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Summary of the Plots

MYTHS AND MYTHOLOGICAL STORIES

MYTHS

N 1. Nobody knows when *Buγá* (a higher spirit, *see* Note *) appeared. He started creating animals, birds and fishes. And the fish cannot plunge into the water as it is too light. Then *Buγa* placed a pebble inside its head.
All living creatures *Buγa* created in pairs – male and female – and let them go and populate the world.

Then *Buγa* created men and left for a while to bring people the Breath that will make them immortal. And he left the Dog to guard over the Man and the Woman. But here came an evil spirit (*ambán*) and he promised the Dog a coat that would not wear out if the Dog let him approach the men. The Dog could not resist the offer. The *amban* gave people a breath that would make them die after living a certain number of years. When *Buγa* returned, he got really angry with the Dog and took away his gift of understanding human speech.

After that *Buγa* asked all the pairs of living creatures how many children they would like to have. The Doe-Hare wanted to give birth to 3-4 children at a time, the Dog – to 5-6 puppies at a time, but the Woman was embarrassed and said that she would be glad to give birth even to a single child at a time.

Buγa warned all the animals to beware of the Man, as men will hunt them. But the Hazel Grouse did not hear his words well and that is why he is not afraid of the Man and allows men to approach him quite close.

The Wild Boar was also warned against the Man but the Wild Boar was boastful and said that he feared no one. But the Man fought the Boar and overcame; then the Boar recognized that *Buγa* was right about the Man and that there is none in the world stronger than the Man.

N 2. It is said that once there were three suns. It was so hot that the fish used to burn out if it jumped out of the water. Three strong men decided to destroy two of the suns. They killed the two that were the hottest and left the weakest shine over the world. Now we can sometimes see in the sky the places where the two other suns used to be.

N 3. There were three suns, the earth was burning hot. A man destroyed one sun, and then another, and now we have only one sun.

N 4. In the old days when people saw black rocks, they used to say that the rocks had been scorched in the times when there were three suns in the sky.

N 5. In the time of the full moon you can see a girl holding a shoulder-yoke on the Moon.

N 6. An orphan girl lived in another people's family and she always cried when she was forced to go and fetch water at night. The Moon felt sorry for the poor girl and took her to stay with him. You can still see this girl on the Moon.

N 7. There was a girl who lived with her father and mother-in-law. Her mother-in-law treated her very badly, she made her work as servant in the house and scolded her all the time. Every night the girl went out of doors and shed bitter tears. The Moon felt sorry for her and invited her to stay with him. Since that time we can see there a girl holding a shoulder-yoke with buckets and a puppy beside her.

N 8. The Sky-Hunter *Maŋi* was chasing an elk-cow with a calf. He caught them by the seashore. The elk-cow jumped into the sea and turned into a whale but *Maŋi* caught the calf and threw him onto the ground, saying: "From now on you will live on the land."

N 9. The old men used to say that the seven stars in the sky (the Pleiades) are seven women who are trying to run away from their evil husband.

N 10. There lived in the taiga a brother and his younger sister. The sister got pregnant and left. Before leaving she said: "If you meet a she-bear with two cubs, do not kill them." But the man killed exactly the one. When he was skinning the she-bear, he found his sister's clothes under the skin. His younger sister had become a she-bear.

N 11. Ulgu. A young man wanted to marry a girl but his family was against the marriage. Once the women of the village went berry-picking, and the girl went with them. During the trip the girl went missing and they could not find her. In fact, she was taken by the bear.

A year passed and the young man went hunting to the very same place where his girl was lost. There he saw a woman, naked and with two bear-cubs. This was his lost girlfriend. The young man took her back to the village. She said that she had lived with the bear, that he had cared for her as if he were a human being. Once he returned home wounded and died the same night.

The girl's parents talked everything over and decided to kill the cubs. After that the girl felt miserable and soon died.

N 12. Ulgu. There lived a girl with her parents. One day she went missing. After about 15 or 18 years she returned back home. She told that she had been abducted by the bear and he had made her his wife. After she returned home, she never ate bear-meat and whenever somebody killed a bear she cried bitterly, remembering her husband and children. People say that she died after the WW II.

