уа игылаз ажэлар икарцахуаиз, ус баша иаанхеит. Гэында-пъшза длыбжьхэа Хабжьын дигеит.

Уажэы амшын хықэ дықэлан дааиуеит ари. Амшын хықэ дықэлан дшааиуаз иегы аапъсеит, иаргы даапъсеит, рыпъсы ааитаркыр, зык ржэыр, акы инацхар ртаххеит. Иаргы дааеыжэцит. Гэында-пъшзагы иеыхэда дыкэымзи, даалбааиган акэарағы дфайргылт. Шахеслам ифахэаны иара зык нкастэоит хэа днылалт.

Адауы х-шьапык зтаз Кьахьыр хэа ағы имазаарын, амшын ихкэарлон. Абри аамтазы адауы иеы Кьахьыр дакэтэаны амшын дыхкэарло дахьхыз, амшын

агәақынтәи данааҕш, Гәында-ҕшза дыҕхеи-ҕхеиуа лымацара затәык ақәара дшықәгылаз ибеит. Лара амни адауы амшын агәаҕы дахықаз ақынза илыркаццеит.

Ари адауы уаанзаҕы Гәында-ҕшза илыштықәаз дреиуазаап. Ари уажә ас даниба, уаанзаҕы лымариа ибар итахны дықамзи, иҕы Кяхыыр даасын, амшын дыхкәарланы ақыҕ хәа амшын даарқьан, Гәында-ҕшза дахықаз даакылсын, дааштыҕаан, есс, уцаларҕы, уцала, амшын дыхкәарланы длықәхәаша дцеит.

Шахеслам ахьҕахәаз акәыу-кәыу хәа ихәхәан, аҕәра ҕнатәан иҕны адауы иштыалт, ари адауы иҕы амшын ихкәарланы ицоит, Шахеслам зсан иашытоуп.

Ари Хабжын данааи, Гәында-ҕшза дабақоу, Шахесламҕы амшын агәтаны инеихьан, иааҕсеит, игьажыит уахәштыхытәы, азы ахытытәцәо иаарит арахь. Шахеслам ацахеит, ахьмызҕ агеит. Иара имтарсны иаанагоз атыҕха ссир адауы дахыгаз хьмызҕнашьеит.

— Уажә уара усшыру, сара сушыру? — ахәеит инеин Хабжын инаидгылан.

Хабжын икайтцара изымдыруа длак-оакуа даакәхеит. Уажә иара иҕы дашыыр, дыҕсит ауп, уаха акаҕы. Иара иҕы ишыыргы, ада дхәартазам. Нак дызлацозеи, имоа злаҕырихуазеи, амца икит, иалаухи?

— Хаи, уанацъалбеит, Шахеслам, абааҕсы, сумшыын, сзыхуырқьозеи, Гәында-ҕшза адауажә дахцәигагар, сара соуп ахьмызҕ зду — ихәеит Хабжын.

— Моумоу, уи еиҕш ахьмызҕ сара исзычхауам, ма уара усшыроуп, ма са сушыроуп — ахәеит Шахеслам.

— Хаи, анцәа хазшаз шыарда зымчу, сара схы-сҕәы сахьзаанза уара умбаауа, зыҕны уанысшыыз еиҕш уаанхо убас уқалааит! — ихәан Хабжын, иҕы Шахеслам агаҕаҕы илеиган, длеи дласны ишыит. Даалалган, аҕслымз ааижуа, аҕслымз ааижуа иргәоаны, иҕы акыртә икайтцан, убра илтацаны аҕслымз лақәиҕсан, иара абри амшын кәара даваланы иҕыөеихеит.

Ари уажә Хабжын, хаҕеимышхара, амца икны дықоуп, Гәында-ҕшза дицәыргеит, иҕы ишыын ақәараҕы аҕслымзра илажыуп.

Ихы игәашараха ақәара даваланы дцо, дцо, дцо дышнеиуаз, қьаҕта хычык аҕы дынкылст. Ақьаҕтаҕы қәацәк гылоуп. Ари иарҕы дкараханы дықамзи? — абри ақәацә схы аатцаскып хәа дахьнеиз, ақәацә тақәажык дыоноуп, тақәажы беимбарахк.

— Хаи, нанхеит, узустада, арахь уабақаз? — лхәеит атакәажә.

Хабжын абас, абас ауп сызыниаз ихәан, дзықәшәаз, дзышытаз леихәеит атакәажә.

— Ааи, уанацъалбеит, нанхеит, уажэымта цэгъахеит, иакэым уакэшэеит, иакэым ухыит — лхэеит атакэажэ.

— Шьта ишпъасыпъсыхэоу, икастцарызеи? — ихэеит.

— Иупъсыхэоу убри ауп, убри уара у-Гэында-пъшза дызгаз адауы иеы х-шьапык роуп иацоу. Уажэ Гэында-пъшза адауы дшигаз Апъсны ажэлар зегы ирахахъеит — адауы дыцэоуп. Ани иеы х-шьапык зацоу убри ауп, пъшьба атазтггы, еихаггы ифэбэахон, ахы анкылара дахэомызт иара адауы ихатаггы. Убри аеы убас казшьас иамоуп, ес сабыша амшын акаэарахы ирны ихьоит. Аха аетцаракаэа иахшо акы иагоит. Абыржэ иааиуа асабшазы иеитах абра акаэарафэ иааины ихъараны икоуп; ианхъалакь, ус уара уамтцасны апа узкыр, адауы дахыкоу уагоит — лхэеит атакэажэ.

— Уи ахъхьо, тыпъс иалнахуа иалыздыраауазеи? — ихэеит Хабжын.

— Абра итыцуеит, абра амшын ахыкэ афэ; иара амшын иантыцуа икыр-кыруеит. Акыр-кыр бжы ангалакь, унеи, алашэага ашьтоуп иара; аетцыс анарилакь, алашэага ирфамтцакэа, уара уамтцасны иузкыр, афыр хэа уаашьтпааны адауы дахыкоу унанагоит — лхэеит атакэажэ.

— Ибзиоуп, азамана.

Хабжын атакэажэ дналыдтын, ифэнеихан днеин иахэа тыхны абри аеы амшын иахьтыцуаз дгылт иеырхианы.

Абра дышгылаз акэымкэа асабша шыбжымтан х-шьапы (Къахыр захъзу аеы) кыр-кырны амшын иаарын, акаэара иаакэгылт. Амшын иаатытын, акаэарафэ апъслымзра илылатэан ихъеит. Убри аамтазыхэа агэакь хэа алашэага еизеит, иакэшэеит. Аха Хабжын дааи даарылагъежын, аеани аетцыс рымпъын икэимыжълеит алашэага. Нас афыр хэа даахъахэын, аетцыс даамтцасын, ахэда инапы акэыршан икит.

— Аа, абаапъсы, шыбжьонынза сан акыкахш сырцаа, шыбжышьтахъ саауеит, уара сутэуп, сыпъсы еикэзырхаз уара уоуп, унапафэ сыкоуп, аха шыбжьонынза сан акыкахш ацэара азин сутар, сыфэбэахоит — ахэеит аетцыс.

Аетцыс анс анахэа, инауижын ицеит ан ахъ. Шыбжьонынза ан акыкахш ацэеит. Ашыбжышьтахъ уаф дакэтэартэ икалеит. Аетцыс апъшь-шьапык шаццаз иаанижът. Дфакэтэан, дама афэнынахан, адауы дахынхоз днаагеит.

Даннеи, адауы ифныка дымнеикэа, азха, азы ахыртоз днеин даатэеит. Адауы дыцэан, ипъсишьон, аха адауы ифны ауаа ыкамзи, зпаб хэычык азы лгарцы акэмаан лыманы абра дааит. Азпаб хэычы лыкэмаан кны азы лгарц ара данааи, Хабжын даалымтцасын дааникылт.

— Иутахыузеи? — лхэеит.

— Ари азы ззыбгода? — ихэеит.

— Адауы Гэында-гъшза дааиган, убри Гэында-гъшза шыбыжъон азы лжэуеит, азы лзызгоит — лхэеит азъаб хэычы.

Хабжъын мацэазк иман, Гэында-гъшза илтахъазаарын, уажэы убри амацэаз азъаб илитеит.

— Абри амацэаз наганы, ацэыца итаршэны, азы зызнабго исызлыт. Амала, са ишбыстаз бымхэан; са ишбыстаз бхэар, бысшыуеит — ихэеит.

Амацэаз лбар, Гэында-гъшза арахъ дышгъамаари хэа игэы иазбеит уажэы.

— Ибзиоуп — лхэан, амацэаз ааимылхын, днеин, ацэыца Гэында-гъшза илылтеит. Гэында-гъшза ари амацэаз анылба, ицъалшьеит, илакэылшьеит.

— Азафэы бахънеиз иббада? — хэа Гэында-гъшза азъаб хэычы длазцааит.

— Уаф дсымбазеит — лхэеит.

— Уаф дбымбакаа каларымызт, иббаз дсабхэароуп! — лхэеит.

— Моумоу, уаф дсымбазеит — лхэан азъаб инафэршэны мап лкит.

Икоу збап схата снейны хэа Гэында-гъшза дыфны азха данааи, Хабжъын уа дылбеит.

— Уанацъалбеит, икоузеи, уабаказ? — лхэан длазцааит.

— Сабаказ, абри ауп сызыкэшээз, абас ауп исаашъахаз, х-шьапы иахшаз аетцыс саанагеит абас мшын гэыла — ихэеит Хабжъын.

— Нас уажэышьта ишгъакахцари? — лхэеит.

— Ишгъакахцари, седроу, дабакоу иара адауы?

— Дыцэоуп.

— Илеи (илакэа) ипъси абакоу?

— Илеи ипъси ахыкоу седроу!

— Бизцааны иеилкаа! — ихэеит Хабжъын.

Гэында-гъшза длахынхэын адауы ифныка днеит.

— Илеи ипъси абакоу ари са саазгаз адауы? — хэа ауаа днаразцаа-ааразцаакэеит.

Даазгаз адауы ла зацэык ауп изтоу.

— Адауы илеи ипъси абри агэашъа иалоуп — рхэеит шыоуки, амшгацэа.

Гэында-гъшза ас анлаха, дааит Хабжъын ифэы.

— Иеилыбказеи, адауы илеи ипъси абакоу? — ихэан длазцааит.

— Агэашъа иалоуп хэа сархэеит — лхэеит.

— Уи башоуп, имцуп — ихэеит Хабжъын.

Хабжъын анс анихэа, Гэында-гъшза даагъежъын, ани адауы илеи ипъси алоуп хэа ахылархээз агэашъа лиарта адкацаланы, днейны дадтэалт, лнапы

акэыршаны илкит бзиа илбозшэа, дацэнымхошэа. Лара ас калцо даналага, аматцуцэа адауы даадырѳшит.

— Хаи, уара, уанацъалбеит, уара иааугаз уѳхэыс Гэында-ѳшза бзиа ушылбо удыруама? — рхэеит.

— Ишѳыкэыу?

— Ишѳыкэыу убри ауп, са саазгаз иѳси илеи абакоу хэа данхазцаа, абри агэашья иалоуп хэа лаххэеит. Баазгаз адауы иѳси илеи абри агэашья хэа анлаххэа, лиарта агэашья иадкацаланы, лнапы акэыршаны дтэоуп; улыхэаѳши! — хэа иархэеит.

Арт ас анырхэа, адауы дкарамеаны дыѳны днеит Гэында-ѳшза лѳы.

— Ыы, арныг, арныг, икабцо закэыузеи? Арт амшгацэа ибархэаз цабыргыз ѳыбышьяма? Барныгыуп акэымзар, сара сылеи сыѳси ас ауаа зегъы иахьырбо, иахьырдыруа инсыжьюама? — ихэеит.

— Иабакоу нас улеи уѳси? — лхэан диазцааит.

— Амшын шкэакэа ацака агэылшьяп тоуп, убри агэылшьяп аѳнутѳка ашьябыста тоуп, ашьяб(ы)ста аѳнутѳка ажья тоуп, ажья аѳнутѳка ахаѳшья хэычы тоуп, убри ахаѳшья хэычы итоуп сылеи сыѳси — ихэеит адауы.

Гэында-ѳшза ас анлаха, мазала, адауы лыѳимырбакэа Хабжын дахьтэаз дааит.

— Икоузеи, иеилыбкаазеи? — ихэан длазцааит.

— Абас ауп иихэаз адауы, амшын шкэакэа ацака агэылшьяп тоуп, агэылшьяп аѳнутѳка ашьяб(ы)ста тоуп, ашьяб(ы)ста аѳнутѳка ажья тоуп, ажья аѳнутѳка ахаѳшья хэычы тоуп, убри ахаѳшья хэычы итоуп адауы илеи иѳси — лхэеит.

ѳшь-шьяпы иара Хабжын итэыми уажэышьта? — иара Хабжын иихэо ауп иканатцо шьята, Уажэышьта агэра игеит адауы илеи иѳси ахьыкоу аиашатцэѳья шихэаз.

— Хаи, ѳшь-шьяпы, уанацъалбеит, абас сакэшэеит, амшын шкэакэа аѳны хазцару? — ихэан Хабжын иѳы дазцааит.

— Кох, ишѳыкэыу хашзымцо, уажэытэѳья хнеиуеит — ахэеит ѳшь-шьяпы.

Аѳы ас анахэа, Хабжын апѳкаѳ хэа дѳакэтэан, даасын ддэыкэлеит. Амшын шкэакэа ахьыкоу седроу, иалид(ы)раауеи, иахьыкоу анцэа итэуп, иѳы дзыкэтэоу иадыруеит, иѳырны ицоит, умбо?!

Ари уажэы амшын шкэакэа ахыкэ аѳы хэынткарк дыкоуп. Абни адауы илеи иѳси зырхэарах итоу агэылшьяп есы-шьяжымтан амшын иаатыцуеит, ахэынткар иуаажэлар рахьтэ азэазэа ама ицоит. Ус иазхэоуп, ус иазыѳцэоуп.

Ари ажэлар ргэы кыднаххьеит, аха җсыхэа рзамтакэа иҗоуп. Иааицыҗхьаза, бзарбзангы, шэақгы иаарҗыхьашэо агэыдырцоит, аха ирызшьуам, ишагэыдырцо, ишагэыдырцо ауп азэ даарылхны дама ишцо. Изакезаалакь акы иазхьаҗшуам, убри аҗара игэылшьап дууп, убри аҗара ицэгьоуп.

Хабжын иеы амшын шкэакэа ахыкэ аҗы абни ахэынтқар дахьынзоз днанагеит. Ара даннеи, уажэы уатэы аашар сабшоуп, ажэлар рыедырхиоит, амшын ахыкэ ахь рхы рханы аизара иаеуп, иаашар, агэылшьап ааираны иҗоуп. Иеизахьазгы ыҗамзи, Хабжын днеин дларыдгылт.

— Иҗоузеи, уара, шэзеизази? — ихэан Хабжын иеизахьаз ажэлар дразцааит.

— Иҗахьузеи, абас ауп, ассир хакэшэаны хакьоуп, есы-шьыжымтан абра агэылшьап амшын итыцуеит, итытыҗхьаза азэазэа агоит, хаихсуеит, хайтеихсуеит, аха ахазшьуам, иаго усгы иагоит, абри хакьоуп, хгэы җцэеит — рхэеит.

— Убри са исшьуеит, шэара амҗын шэыкэымлан, зеиҗшыртаны итыцуа сашэхэа, итытыр, са исшьуеит — ихэеит Хабжын.

— Ыы, умцахэ ыцэааит, иухэо закэыузеи, уеилагома, уара ани узшьуа иҗоума, иургэаар, хара зегы ханнамыртэои?! — рхэеит.

— Азэ иами иаго? — ихэеит.

— Аа, знык ианааилакь, азэ иоуп иаго — рхэеит.