N 13. Ulgu. One man lived together with a bear and never killed bears. People used to make fun of him. Then he killed a bear and brought his meat to the village. And people knew that he was a strong man.

N 14. Ulgu. An Ul'chi Ulgu. A man got lost in the taiga. He found the bear's den, crawled inside and fell asleep. Some time passed and in his sleep he heard human speech: "Leave through this door and you will find your village." He woke up, went out and saw that right in front of him, out of the same very den, the Master-Bear was leaving (that is, he had passed the winter in the same den with the Master-Bear). The man returned to his village.

N 15. Ulgu. (An incident) in Sekhan-village. One girl never talked with men. If she happened to talk to one, then the next day her face was all covered with bruises.
One day she disappeared. After 3 years the girl's mother saw in her sleep that her daughter promised to come to visit her and asked to cook a good meal. Also the daughter said that she would come in the evening and that there should be no fire in the house and everyone should be very quiet. The mother did everything as her daughter told her. In the dark several figures entered the house. They were the daughter and her husband the Tiger (in the Negidal language it is called "our father") and two cubs. They tasted the food and then left. And only then did the family understand that the girl had been abducted by the tiger.

N 16. There lived a girl in the village of *Sékhan*. One day she went to fetch water from the spring and disappeared. They searched for her high and low but could not find. Once the girl's mother saw in her sleep that her daughter promised to come and visit her family at night and asked to cook some food. The mother did everything as told. At night her daughter came with a tiger and a cub. They tasted the food and left. Apparently the tiger had married the girl.

N 17. Ulgu. This is a true story. A girl from the Solovyov clan was taken to wife by a tiger. Whenever the Solovyov brothers went hunting, they made one extra place at their overnight stop, that extra one being for the tiger, their brother-in-law, who came to them from the taiga. And on the tiger track the brothers always found a dead animal (i.e. the tiger used to leave the game for them).

N 18. One man treated his wife very badly, beat her. The tiger felt sorry for her and once when she went to fetch some water, he took her to live with him. When her husband came home, he understood what had happened and started scolding the tiger, and threatened to kill him, but when the tiger appeared right in front of him, carrying the woman on his back, the husband got very frightened. And the husband never again visited the place where he had met the tiger.

N 19. There lived an old man and an old woman. One day a tiger thrust his paw

through their doorway, and there was a big splinter in his paw. The old man and the woman pulled out the splinter. After that the tiger felt grateful and started driving animals to a place close to the house and killing them for the two old people. Thus owing to the tiger's help, they led a richer life.

N 20. Ulguy. Once a man was hunting in a light boat and heard the tiger's roar. The man saw that a tiger was pressed against the tree by a huge snake *ǯabdán*. The hunter cut the snake in two and released the tiger. While returning to his boat, the hunter saw a toad and took it into the boat with him. He sailed back to his camp and saw that instead of the toad there was a newborn baby inside the boat. Then right outside the camp he killed two big elks. The elders used to say that the tiger had given the hunter a powerful amulet for his rescue.

N 21. Ulgu. There lived two brothers and the older brother got drowned. The younger brother had searched for him a long time but could not find. Once on the shore he saw several killer whales swim up to the shore and some people went out of their mouths. And among them was his brother. When the people-whales saw a living man, they all swam away but one stayed behind. The brother-whale left his sword-fin to the younger brother. The latter made an exact copy of this fin from the willow-trunk and threw it into the water instead of the real fin.

The younger brother then married a water-woman and they had a son. This water-woman came to him only at night. Their son grew up and became a hunter. And the father died. After his death people from this village heard the voice of a crying woman in the water. This happened every night.

N 22. In the village of *Kálma* there was a man who had a water-woman for his wife. He fished a lot of fish and his wife the water-woman prepared it for drying. The woman herself could not be seen while she was doing that. Once this man's mother and sister brought some food to the water-woman, she took it and went down into the water to treat her relatives to the food. Soon she returned empty plates. The man's mother once managed to touch the hand of the water-woman and it was very thin.

The water-woman broke two pieces off a rock; one she gave to her husband and the other she took herself. This rock is still standing in the *Mácha* channel, near *Kalma*.