— Нас ус акэзар, исызшьыр, исшьит, исзымшьыр, са сафап, уажэык са исажэраза, уажэынтэи шэуочарад са избап, шэа ишэцэалазуеи, исажэраза, исылшалакгы жэбап — ихэеит.

— Моумоу, анс, арс — рхэеит, аха иалаухьузеи, иазааит арт.

Хабжын, иахэа ахэыц аҗашэар иаафнатэартэ ихны, абри агэылшьап ахьтыцуаз днаган ддыргылт.

— Шэарт ахьсра шэакэыц, исызшьыр, исшьит, исзымшьыр, са сафап, шэара зныкгы шэымхысын — хэа реихэеит ажэлар еизан иҗаз.

Ари уажэы иахэа атра итыхны, ирхианы ишикыз, дышгылаз, дышгылаз акэымкэан, амшын аххахэа, аддыхэа ахэо иалагеит, абыржэы, абыржэы, абыржэы агэылшьап ахэыркь хэа амшын иаатыцын аҗэара аеанаакэнажь, Хабжын иеыфеитихын, иахэа рыхха аҗэак хэа ахы дласын, аха ахы изхымцэеит, ихаирҗэалт ахы, уахэа амшын илтафры ицеит.

— Иахьа ус сзыууит, аха уатэы шьыжымтан асыс шкэакэа акьамашэышэ ыфаны саауеит, иузызуа убап! — ахэеит агэылшьап шытахька амшын ианазцо. Хабжын икэмақарт, умбо?!

Абас Хабжын, агэылшыап ихэын наф ианца, ари ажэлар рнапы данцаны дышьтырхт, изымшыит, аха уи аены ма уа дааимцеит, уа деимыргеит, иаргы акгы имыхкэа деикэхеит. Ари иеигэырбыан, ажэлар дышьтырхын, ахэынтқар хэа дара ирымаз икны днаргеит. Дахьнаргаз ахэынтқаргы диеигэырбыан дидикылт. Уи ахэынтқар х-оык афхацаа иман.

— Сыфхацаа иреифыаушыо унацаа иалыкэыукыр, дуыстоит — ихэеит ахэынтқар.

— Моумоу, уанацалбеит, уфхацаа рыхаирра убааит, сара азэгы дыстахзам — ихэеит Хабжын. Даеазэ дитахыума? — Гэында-фшза лоуп иитахыу.

Ахэынтқар ифхацаа руазэ длыцшьтарцеит ауха Хабжын, аха иара длыламкыыст, уи моу лган ахыгы дымнахэит.

Ауха шаанза уа дыкан, ашыжь шаанза даагылан, иеааибитан, амшын ахыкэан днеин дгылт. Дышгылаз акэымкэан, амшын еимгэыхэаны агэылшыап отыфрит, ахы рбыаны, асыс шкэакэа акьамашэышэ афан егын. Атыцымтаз дырфаагых Хабжын иахэа рыхха агэылшыап ахы дласын, ахы аахифэыцеит, нас иаразнак афслымз афеифсеит. Ихифэыцеыз агэылшыап ахы амшын илтафры ицеит, ахэамц арахь иаанхеит. Амгэа дылтасын ианааиркьа, ашыаб(ы)ста откэеит, ашыаб(ы)ста дласын амгэа ианааиркьа, ажьа отытэрааит. Ажьа ааникылан, амгэа анааиркьа, хафшыа хэычык иакараны, иаатшэаны инкашэеит, уи ахафшыа хэычы аашьтифэан, даахан ицыба илтеитеит.

Арт ажэлар иеикэирхаз гэырбыеит, ихаткы, ифсаткы кадмыршэуа, иузахаурызеи бзиарас рхэеит. Аха иара акагы стахым ихэан ддэыкэлеит.

— Хаи, уанацалбеит, уабацо? — рхэан икэшан дырkit ажэлар.

— Сабацо, сахьааз сымцои? — ихэеит.

— Унан, уанацалбеит, хара хазфоз тарханы уцоит, иутахыузеи, иутахыу уахтоит, уара узы икахамцара икоузеи? — рхэеит.

— Шэара шэкынтэ сара акымзарак стахым, абри агэылшыап сшыырц сгэы итан, азбахэ сахан, исшыырц сааит — ихэеит Хабжын.

Ари иитахыз ицыба итоуп уажэышыта, арт ажэлар иалырдыраауеи?

Хабжын фшь-шыапы зцаз иеы усгы иман, даакэтэан, “Абзиара шэзыкалааит!” ихэан уа ажэлар афсшэа рахэаны, амшын дыхкэарланы ддэыкэлеит арахь.

Дааит ифхэыс Гэында-фшза лфы, азыхь афы. Ларгы уа днеит.

— Икоузеи, уанацалбеит, уахьцаз икоуцазеи? — лхэан диазцааит.

— Икасцаз иалыбхызи, уашьтан ибасхэап, уажэы быццакны х-шыапы быманы бааи! — ихэеит.

Ларгъы Хабжын ихэаз иажэа аабамтэыкэа афыр хэа днеин, х-шьапы лыманы дааит. Иара п̄шь-шьапы дакэтэеит, лара х-шьапы дакэтэеит, абыцагъы еивагыланы, иеивасны амшын ихкэарланы идэыкэлеит арахь.

— Уа, уара, уанацалбеит, хцоит уажэы, аха абри сара уансышьтаз узыкэтэаз уеы абакоу? — лхэан диазцааит.

Уи аеы лара дамыршэахъази, илхаштзомызт.

— Аа. уи анасып̄да абакахыу, исшьхьеит — ихэеит иара.

— Ишп̄аушыи?

— Ишысшьыз уи ауп, бара адауы бансцэига, адауы сѐи сареи ханихьымза, “Ма сушьыроуп, ма усшьыроуп” ахэан, исымшьыр ада п̄сыхэа смоузт, исшьит, агэнаха анцэа исыкэимтцааит! — ихэеит Хабжын.

— Кох, убри уеы ахыушьыз хнаугароуп, ишъны иахышьтоу сурбароуп — лхэеит Гэында-п̄шза.

Ари иеы Шахеслам гаѣак аѣы ишьит, аха иахышьыз ахъакэыу седроу, уи аахыс закацъара днаагахьоузеи, игэалашэо дыкоума? Аха ари уажэы дзыкэтэоу аеы иамдыруази? — даманы уа инеит.

— Абыржэыцэкъа итх! — лхэеит Гэында-п̄шза.

Хабжын дласын Шахеслам ап̄слымз иахьалаз иаалихит. Иара ахэда ашьа аалыжж-аалыжжуа¹⁰ икоуп, абыржэы инатцкъап ухэартэ мшаѐны ианишьыз еип̄ш икоуп ибжъымсзакэа.

— Шахеслам, уанацалбеит, удунеи укэнацы хьмызѣ умгазацызт, анкъа ушыказ еип̄ш уп̄сы таны анцэа ухаитааит — лхэан Гэында-п̄шза днеин аеы алахь дагэзит.

Лара лѣахэатэы калеит, умбо! Шахеслам ахышьтаз иаахэыцы-мацит. Гэында-п̄шза еитах адоуха аалхэан адгьыл данагэзы, Шахеслам ахышэт хэа иѣатцкъеит икыыр-кыруа. Ишѣатцкъаз еип̄ш х-шьапы илеи-иласын ицкъа-шэкъа илыкэнатцеит.

Хабжын ип̄хэыс Гэында-п̄шза Шахеслам длакэиртэеит, иара п̄шь-шьапы длакэтэеит, абас дара зегъы еиманы иѣныка иааит. Ачара рун, ажэра рун, саргъы убра сыкан, иахьа абрахь слыкэлан сааит.

Xabzhyn's Tale

(S.L. Zykh^wba, 1976, 88-103)

¹⁰ The text has аалжж-аалажжуа, a form not recognised in V.A. Kaslandzia's ‘Abkhaz-Russian Dictionary’ of 2005.

There was an Abkhazian man, a strong one — indeed, where he lived, in the region under his sway, there was no better, no stronger man than he. Beyond it, the area along from the one subordinate to him belonged to ogres. The ogres really yearned to attack him, but this fellow was powerful, and, if the ogres came in his direction, he used not to let them get close to him — they didn't dare to attack him because they were afraid of him. He had three girls and a son; his son's name was Xabzhyn. When he began to feel death's approach at his appointed time, he summoned his son Xabzhyn and spoke to him thus:

‘Well, lad, I'm now in the process of dying — yes, I'm dying, but these sisters of yours will be off and come to harm without your seeing where they go — keep it in mind. After they disappear, do not follow them thinking to find them.’

What was Xabzhyn to say? He kept his father's words in mind, and that was that.

The father passed away. They gave him a fitting send-off, buried him and everything, and that was that. In due course, one day, a cloud suddenly came down. It took up and carried away Xabzhyn's sisters. The cloud carried off his sisters, but who knows where it took them?

Xabzhyn remained by himself in his father's home. Not knowing where his sisters had been taken, he was patient for one day, two days, three days, and for quite some time, but his sisters played on his mind. He was a good lad and even stronger than his father. When he could bear it no longer and was troubled no more by what his father had said, he got himself all ready and set out in pursuit of his sisters. (His father had told him not to go after them when his sisters disappeared, but he couldn't bear it, don't you see?!)

This fellow knows nothing at all about where his sisters had been taken, but, asking and seeking, on he goes, keeping to his path. Onward, onward, ever onward, today, tomorrow, the day after tomorrow he journeys, but nowhere did he see anyone — where was he to see them? He asks everyone he comes across along the way, but he hears not a thing by way of news of his sisters. When he'd already travelled a considerable distance in this way, he eventually grew tired during his travels; there being no more strength in him, his horse also suddenly became exhausted and stopped, having not another forward-step left in it. He had emerged into a beautiful meadowland.

In this lovely meadowland where he had arrived there stands a wild-pear; it is loaded with much fruit; bowed down, its fruit is ripe, so much so that, dropping off it, they fall to the ground with a rat-a-tat sound. Encircling this wild-pear stands a group of alders in the form of an alder-grove. Xabzhyn went up to that wild-pear and sat at its base in order to rest. Gazing thus to and fro, he noticed at a certain spot a grey horse standing, rubbing its head against a young alder.

The horse on which this Xabzhyn sits has come to a standstill — it has become exhausted, and he too is worn out, having nothing more in him. He made the following calculation: ‘I think I’ll leave here this horse of mine, mount that one and go onwards — that horse standing and rubbing its head on the young alder is a strong one.’ He released there the horse on which he’d been sitting and placed its saddle there on the ground. He gathered up a few pears, sat down on his saddle eating them, and now glanced over at that grey horse which, standing up against the young alder, is scratching itself. He remains sitting. As he was sitting in this fashion, that grey horse looked over and, glancing at him, stands there still rubbing its head against the young alder.

Xabzhyn, after he’d got back his spirit and everything, picked up the bridle that had been on his horse and went over thinking to grab hold of that grey horse. He made it twist this way, he made it twist that way, but, no matter what he brought to the task, he couldn’t get a grip on it. He’s after it, and it doesn’t move far, but, where’s the gain? — whatever he did, he couldn’t get hold of it. He had a thought: ‘Who knows? — maybe I can get a hold of it, if I sidle up to it seated on this horse of mine!’ He saddled up his horse (this one too is a powerful horse, but it had come to a standstill, exhausted, otherwise...) and mounted it. He sidled up to that other horse and tried all manner of means to get hold of it, but, I swear to you again, once more he was unable to grab that horse. But neither does he leave it be — driving it down, driving it up, driving it down, driving it up, he irritated it greatly. When he had got it thoroughly agitated, when he just wouldn’t let it alone, the grey horse let out a snort. When the grey horse neighed, Xabzhyn, not knowing at all where he is, all of a sudden dropped down into the earth. Falling through a hole in the ground, he went down and landed somewhere flat out with a thud. That wretched horse on which he was seated went and smashed utterly to smithereens. He was left by himself on a meadow. Wherever he looks, this way or that, the place where he finds himself is the centre of the earth. All around there stand houses, but there is no sign anywhere of what one could call a human soul. He doesn’t know where he’s been carried; he doesn’t know where he’s going; he’s left completely at a loss. When he became really riled, moving this way and that, up and down, to this side and that, he heard the sound of a large volume of water, a river. Saying to himself: ‘I’ll just go and see where this water is flowing and at least in that way find out where south and north are’, he set himself in the direction from which he could hear the sound of this river, and, as he was going onwards, onwards, ever onwards, a large stretch of water is flowing by — he came to a stand beside it. When he took a look across, on the other side of that water he saw a small wicker-dwelling — a column of smoke is puthering straight up out of it. When he caught sight of that dwelling, he came to this decision: ‘So I’m off

over there! One can plainly see that someone's there — smoke's rising, and so I'll see what it's all about!' Elsewhere stand houses and wicker-huts and sheds, but everywhere is a run down wasteland, and there's not a single person about.

Xabzhyn set off boldly in that direction and crossed the water. As soon as he crossed the water and arrived at the wicker-dwelling where that smoke was puthering straight up into the sky, lo! an ogre-woman is sitting over the fire she has stoked up to a roaring flame, yes an old woman! The appearance of the old woman is frightful — when he saw her, he took fright of her and all that, but, even if he'd turned back on himself, where is he to turn? He has no means of going anywhere and doesn't know where's best for him. He determined to go up to her and say to her: 'My goodness, oh mother of mine, what has happened to me is this!' Boldly he set off and went up to where the old woman was sitting; he went up and stood before her. And the old woman looked round suddenly and caught sight of him.

'Er-er, you Abkhazian beggar, let it come to pass that you see nothing good! Why are you here? What's brought you here?' said the old woman mumbling and grumbling.

'Well, for my sins, I'm here, to my surprise; I'm an orphan — don't eat me, don't do away with me!' he pleaded.

'Er-er, you beggar with whom not even the dead would bother! I could make a single mouthful of a meal out of you!' she said.

'If that's what you want, do as you wish, do with me what you want, I am in your hands,' he said.

'I could eat you, but I won't touch you now — I'll not lay hands on my guest; I won't cause him harm. Fine, but how come fate has brought you here, you luckless wretch?' she asked him.

'Aah... what's befallen me is as follows: I had a father, I had three sisters. At the time when my father was dying, he told me that something would carry off my sisters, that they'd disappear, but that I was not to set out after them in the hope of finding them. He died; we buried him. That's how we were when one day a cloud descended and took away my sisters — who knows where? And I was patient for a good while, and I recalled what my father had told me at the moment of his death, but my sisters began to prey on my mind, I couldn't bear it any longer, and that's how I ended up here,' he said. Thus did Xabzhyn relate to that old woman one by one all the things that had happened to him.

When he had finished all that he had to tell, the old woman from where she sat said, 'Huh!' The place where they've been holding this fellow's sisters is, it seems, right here, but what does he know of this? Apparently three ogre-brothers are holding his sisters.

The oldest has the oldest; the middle one has the middle one; the youngest has the youngest. This old woman evidently knows where these are.

‘As you go along this water, you’ll come first to the house of your eldest brother-in-law; keeping going, beyond that you’ll come to where the middle one lives; where you pass by that one, lives the youngest. All your brothers-in-law live along this water’s broad bank. People used to inhabit this place that you see all around — these ogres have already done away with them. They alone are the ones who are here now — they couldn’t exterminate me. Those ogres are the ones who hold all three of your sisters — such is how it is,’ said the old woman.

‘In that case how am I to act now? If those so-called brothers-in-law of mine that you describe see me, it looks like they are going to kill me,’ said Xabzhyn.

‘You must approach very carefully. It’s hard to approach them. They are mythical creatures — do you suppose them to be the sort to take pleasure in man?! If you don’t take good care of yourself, they’ll harm you. I have deemed you a guest and tell you like a son of mine not to do yourself harm,’ said the old woman.

‘Well and good, mother, I am your obedient servant,’ said Xabzhyn, whipped his horse and set himself in the right direction. As he was moving along, he saw where his brother-in-law (the ogres’ youngest brother) lived and entered his yard.