N 23. Ulgu. Once into one village flew a bird-*amban* (an evil spirit) and perched on a larch. Everyone who saw the bird died instantly. The only person left alive was a girl who was hidden from the others in a storehouse (in order to get a big bride price from her fiancé). When the girl managed to open the door of the storehouse, she saw that everyone was dead. She cried for a long time and lost her voice. Then she made a wooden Jewish harp (Rus. *vargán*) and with its help she cried day and night. One night she had a dream: some man was telling to her: "Don't cry. I'll take away all the dead bodies." Indeed, all the dead bodies were gone.

After that she started dreaming that at night a man was coming to her. Fresh fish

started appearing outside the house, on the platform for storing the food. Soon the woman gave birth to a son, then another one. Altogether she had 7 sons. They grew up and began hunting. Then the woman's husband said: "I am old and I am dying; after my death, take my eye (as a lamp)." It turned out that her husband was *khímŋu*, the lake monster resembling a huge cat-fish (*see* Note ******).

The woman after the death of her husband decided to take her children and move closer to other people. So they set out. When they were already on the way, she remembered that they had left the eye of the *khimŋu* which they used as a lamp, in the old house. The woman sent three of her sons to fetch the magic lamp, and she herself went on, taking the other sons with her. That night it snowed and the three sons who went to fetch the eye could not find their mother and brothers. The mother with the four sons were parents to the *Tápkal* clan, the descendants of the *khimŋu*, and the other three brothers settled down on the river *Gorin* and became either the Nanays or the Orochis.

N 24. Ulguy. There are two lakes up-stream the river Amgun'; these lakes used to be called the "lair of the *khimŋu*" (the lake-monster). In one of those lakes a man killed a *khimŋu*. Once a man with his son came in a boat to get some birch bark. The son stayed on the bank and the father went into the forest. When the father returned, he did not find his son on the bank. Then he started throwing rolls of birch bark into the water, and somebody swallowed it all. Then out of the water rose the huge belly of the *khimŋu*. The man killed this *khimŋu* with his spear and found his son inside.

N 25. A man with his son went in a boat to the lake for some birch bark. While the father worked, the son had disappeared and only his footprints could be seen on the bank. The father started throwing the birch bark into the water; he threw down all the bark he had time to get, and the *khimŋu* (a monster, *see* previous texts), who lived in the lake**,** swallowed it all. Because of the birch bark he had swallowed, the *khimŋu* rose to the surface and the boy's father killed him.

N 26. In *Gédama* Lake there is a *khimŋu* (a monster, *see* previous texts). Everyone knows that and no one ever crosses this lake in a boat. Half of the water in the lake is black, and the elders say that it is such because of the *khimŋu'*s slaver.

Not far from *Gedama* Lake, there is another lake, and the banks of the lake are covered with larch-trees. Water-moss hangs down off these branches. Because when the *khimŋu* leaves the waters of the lake, there rises a huge wave that reaches up to the middle of the larches and leaves the moss on their branches.

N 27. A girl grew wings and flew away to the Upper World. When a man of the *Tapkal* clan dies, then it always rains or snows; and people say that the girl who flew away is mourning over her kin.

N 28. There lived a boy called *Koŋardukkán.* Once his mother and he went to the taiga

to the food depot. The mother started taking out the food, and *Koŋardukkan* says: “Give me some dried fish. Give me some grease.” Every time that he asks, his mother answers: “You’ll have it at home.” The boy was upset and went to the lakeside, he stood there crying. A duck felt sorry for him, turned him into a duck and took with her.

And the mother was looking for her son and calling his name. Suddenly she heard his voice from above. She begged him to come back but he flew away with the ducks.

N 29. Ulgu. There lived a man and he had a bitch dog. They were starving. One day the man noticed that his dog returned from somewhere quite full. Next time he followed the dog: he went into some hole, walked in the dark for a while and then got out to a light place with people. The people are talking to each other but nobody talks to the man (they cannot see him). The man took a fish frying on the rod by the fire, he took some dried fish. Then he followed his dog back home. When he returned home, he saw that all the fish was rotten. From then on we know that there are people in the land of the dead (and this was the place the man had visited).