His sister did, of course, recognise her brother, and, when she saw him, she screamed a shrill cry of joy and rushed to meet him. Fortunately, this coincided with a time when her husband was not there, as you see!

‘Where have you been, you dear thing? How did you get here? What did you know about this place? How did you happen upon it?’ said his sister as she went to welcome her brother, moving her hand [sc. in the circular motion of an Abkhazian greeting].

‘Well, I came out of concern for you,’ he said.

‘Ah, I am pleased like nothing else that you have come, but, where’s the advantage, if my husband comes, I’m afraid that he’ll eat you, you poor thing,’ she said.

‘Oh, will he indeed?’

‘I fear he’ll eat you. What can I be expected to know of such things? — in what way can one put one’s confidence in an ogre?’ said this youngest sister of Xabzhyn.

The sister had a large trunk. Xabzhyn was tired and worn out — who knows how much travelling he’d done? His sister gave him something to eat and drink; she bathed him, she rubbed him dry, took him and put him into that large trunk.

This is how it was when this one’s husband (the ogre) came home in the evening. Allah alone may know where he’d been!

‘I perceive the smell of an Abkhazian beggar — what’s this all about?’ he said, questioning his wife the very moment he got back.

‘What sort of Abkhazian could there be? Where was there an Abkhazian here? What could have brought one? It’s probably my smell that you were sensing,’ she said, this sister of Xabzhyn.

‘Who knows? I smell an Abkhazian,’ said the ogre.

‘No, no, I’m probably the one whose smell you are picking up,’ she said again.

‘No, no, you are not the one whose smell I sense here — it is absolutely out of the question for you not to tell me right away who he can be,’ he said. When this ogre had worked himself up into a fearsome lather, she told him that her brother had arrived.

‘Well, you see, it’s like this: I had this one brother of mine. He became concerned for me and has come in search of me. I feared you’d eat him and have him stuffed here inside the trunk. I beg you, don’t deprive me of him by eating him!’ she said.

‘Ah, let the flame in your family’s hearth be extinguished! What’s that you say? I too had no-one. If I have only a single brother-in-law, how am I going to eat him by making myself a meal of him?! It’s also shameful that you have him stuffed inside the trunk — get him out here,’ said the ogre, this woman’s husband.

This woman fetched her brother out of the trunk, and they put on a party for him that night as for an honoured guest and noble relative.

The next day in the morning Xabzhyn took his leave of these, set off and went along to his middle sister. She too welcomed him with great joy. She too said at once that she was afraid her husband would eat him, but then, when she told her husband, he too, just as that youngest one’s husband had said, came out with the words, ‘If I have a brother-in-law, am I going to eat my one and only brother-in-law? Am I going to kill him?’ And what do you know? — there also they put on a party for him and shewed him great honour and respect.

The next day, going to the house of his eldest sister as well, like the younger ones she welcomed him, and there too his brother-in-law put on a party for him, giving him a real Abkhazian greeting. There too he spent a night and a day.

In this way Xabzhyn visited his sisters, saw them and heard their news. Now he’s at the place of the very oldest, but what he observed is this: these sisters and brothers-in-law of his do not pay visits to one another. So, each keep to themselves. Xabzhyn has no idea what this place in which he finds himself might be. He fell through a crack in the earth and went all the way down — what does he know about this place? He sits there pondering what he is to do, how he can act now. He doesn’t even see his sisters in each other’s company — they don’t visit one another at all. This chap remained at his eldest

brother-in-law's place and, when a little time had passed and he felt as much a host as a guest there and had grown somewhat accustomed to his brother-in-law, he asked him: 'Even if you brothers don't go to see one another, why don't your wives come visiting one another?'

'If our wives start visiting one another, they'll be saying bad things about us — that's why they don't visit one another,' said the brother-in-law.

OK. Something else that Xabzhyn realised was that here he is and that, if he says he's leaving, they'd let him go — why should they detain him?! But where is going to say he's going? After all, he has no idea where to go!

One day he too began feeling bored, and his eldest sister said this to him:

'Brother! Go round your brothers-in-law and tell them that you've seen enough of them and that now you're off. When you tell them that, they're filthy rich in cattle, herds of horses, etc..., and, sparing nothing, they're sure to tell you that they'll give you whatever and however much you desire. If you take the stock which they enumerate and say they'll give you, then you'll never be able to leave and will have to stay here. More than that, however much they start making you promises of gifts, don't go along with it. They have a horse; Shaxeslam is its name. Say this to them: "If you find it impossible not to give me something, give me that horse of yours!" They'll never sell that one, but you are their one and only brother-in-law; if you say to them: "Give it to me", they might bring themselves to do so. That horse called Shaxeslam is like this: they'll shew you the herd where it is, and it has the look of being the worst of the lot, of being just an ordinary horse. But, if they give it to you, whenever you mount it, then it will take on another form — it'll become like those of which they use the term a real flier!'

This is what Xabzhyn's eldest sister said to him.

'Fine, I've understood what you've said,' said Xabzhyn.

When that night his brother-in-law came back, Xabzhyn said: 'I've now seen enough of both my brothers-in-law and my sisters, and tomorrow I'm leaving.'

'Och, what are we to give you, our one and only brother-in-law who's come to us?' said his brothers-in-law, the ogres, all three of them, running round informing one another about it; one brought exactly one hundred (cattle), another brought precisely two hundred, and the other brought exactly three hundred.

They said to him: 'We'll give you as much money, as many cattle as you want.'

But Xabzhyn rejected all the treasure that his brothers-in-law brought for him.

'Oh dear me, to whom am I going to give all these? Where on earth can I take them? I don't even know where I'm going myself. Where on earth am I going to drag this lot off

to and set out for, with them in tow? I don't want any sort of treasure — it wasn't for treasure that I came.'

'Och, how can you say that, you our one and only brother-in-law? Are we to set you on your way without giving you anything, just like that, empty-handed? It's impossible for you not to take them — we'll have to kill ourselves,' said his brothers-in-law.

'In that case, if you can't do this, might you even so be minded to give me the horses?' was the question he posed them.

'Aa, not give them to you, how can we not give them to you?' they replied.

'If such is the case then, I don't really want them all, no not all — even when I was at home, I had heard some report: you have one horse called Shaxeslam — if you are minded to give them to me, just give me that one; apart from that one, I don't want any other at all,' he said.

When he spoke thus, these brothers-in-law of his looked this way and that at one another. They didn't like what their brother-in-law had said, but what were they to do? It was impossible for them not to give it to him — they couldn't devise any way to refuse.

'Do you know what you should do?' they said.

'No,' he said.

'We'll give you this, now that you, our one and only brother-in-law, have paid us a visit as guest — how should we not give you that which has pleased you? We are not the sort to haggle with you over a horse, but we're afraid that it might do you harm. Hereafter if it causes you an accident, don't blame us, don't take out your misfortune on us!' said his brothers-in-law, the ogres.

'Why, why is it going to do me harm?' Xabzhyn asked his brothers-in-law in amazement at what they had said.

'Why will it do you harm? — the way it will come to do you harm is like this: Shaxeslam has the following sort of character — if it takes any offence, it will kill you; it mustn't take any offence whatsoever; when it takes offence, it will kill you straightaway,' his brothers-in-law spoke thus to Xabzhyn.

'How am I likely to cause it offence?'

'The following is how you will offend it: you will have offended it when it has gone into a situation which gets the better of it, when it finds itself unable to master it — that's what it's all about; it is then that it feels a sense of shame. Then either it will kill you or maybe you will kill it,' they said.

'Whatever may happen to me, if you are willing to give it to me, I'll take it; and if you are unwilling to give it to me, I shall not deprive you of anything else — I want nothing else,' he said.

When he then refused any other action, the ogres brought Shaxeslam, saddled it up and gave it to him. This is how Shaxeslam was: it flew, it was a steed; when you spoke its name and struck it with the whip, saying: ‘Take me to such and such a place!’, it had to take you to the place you named.

Xabzhyn mounted Shaxeslam, said to his brothers-in-law in Abkhaz: ‘Have a good day!’ and the other usual things, and, when he embarked on his route, had a word with the horse.

‘Shaxeslam! Poor fellow, if what my brothers-in-law told me is correct, take me to the grey horse which cast me into the bowels of the earth!’ he said and with that smartly brought the whip in contact with it.

When, having spoken thus, this chap brought the whip in contact with it, Shaxeslam took flight and, without him seeing whence he came or whither he went, conveyed that fellow through the gap to the beautiful expanse of meadow where once he had eaten the wild pear. When he’d emerged up through there and took a look around, there is another, small grassy plot and on that grassy plot is the grey horse which he’d seen earlier — it had moved along over there, having passed through the alder-grove.

‘As sure as I’m now in one piece, I’ll extinguish the flame in your hearth!’ he said and set off after the grey horse in order to catch it. He has a score to settle with this grey horse, don’t you see? — he doesn’t forget anything. He set out and went up to the grey horse. He went up to the grey horse, made it turn round and round and round, but he couldn’t catch it, don’t you see, this meal for a wolf?! It snorted and snorted, but he couldn’t catch it. But neither did he give in, he didn’t leave it alone. When he absolutely refused to give up on it or let it have any rest, this grey horse took flight, and Shaxeslam too flew off on its trail. In the course of its flight the grey horse went shooting down into a window at the summit of a palace.

When he saw the grey horse go right inside the tower at the top of the palace, Xabzhyn said: ‘Wo!’ and, when he reined back Shaxeslam, he dismounted, set off on foot and went to the grounds wherein this palace stood. People are gathered at the spot where he went, and the yard in which this palace stands cannot hold them — they are milling about here filling the place to bursting.

Well, it seems that there’s a beautiful maiden called Gunda the Beautiful right here; she emerges from this palace after having taken on the form of a grey horse. When she returns, she apparently becomes at once restored to the form of a lovely maiden. This, it seems, is the one whom Xabzhyn too is pursuing, believing her to be the grey horse. When she became a maiden, no-one had ever seen anyone with a skin like hers or as beautiful as her since the world was created. Ogres were after her, but she was not falling

into their clutches. It was her viewers and suitors that make up all these people that Xabzhyn now saw gathered together in this yard. Thus do folk gather to see her. They are here in the yard, only it's not so simple a matter even to get into her presence, but Xabzhyn came in amongst the thick of them, bidding them all 'Good day!' as he moved through. And they said, 'Welcome to you,' in return.

When Shaxeslam reached this spot, it turned itself into an ordinary horse. When Xabzhyn mounted it, it took on a different pelt, a different look — at other times it was as though it was an old nag. The people who saw Xabzhyn are turning to one another constantly asking: 'Where's he from, where's he from?' They couldn't recognise him. What do they know about it? Had any one of them ever set eyes on him?

In return he asked them: 'Why are you gathered here in such numbers as this? What's being decided?'

'There's a ruler here called Gunda the Beautiful. People are going to see her dispense gold, but who's going to give them a place to get a view of her? We too are come in order to see her, my good sir, but we can't get near; many too are those who can't approach out of shame — boldness is hard,' they said.

'Is that how it is?'

'Indeed it is so.'

'If such is the case, if you were to get the so-called Gunda the Beautiful, with whom you are all besotted, to stand on the balcony here, anyone who can't approach her out of shame will be able to see her as well as anyone who wants to go and has no shame — I too will then get a look at her. Isn't it possible for her to stand on the balcony here?' said Xabzhyn.

'Let's ask — we'll soon see if it's possible,' said the people who heard this suggestion of his.

As you'd expect, she had her ladies of the court there, and to them they passed on the information by talking to them in this way: 'The folk who have come here like this intent upon catching a glimpse of Gunda the Beautiful can find no way of getting to her; if she were to stand on the balcony there, they'll all see her.'

'Fine, we shall convey what you have said to her ears,' they said, and the ladies of the court passed the information to Gunda the Beautiful. She too agreed with what they had said and, with her milk-brethren flanking her, she came and took her stand on the balcony.

She appeared on the balcony, but she who came forth is a sight for one to describe! What a stunner! She shines like the moon, she radiates like the sun. As soon as she appeared on the palace's balcony and looked over the yard, she saw where Shaxeslam

was tied. At once she recognised that it was the horse on which was mounted the man who was on her trail, but what do you suppose she could do other than mouth the words: 'It's tied up down there, and I'm standing here on the balcony of the palace!?' At that very moment Xabzhyn here slowly, craftily, softly goes up and mounts Shaxeslam.

'Ah, you poor thing, Shaxeslam, let your mother now beat her head in pride at your valour! — today is why I want you!' he said. He whipped it, but it was with truly fearsome force that he brought the whip down upon it. With the balustrades and banisters all shattering in on themselves, he snaked upwards to where Gunda the Beautiful had appeared. With a flick of his hand under her shoulder, he seated her on his horse's neck, and, with a whoosh, away he flew. No gate, no fence, nothing holding him back, he was gone in a cloud of dust. As for the other folk standing there, what on earth could they have done? — they were just left standing there. Xabzhyn had hauled Gunda the Beautiful from their midst and taken her away.

Now he is skimming over the surface of the sea and coming onward. As he was coming onward skimming over the surface of the sea, both he and his horse wearied and felt the desire to refresh their spirits, to drink something, to snatch a bite of something. And he dismounted. You'll recall that Gunda the Beautiful is perched on the horse's neck, well he took her down too and stood her on the shore. He tied Shaxeslam up and went inland thinking to pour some water.

An ogre apparently had a three-legged horse called K^j'ax^jyr, and they were gliding over the sea. At this moment, when the ogre, seated upon his horse K^j'ax^jyr, skimming over the sea, looked over from the heart of the sea, he saw Gunda the Beautiful standing all alone on the shore gleaming and shimmering — she cast her brightness as far as where that ogre was, in the very heart of the sea.

It seems that this ogre is one of those who even earlier had been on the track of Gunda the Beautiful. When he now saw her here like this, for after all even before he had wanted to see her in an exposed position, he struck his horse K^j'ax^jyr; skirting along the surface of the sea, he speedily shot over the water, appeared where Gunda the Beautiful was, snatched her up and — whoosh, if one's going, one should go like this — he disappeared in a straight line over it, skimming the sea.

From the spot where Shaxeslam was bound it let out a shrill yell, shattered its bridle and set off at speed after the ogre. This ogre's horse goes skimming over the sea, whilst Shaxeslam swims in pursuit.

When our friend Xabzhyn comes back, where is Gunda the Beautiful? And Shaxeslam had by now reached the heart of the sea, but it grew tired, turned round on itself and crossed back with water dripping off it. Shaxeslam was defeated — it took

offence. It deemed shameful the fact that the ogre had carried away the lovely bride that it had snatched up and was fetching back.

‘Now am I to kill you or are you to kill me?’ it said, having gone up and stood facing him.

Xabzhyn was left in a quandary, not knowing what he was to do. If his horse now kills him, that’s it, he’s dead, and there’s nothing more to be said. And if he kills his horse, he’s no good without it! How would he travel onward? How would he accomplish his journey? He was caught on the horns of a flaming dilemma — what was to be done?...

‘Hey, wretched creature, Shaxeslam, you poor old thing, don’t kill me — what do you blame me for? If the damned ogre has taken Gunda the Beautiful away from us, I am the one on whom the shame lies,’ said Xabzhyn.

‘Nay, nay, I cannot bear shame like this. Either I must kill you, or you must kill me,’ said Shaxeslam.

‘Hey, by God who created us and whose power is great, may you be such as not to rot until I achieve my heart’s desire and to live as on the day I slew you!,’ said Xabzhyn and led his horse, Shaxeslam, to the shore, went up, struck it down and slew it. He set to; scooping out the sand, scooping out the sand, he hollowed it out and made it capable of accommodating his horse. Placing it in there, he cast sand on top and himself set off, skirting the sea-shore.

Our friend Xabzhyn now — our enemy’s day has arrived! — is still caught on the horns of a flaming dilemma: they’ve taken Gunda the Beautiful away from him, and his horse lies slaughtered in a mass of sand on the beach.