N 30. Ulgu. There lived two families. One family had a child of 6. One evening they cooked some hare meat and the child asked his mother to give him a bite. The mother did not give him anything and then the child felt hurt and refused to eat at all. The mother got angry; she opened the door and said: “Bring in the hare meat!” And then she called the boy by his name. Immediately, someone handed in the hot meat through the door. The mother thought that the neighbours were treating them to the meat and made the child go and take the meat, though he was very frightened. As soon as the boy approached the door, he was pulled out of the dwelling. The father rushed outside but he could only hear his son crying in the dark. The father followed the sound of the voice and came to a big hole where the child’s cry had died down. The next day the father closed the hole with some asp bark and said: “Let people not die until this bark rots.” Thus he closed the entrance to the Lower World (i.e. the entrance into the land of the dead).

N 31. Ulgu. It says in the *ulgu* that people live above us and they are called *omnankán.* These are sky-people. They are said to be small and weak.

The elders on a hunt saw the *omnankan*. In the evening the hunters saw a fire in the distance and sneaked up to it noiselessly. And round the fire small people were running and jumping. They felt the hunters’ presence and disappeared. The elders said: “Those probably were the *omnankan*”.

N 32. There lived two sisters and the elder sister was a witch. The younger sister got married and gave birth to two children. When the oldest child was 7, the elder witch-sister appeared. The witch started eating the children’s cheeks, while pretending that she was kissing them. Then the father of the children killed the witch and burned her body. Out of the bits of her burnt bones appeared the flies and the wasps and they flew forth (around the whole world).

N 33. (This is) apparently an ulgu. There lived an evil shaman and he strove to do harm to everyone. One young man decided to kill him, though the elders tried to talk him out of it. The young man came to the shaman but the shaman said: “Even if I die, I will still bite you.” The young man cut his body into pieces and burnt the body. From the ashes of the evil shaman originated the flies, the mosquitoes, the midges, that is, all the insects that bite.

N 34. Ulgu. There was a stone, and it was called *sewewé* (local mistress-spirit, *see* Commentary to the text and Note *). In the year 1936-37 the Russian military came and tried to lift and move the stone, and they failed. But the *sewewe* got offended and moved to the east. And she threw a five-meter length of silk into the direction where she went. The elders said that she had thrown the silk so that people knew where she had gone.

N 35. Ulguy. A man with his wife and his child was crossing *Chukchagír* Lake in a deer-sledge. Suddenly the strings of his fur boots got untied. Seeing ahead of him a tree-root jutting out of the ice, the man tied the first deer to the root and started tying his boot-strings. While he was doing that, the ice gave way and all the people and the deer got drowned. People said that it was the shaman-woman (the master-spirit of the lake, *see* N50) who had taken them.

N 36. Ulguy. There was a place on the river Amgun', called *Chalbukkán* (a small birch-wood). Very bad people used to live there. When they met someone, these people pissed on them as if they were dogs. And they never entertained guests.
One day they caught a huge Siberian sturgeon. When they sat on its back, their feet could not reach the ground. The Negidals call such fish “*gála*” (“breaking the ban”, i.e. taboo, it is prohibited to catch such fish, see Note *). Next spring all those people died out.

N 37. Ulgu. In the village of *Krasny Yar* there lived a numerous people. One day they joined hands and started a traditional round dance *khēǯe*. They decided to dance around a hill but they lacked one more man to make this huge round. Then they took a bitch-dog the front paws, making her stand like a man. During the dance the people pulled and tugged at the dog and she got torn asunder. After that all these people died out. They were from the *Udán* clan.

HUNTING AND FISHING MYTHOLOGICAL STORIES

N 38. One man was hunting in the taiga. One day he heard a dog barking. He hit with his nine fingers spread apart at the ashes of the fire and then turned into a stone. Suddenly out of the ashes came a huge man. (This was an evil spirit.) “Why are you barking?” he asked his dog. “Nine years are imprinted in the fire (i.e. the man has not

been in this place for nine years).” And he did not find the hunter.

N 39. Ulgu. Old Grigoriy Bóbike used to say that one should never borrow matches from the Negidal family of the *Sarins*, because an evil spirit lives in their fire. Before this evil spirit appears, people hear a dog barking. Then you should strike at the ashes in the fire with your nine fingers and run away. And this evil spirit is a woman and she goes out of the fire into the taiga. Her dog, it is said, is long and thin, like an otter.

N 40. Ulgu. A man was hunting. One night in the camp he heard that something was flying towards him with a terrible howling. He fired a shot in the direction of that howl, and the insole fell down from above. That was an evil spirit called *ayí*.

Then the man continued his hunt. On the forth night he again heard a howl over his head and again he fired a shot in its direction. Immediately after some birch bark bowl fell on the ground – *dodokhón*.

Once again the hunter continued his walk in the taiga. And again at night in his camp he heard something howl above him. He fired a shot but he apparently missed, as the howl did not stop. The hunter ran back home, told everything about the howl and soon died. His last wish was that after his death people should take a look at his heart: it seemed to him that the heart had broken in half because of the fright he had taken. People did as he had asked. Indeed, because of the fright the man had taken, one half of his heart turned into stone, and half of it remained the same.

N 41. Ulgu. An *ulgu* says that there was a pike that used to attack people and overturn their boats. Once it attacked a man who had a silver ring on his finger. The pike started eating this man, choked with the ring and died. After that people no longer were killed.

N 42. Ulgu. Once a hunter saw a toad with a horn. He knew that such toad brings luck as this is a *siŋkén* (a charm, *see* Note ****** to N 20). The man put his hat down in front of the toad but the toad did not throw its horn into the hat; neither did it want to throw her horn onto his fur boots or belt. Then the man howled like a bear and trampled down the toad and took its horn. After that incident, for 7 years had he been hearing a squeak in his ears. When the toad’s squeak stopped, the man fell seriously ill but he nevertheless got better. He then bagged a lot of game and became rich. When he died, everything he had, passed to his younger brother. And during the time of the repression of 1937, his people buried the things in the ground.

N 43. It is said that in the autumn you should keep watch over the island, the upstream side of it, and the downstream side of the island – in spring. The brave men who dare to do that wrap a leather belt around their genitals. At night appears *kálǯam* (master-spirit of the taiga, *see* Commentary to the text and Note *). He is said to be very tall, his testicles are like kettles – and it is them that you need for a hunter’s lucky charm. If a man takes possession of this charm, then for 7 years he will hear inside his head the words: “Give back what belongs to the *kalǯam*!” Some people cannot bear that and

throw the testicles away, that is, they return them to the *kalǯam*. But if the hunter manages to hold out, then he no longer needs to seek the game as the *kalǯam* supplies him with the game.

It is said that there are also female *kalǯam*. If she is overcome by a man, then she becomes his wife in the taiga when he is hunting.

N 44. Ulgu. It happens that a lucky man can find a wasp's nest with living wasps during the winter. Such nest should be taken and hidden (a charm). An *ulgu* says that one man from the *Ayímkan* clan found such a nest and after that the *Ayimkan* clan became rich (i.e. received the hunter's luck).

MYTHOLOGICAL STORIES ABOUT BREAKING THE BANS (VIOLATING TABOOS)

N 45. One Russian man Sergey Sivolik used to work as an electrician. Once on the river *Upágda* he killed two bears during their mating period and took only their bile and skins while their carcasses he threw into the water. When it was near autumn, the man got drowned. The Negidal elders said that he had paid for having violated the taboo.

N 46. In the village of *Ust'-Amgun'* there lived the brothers Abrámovich and their father was called Abramka. One autumn they made a dam across the river to catch fish, and after fishing they did not pull it down as they were supposed to. Then they went hunting and saw seven elks, and one elk-cow had a snow-white tail. They killed this elk, her tail they tied to a tree and then set out to their camp, taking just a little meat with them. The elder brother suddenly felt unwell and died before the morning came. The younger brother went to the village to tell about his brother's death and he also died on his way home. And the relatives were waiting for the brothers and were worried. Finally they went to the shaman from the village of *Savinskoye*. The shaman contacted the souls of the dead brothers and learned the story of their death. Following the directions of the shaman, they found the bodies of the dead brothers and even the rifle hidden by the younger brother. The shaman explained the events by the interference of an evil spirit.