As he was advancing, walking, walking, walking, abandoned to his own desolation, skirting the shore, he emerged at a small run-down spot. In the desert spot stands a wicker-hut. Well, as you may imagine, he’s tired out — when, thinking to find sanctuary, he went in this hut, there’s an old woman inside the hut, an enormous old woman.

‘Hey, who might you be, my little one? Why are you in these parts?’ said the old woman.

Xabzhyn said that it was like this, in this way that things had happened to him and told the old lady what had befallen him and whom he was tracking.

‘Aah, poor thing, my little pet, how bitter has it all become now — what inappropriate things you’ve experienced, what inappropriate things you’ve suffered,’ said the old woman.

‘Now, is there any way out for me? What should I do?’ he said.

‘The way out for you is as follows: the horse of the ogre who took away that Gunda the Beautiful of yours has three legs. All the people of Abkhazia have by this time heard

that the ogre has carried off Gunda the Beautiful — the ogre is sleeping. The reason that horse of his has three legs is that, if it had four, it would become even stronger and not even the ogre himself would be able to rein in its head. That horse behaves like this — every Saturday it crosses the sea to the shore and goes into labour. But something carries off the foals that issue from it. On this coming Saturday it is due to come here to the beach and to go into labour. When it gives birth, if you can thus get a hand on its colt and catch it, it will take you to where the ogre is,’ said the old woman.

‘What do I know about where it gives birth, about its chosen place?’ said Xabzhyn.

‘It comes forth here, here on the edge of the sea; when it emerges from the sea, it neighs and neighs. When the sound of neighing is heard, go to it! A pack of dogs is on its trail. When it delivers the foal, without feeding it to the dogs, if you can get a hand on it and catch it, it will at once waft you up and convey you away to where the ogre is,’ said the old woman.

‘Ok, fantastic.’

When Xabzhyn came away from the old woman, he set off with determination, drew his sword and stood where this horse would emerge from the sea, in readiness.

As he was standing here, on the Saturday morning Three Legs (the horse named K^j’ax^jyr) crossed the sea, constantly neighing, and appeared on the shore. Emerging from the sea, it sat down on the shore in a mass of sand and dropped its foal. At that moment a pack of dogs suddenly massed and fell upon it. But Xabzhyn came, mingled with the pack and allowed them no access to the mare and foal. Then in a flash he spun round, thrust a hand at the foal, wrapped his arm around its neck and caught hold of it.

‘Aa, you wretch, let me suck the milk from my mother’s nipple till midday; in the afternoon I’ll return — I belong to you; you are the one who enabled my soul to survive. I’m in your hands, but, if you give me permission to suck the milk from my mother’s nipple until midday, I’ll grow strong,’ said the foal.

When the foal spoke thus, he let it go, and it went to its mother. Till midday it sucked the milk from its mother’s nipple. By the afternoon it had become such that a man might mount it. He left the foal with all four of its legs in place beneath it. He mounted up; it set out and, with him in tow, carried him to where the ogre lived.

When he got there, without going to the ogre’s house, he went to the spring where they used to draw water and sat down. The ogre was sleeping, resting, but there were of course people in the ogre’s house, and it was here that a small girl came carrying a ewer to fetch water. When the small girl came here carrying her ewer to fetch water, Xabzhyn made a grab for her and restrained her.

‘What do you want?’ she said.

‘For whom are you taking this water?’ he said.

‘The ogre has brought Gunda the Beautiful. Gunda the Beautiful drinks water at midday — I’m taking the water for her,’ said the small girl.

Xabzhyn had a ring — Gunda the Beautiful had evidently given it to him. He now gave that ring to the little girl.

‘Take this ring, drop it into the glass and give it on my behalf to the one for whom you are taking the water. Only don’t say that it was I who gave it to you — if you say that it was I who gave it to you, I’ll kill you,’ he said.

His heart was now sure of this: ‘If she sees the ring, how will Gunda the Beautiful be able to resist coming here?’

‘Fine,’ she said, took the ring from him, went and gave the glass to Gunda the Beautiful. When Gunda the Beautiful saw this ring, she was amazed; she deemed it a miracle.

‘Whom did you see at the water when you were there?’ Gunda the Beautiful asked of the little girl.

‘I saw no-one,’ she said.

‘It would have been impossible for you to see no-one — you must tell me whom you saw!’ she said.

‘No, I saw no-one,’ said the girl, and denied it with conviction.

When Gunda the Beautiful came running to the spring intent upon going herself and seeing what it was all about, she saw Xabzhyn there.

‘You poor thing, what’s going on, where have you been?’ she asked him.

‘Where have I been?! This is what happened to me, such is the manner of my coming here — the foal that was born to Three Legs brought me here across the heart of the sea,’ said Xabzhyn.

‘So, what are we going to do now?’ she said.

‘What are we going to do? Who knows? Where is that ogre?’

‘He’s sleeping.’

‘Where are his eye and soul kept?’

‘Who knows where his eye and soul are kept?!’

‘Ask him and find out!’ said Xabzhyn.

Gunda the Beautiful turned back and went to the ogre’s house.

‘Where are the eye and soul of this ogre that brought me here kept?’ were the enquiries she made amongst the people.

The ogre that brought her has one eye only.

Some, time-wasters, said: ‘The ogre’s eye and soul are lodged in this pillar.’

When Gunda the Beautiful heard this, she came to Xabzhyn.

‘What did you find out? Where are the ogre’s eye and soul?’ he asked of her.

‘They told me that they’re lodged in a pillar,’ she said.

‘That’s nonsense — it’s a lie,’ said Xabzhyn.

When Xabzhyn spoke thus, Gunda the Beautiful turned round, set her bed beside the pillar where they told her that that ogre’s eye and soul were lodged, went and sat down beside it, and, wrapping her arms around it, she held on to it as if she were in love with it, as if she couldn’t live without it. When she began doing this, the servants shewed her to the ogre.

‘Hey, you, you poor thing, are you aware how your wife, Gunda the Beautiful, whom you brought here, loves you?’ they said.

‘How?’

‘This is how: when she asked us where the soul and eye is located of him who brought her here, we told her that they are lodged in this pillar. When we said to her: “The soul and eye of the ogre who brought you here are lodged in this pillar”, having placed her bed up against the pillar, she wrapped her arms around it and sits there — look at her!’ they said to him.

When these spoke thus, the ogre ran off bounding and went up to Gunda the Beautiful.

‘Er-er, idiot, idiot, what are you doing? Did you suppose that what these loafers told you was the truth? You’re clearly an idiot, otherwise can you really believe that I’m going to leave my eye and soul like this where everyone can see it, in a place where everyone knows it to be kept?’ he said.

‘In that case where are your eye and soul kept?’ she asked him.

‘At the bottom of the White Sea is a monster; inside that monster is a fawn; inside the fawn is a rabbit; inside the rabbit is a tiny wine-jar; my eye and soul are lodged inside that small wine-jar,’ said the ogre.

When Gunda the Beautiful heard this, secretly, without letting the ogre see her, she came to where Xabzhyn was sitting.

‘Well? What did you learn?’ he asked her.

‘What the ogre said is as follows: at the bottom of the White Sea is a monster; inside that monster is a fawn; inside the fawn is a rabbit; inside the rabbit is a tiny wine-jar; the ogre’s eye and soul are inside that small wine-jar,’ she said.

You’ll recall that Four Legs now belongs to our Xabzhyn and what Xabzhyn says is what it now does. He was now confident that the ogre had said with absolute truth where his eye and soul reside.

‘Hey, Four Legs, poor thing! I’ve happened upon our destiny, and this is how it is: shall we be able to go to the White Sea?’

‘Och, us not be able to go? — how can that be?! We’re off now,’ said Four Legs.

When the horse spoke thus, Xabzhyn mounted up and, with a crack of the whip, was off. Who knows where the White Sea lies? What does he know about it? The place where it lies belongs to God — the horse on which he sits does know it and is away flying there, don’t you see?!