N 47. (This is) most probably an Ulgu. One man went hunting and came across some snakes and he killed the biggest one. Then the snakes started chasing after him. The man ran home. His relatives covered him with a Manchurian cast-iron cauldron and then escaped in their boats. When they returned, they saw that nothing was left of the man, but his bones. He was apparently killed by the snakes (they took revenge on him for the unneeded murder of their chief).

N 48. On the river Amgun' there was a village *Mokichán.* There were three big lakes

not far from that place and they were called *Mokichan* Lakes. Once three men spent the night there outside an abandoned house. At night one of them started choking in his sleep and hit another right between the eyes. It turned out that he dreamt about a shaman in trance and he hit the shaman at the leg with his axe in his sleep. The place where they had spent the night became deserted and it became *súsu* (abandoned campsite where it is dangerous to stay at night, *see* Commentary to the text and Note **). If people passed by this place at night, they heard the sounds of the shaman's drum, or children crying, or people singing. It was said that these were the master-spirits of *susu*.

N 49. Two men went to a salt-mash to watch for some game. One of them went at night to keep watch and suddenly he heard a human moan and felt somebody's breath in his face. He rushed back to the night camp and told everything to his friend. The latter did not believe him and went to the salt-mush to see for himself. He heard and felt the same thing and somebody even grasped him by his shirt. He got frightened and ran away. Probably someone had died or had been killed in that place and it became *susu* (a place haunted by the souls of the dead and where you should not spend the night).

N 50. (This is) indeed an Ulgu. Two widows went to the taiga to check their food depot on the piles. They found out that a bear had visited their depot and eaten part of their stock. The older woman started scolding the bear, she was scolding him on the way home and even at home she continued to do it. The younger woman tried to stop her but in vain. The same night the bear came and tore the older woman to pieces (as punishment for her bad treatment of him).

LEGENDS (PREDANIYA)

N 51. Ulguy. The clan of the Negidals – *Chukchágils* had a very strong man. He used to kill for himself fat elks and plump swans because the Negidals have no ban to kill such animals and birds. His name was *Amalakán*. His wife was a very good worker. When her husband bagged two elks at once, she usually dried all the meat very fast.

N 52. Ulguy. A very long time ago there lived a lot of Negidals on *Chukchagir* Lake. They lived in the village of *Ayá Gégi*. Once a man called *Sogǯokón* came to them from the river Amgun'. He entered every dwelling of the village and everywhere he said that the neighbours were planning an attack and that they were forging spears and arrows. So he managed to deceive everyone and provoke war. The local shaman-woman, putting on her shaman clothes, went into trance and begged her people to stop the meaningless slaughter. But no one wanted to hear her. Then she jumped down into the waters of the lake, still wearing her shaman clothes.

Sogǯokon escaped. But the fighting men wounded him by a spear and an arrow.

Sogǯokon climbed upon a rock and watched the battle from above. The blood from his wounds was dripping down the rock. And now, when you pass the rock in a boat, you can see red blotches on the stone like drops of blood. They say that this is the blood from *Sogǯokon* wounds. Also after that fight there appeared in *Chukchagir* Lake a master-spirit. This is the shaman-woman who had jumped into the water in despair. And now we have *ulgu*: people say that you can hear the sounds of her tambourine and her shaman song from the depths of the lake, and this is the voice of the master-spirit. And so when people cross the lake, they offer her various food (i.e. they throw a little amount of different kinds of food into the lake in order to appease the spirit of the lake).

And *Sogǯokon* after the end of the battle jumped into his boat and sailed to his home on the river Amgun'. On the way he stopped for the night and without any reason he killed one of the two men who were fishing at night by the light of a birch torch.

Sogǯokon was a trickster, he was the worst of all people (because he observed no norms or rules and violated taboos).

N 53. Ulguy. There lived two strong men on Lake *Chukchagir*, their names were *Ukuyechén* and *Chépchika*. Once three enemies came from the village of *Gúga* on the river Amgun'. First they killed the sleeping man and then they sailed to the place where *Ukuyechen* was fishing. They shot an arrow at him but *Ukuyechen* heard the sound of the bow-string and had time to dive into the water. When he got out of the water, he ran towards his home, calling out to his people and warning them about the danger. The people got into their boats as fast as possible and sailed to confront the enemies. *Chepchika* was sitting in the first boat and he killed the good marksman of the enemies with his first shot. The enemies collected the body of their marksman and escaped.

N 54. Ho belgan. (The Slit Throat). A man and his son went fishing on an island. They belonged to the *Tapkal* clan. On the island they caught a huge pike and the father cooked a meal from the insides of the fish. Then he went to the river to spread the net again. When the father returned, he invited his son to eat the meal. But the son answered that he had already eaten everything. The father became angry and cut his son’s throat. After that this island at the mouth of the river Amgun' is called the Island of the Slit Throat.

TALES ABOUT ANIMALS

N 55. The frog and the mouse. There lived in one house a frog and a mouse. In summer when the bird cherry was ripe, the mouse suggested that they go get some. They found a piece of bark and used it as a boat. And they sailed up to the place. The mouse said that it would climb the tree and throw down the twigs of the bird cherry tree while the frog should pick them up and put into a birch-bark bucket. But the frog ate all the bird cherries instead and it ate so much that its belly was bulging out.

Because of the amount of the berry that the frog had eaten, its back became green. The mouse got angry with the frog and they had a fight. The frog took offence and left to live alone in a small lake.

N 56. (Variation of N 55). The frog came to the mouse and offered to live together and to go and gather enough red bilberries for the coming winter. They went for the bilberries in a boat. They arrived at the spot and saw that the place was full of bird cherry trees. The mouse climbed the tree and started throwing down the berries. She was doing that for a long time but the frog kept saying that the bucket was not yet full. The mouse got angry and climbed down the tree and saw that the frog's belly was round with the berries she had eaten and the frog itself became green with the bird cherries it had eaten. The frog had not been putting the berries into the bucket but had eaten all of it and became round.

N 57. The frog. There lived together a frog and a woman. They never had enough to eat. The frog was dreaming of bagging an elk. And once she met an elk, who was standing in the water and eating the water-plants. The summer was hot and the elk ate so much that he hardly managed to climb up the bank. And here the frog comes and suggests a racing contest. When the elk agreed and got ready to run, the frog jumped onto his forehead and clung to it. The elk ran and ran and then called out to the frog and the frog answered from his forehead in a quiet voice. The elk ran for a long time but he could not "outrun" the frog, however hard he tried. He finally fell down and died because his heart had burst. The frog and the woman skinned the elk and brought the meat home. And at night the woman heard a rat come and try to steal their meat. In the dark the woman started hitting with a billet at the place where the rat was making the noise. And the next day they learnt that the rat had backache. The rat's people called a shaman and he said that this was not an illness but the beating. The rat got angry and kicked him away. They brought her another shaman who said that the rat had hurt her back while she was going down the hill. The rat liked the explanation. Then the shaman asked for a birch-bark bowl full of caviar for his healing performance. And the rats gave him the caviar.

N 58. (Variation of N 57). There were two houses at the mouth of the river: one was occupied by a *puʒĭn* (a young beautiful girl) and a frog; the other – by the mice, a mother with children. Once the mice decided to go for some bird cherries and invited the frog to go with them. When they arrived, the mice climbed the bird cherry trees and started picking the berries while the frog was waiting on the ground for some berries to be thrown down to her. The frog asked many times and finally the mice threw down one ripe and one unripe cherry. The frog ate the unripe berry herself and the ripe one she put into the bucket (to take it to the *puʒĭn*). With this berry she went home with the mice, but in the boat the mice pressed down at her belly and she spit out the only cherry she had swallowed.

At home the frog gave to the sick *puʒĭn* the single cherry she had brought. And the

girl scolded the frog, as she did not know the real story.

Once the frog saw a huge elk-cow not far from their home. The frog suggested that they compete and find out who can run faster. But before they started their race, the frog jumped and held fast to the elk's forehead. The elk-cow ran and ran and called out to the frog, and the frog answered seemingly from somewhere ahead. The elk-cow ran for a long time and she ran faster and faster but the frog always made herself heard from ahead. Then the elk-cow ran as fast as she could, foam appeared in her mouth and she fell down and died outside the house of the *puǯin* and the frog.