Now there’s a ruler beside this White Sea. Every morning the monster in whose innards that ogre’s eye and soul are lodged emerges from the sea and goes away with one of the ruler’s subjects. Thus is it laid down; thus is it ordained. This has broken the hearts of the people, but they are in no position to be able to do anything about it. Every time it comes, they aim any canons and rifles which happen to fall into their hands at it, but they can’t kill it; while under their constant fire, it disappears, choosing and carrying off one of their number. Whatever their action may be, it disdains it, so enormous, so awful is the monster.

Xabzhyn’s horse took him to where that ruler resided beside the White Sea. When he arrived here, lo! tomorrow’s dawn brings Saturday! The people are getting ready; facing towards the edge of the sea, they are gathering. As soon as it dawns, the monster is due to come. Well, of course, there were some already gathered there; Xabzhyn went and stood amongst them.

‘What’s going on, there? Why have you assembled?’ Xabzhyn asked the folk already gathered.

‘Do you really have to ask what’s going on? It’s like this: we find ourselves encumbered with this monstrosity — every morning a monster comes out of the sea here; every time it emerges, it takes someone. We shoot at it and shoot again, but we can’t kill it — what it takes it takes regardless. It’s this with which we’re busied — we are heart-broken,’ they said.

‘I’ll kill it! Tell me from what sort of place it emerges. As soon as it emerges, I’ll slay it,’ said Xabzhyn.

‘Er-er, the flame in your hearth be extinguished¹¹! What’s that you say? Are you crazy? Are you such a one as to be able to kill it? If you anger it, won’t it annihilate us all?!’ they said.

‘It’s one person that it takes, isn’t that right?’ he said.

‘Yes, once it comes, it’s one person that it takes,’ they said.

¹¹ Sc. ‘May your family-line die out!’.

‘If such is the case, then, if I can slay it, it’s dead — if I can’t slay it, it’ll devour me. Just this once leave it up to me — let me take your place this time. What have you got to lose? Leave it up to me, and you’ll see whatever I can manage,’ he said.

They kept finding reasons to refuse, but, what can you do? — they came round to this point of view.

Having sharpened his sword to such a pitch that, if a strand of hair fell upon it, it would slice it down the centre, Xabzhyn was taken and set at the spot where this monster would come forth.

‘You lot cease firing. If I can slay it, it’s dead; if I can’t kill it, it will devour me. Under no circumstances fire!,’ he told the folk gathered there.

He now took his sword from its sheath and, as he held it at the ready, as he stood and stood, the sea began to give forth the sounds of roaring and thundering, as now, now, yes now the monster with a mighty heave emerged from the sea and deposited itself on the shore — Xabzhyn, at full stretch, brought his sword down and struck its head with a thwack, but he couldn’t sever the head. He fractured its skull, and backwards it disappeared into the sea.

‘Today that’s what you did to me, but tomorrow morning I’ll come after eating a white lamb’s fatty tail, and then you’ll see what I’ll do to you!’ said the monster as it was returning back to the sea. It threatened Xabzhyn, don’t you see?!

When the monster went away thus wounded, this group of people lifted Xabzhyn up on their hands. He wasn’t able to kill it, but that day he had neither fed anyone to it, nor had he let it take anyone. He himself survived, having come to no harm. The people rejoiced over him, lifted him up and conveyed him to the person they held as ruler. The ruler where he was conveyed also rejoiced over him and welcomed him. That ruler had three daughters.

‘If you point to the one you deem the best of my daughters, I’ll give her to you,’ said the ruler.

‘No, by your poor mother, may you witness all that’s best for your daughters — I don’t want anyone,’ said Xabzhyn. Why should he want anyone else when it’s Gunda the Beautiful that he wants?

They bedded one of the ruler’s daughters that night with Xabzhyn, but he didn’t lay a finger on her — not only that, he didn’t even turn over towards her¹².

¹² For a similar practice among the Georgian Khevsurs of laying a guest overnight with a female of the family to test his self-restraint see Sergi Mak’alati’s *Folk Traditions in Khevsureti* in George Hewitt’s *A Georgian Reader* (SOAS, 1996, pp. 120-129), especially pp. 124-5.

That night he was there till dawn; in the morning before dawn he rose, got himself sorted out, went to the edge of the sea and stood there. As he was standing, the monster burst through the waves and surged up out of the sea, having recharged himself by eating the fatty tail of a white lamb and what have you. At the moment it emerged, once again Xabzhyn brought down his sword, struck the monster's head and lopped it off, immediately flinging sand on it. The head of the monster which he'd lopped off disappeared down into the sea, whilst the body remained out of the sea. When he struck its belly and disembowelled it, the fawn shot out; when he struck the fawn and opened up its belly, the rabbit scrambled up out. When, having restrained the rabbit, he split open its belly, a small-sized wine-jar toppled out and fell on the ground. He snatched that small wine-jar off the ground, pulled it up and stuffed it down into his pocket.

These people whom he'd saved rejoiced; they asked what good deed they could do for him so as to let no bodily or spiritual need of his go unsated. But he said that he wanted not a thing and set off.

'Hey, by your poor mother, where are you off?' the people asked, surrounded him and held him back.

'Where am I going? Shouldn't I be going to the place whence I came?' he said.

'What are you like, by your poor mother?! You've put pay to the creature that was devouring us and are leaving just like that! What was it you wanted? We'll give you what you want. What is there that we won't do for you?' they said.

'From you I don't want anything whatsoever. I just fancied slaying this monster — I heard about it and came to kill it,' said Xabzhyn.

What he desired is now in his pocket — what do these folk know about this?

Xabzhyn still had his four-legged horse as a friend. He mounted up, said: 'Only good things be your lot henceforth!', and, thus bidding the folk there an Abkhazian farewell, set off hither, skimming the surface of the sea.

He came to his wife, Gunda the Beautiful, at the spring. She too had gone there.

'Well, by your poor mother? What did you achieve there?' she asked him.

'We'll see what you made of what I did¹³ — I'll tell you later. Now hurry and come with Three Legs!' he said.

And she, without thinking twice about Xabzhyn's words, went in an instant and came with Three Legs. He mounted Four Legs; she mounted Three Legs, and the two of them, first standing then moving along side by side, came away, skimming over the sea.

¹³ Literally 'What did you make of/draw from what I did?'.

‘Eh, you, by your poor mother, we’re on our way now, but where’s this horse on which you were mounted up when you were on my track?’ she asked him.

Hadn’t that horse after all once given her a fright? — well, she wasn’t going to forget it.

‘Yes, where indeed is that unfortunate creature? — I’ve already killed it,’ he said.

‘How did you come to kill it?’

‘This is how I killed it: when the ogre took you away from me and put both me and my horse to shame, it said: “Either you must kill me or I must kill you.” I had no choice but to kill it. I killed it. May God not hold the sin against me!’ said Xabzhyn.

‘Och, you must take us to the place where you slew your horse; you must shew me where it lies dead,’ said Gunda the Beautiful.

This here fellow had killed his horse Shaxeslam on a certain coast, but who knows where the killing spot lay? Since then how many places has he visited? Is he the sort of person to remember it? But of course the horse on which he’s now mounted knew and went there with him in tow.

‘Dig it out this instant!’ said Gunda the Beautiful.

Xabzhyn applied himself and extricated Shaxeslam from the sand wherein it lay. There it lies with blood ever oozing from its neck; without having decomposed, it is as it was on the day when Xabzhyn killed it such that one might imagine it would take off any second.

‘Shaxeslam, by your poor mother, while you were in the world you had never felt a pang of shame — let God give you to us alive as you were before!’ said Gunda the Beautiful, went up and planted a kiss on its forehead.

What she said came to pass, don’t you see? Shaxeslam stirred there where it lay. Once more when Gunda the Beautiful uttered an oath and kissed the ground, Shaxeslam jerked smartly up to its feet, neighing. As it sprang up, it went and slammed into Three Legs and smashed it to pieces.

Xabzhyn’s wife, Gunda the Beautiful, mounted Shaxeslam, while he mounted Four Legs, and thus did they all together come to his house. They put on a feast and made plenty of drink available.

And I was there. Only today did I leave that place and come here.