The frog and the *puǯin* flayed the elk-cow and brought the meat home. And the mice watched all that. One young mouse came and asked for some grease but the *puǯin* refused to give it to him. At night the *puǯin* and the frog woke up as they heard the noise of the mice, who came to steal their meat. Then the *puǯin* set a trap. Soon a mouse started squeaking in the trap but she managed to get out and run away. And in the morning there came another young mouse and asked for some grease for an offering to the fire as their mother has fallen ill. The *puǯin* refused. Then the mice invited the shaman of the polecats who came and said that their mother had got caught in a mouse-trap while stealing and that was the reason for her illness. The mouse told him to leave their home. The shaman got angry and strangled all the mice. After that we have a legend that there is a bump and a small hollow on the elk's forehead because the frog had stuck to this place when she and the elk ran a race.

N 59 (Variation of N 58, first part). The frog and the mouse were neighbours. One day the frog went to fetch some water and saw a drowning worm. She saved him. After a time the mouse invited the frog to go for the bird cherries. They went there in a boat. When they arrived, the mouse climbed the tree and started picking the cherries. The frog asked her to throw some berries down to her but in vain. The mouse gathered a whole birch bark bucket of berries and climbed down. The frog started crying. But here appeared the worm. He climbed the tree and threw down such a lot of berries that the frog had even more than the mouse. Thus the worm helped the frog, he did not forget that she had saved him.

N 60. A tale. There lived in a tree hollow a flying squirrel with many children. Once a fox came and forced the flying squirrel to give her children to him, one after another. Thus the fox ate all the squirrel's children. The flying squirrel started crying and here appeared Grandpa Eagle-Owl. The squirrel told him about her misfortune. Grandpa Eagle-Owl flew and caught the fox and threw him into the sea. The fox was swimming in the sea ready to die when suddenly a seal came to the surface beside him. The fox asked him how many seals there were in the sea and suggested counting them. A lot of seals then emerged and the fox clambered up their backs, ran to the shore over their heads and disappeared in the taiga.

N 61. The flying squirrel (Variation of N 60). One flying squirrel had a hollow in the tree and four children in it. The fox came and browbeat her into giving him three of the

children. He ate all three. The flying squirrel was crying, and here Grandpa Eagle-Owl appeared, who explained to the squirrel that she need not be afraid of the fox. When the fox came again to the squirrel's hollow, the flying squirrel did not give him her last young. And Grandpa Eagle-Owl grabbed the fox and threw him into the middle of the sea. The fox is swimming in the sea and crying. A seal came to the surface and the fox suggested counting all the seals in the sea. A lot of seals came to the surface and the fox climbed up their backs and ran up to the shore jumping from one seal to another and pretending to count them.

The fox was walking past a house where the bird cherries were drying outside. He ate all the cherries, then he climbed into the dog-tent and fell asleep. An old woman went out of the house to check her bird cherries and found none. Then the old woman started looking for the thief and found the fox in the dog-tent. She hit the fox with a billet and killed him, and from his fur she made a *domdokhó*-hat.

One winter day when the old woman was going to fetch some water, a fox appeared and offered his help in fetching water. And he also asked to put the *domdokho*-hat on him. The old woman gave the fox her hat but the fox took it and ran away. The old woman is crying and birds offer her help but only one tiny but smart bird managed to find the foxes and take the hat from them. The old woman was pleased to get her hat back; she gave some food to the bird, made it a nose with the awl, made its talons with the needles and tied beautiful rags round the bird itself.

N 62 (Variation of a part of N 61). There lived an old woman, and she had a bitch-dog with puppies. One fox got the habit of stealing and eating the puppies. The old woman caught the fox and killed him with the rod to hang the cauldron on. And from the fox fur she made a hat for herself.

Once the old woman was feeding puppies in her fur-hat, and here came a fox offering to help her feeding the puppies. The old woman gave her hat to the fox and went into the house. The fox ate the puppies and ran away with the hat. The old woman started crying. A small bird appeared and promised to help the woman. She found the place where the foxes lived and managed to fool them into giving her the old woman's hat. The old woman was very pleased to get her hat back. Out of gratitude the old woman gave her cutting-knife to the bird and warned her not to perch on the branches too close to the ground.

The bird flew forth. First she kept in mind the old woman's words but then she perched on a branch very low. And here the fox caught her. But the bird did not lose her head and told the fox to ask permission to eat her from the master-spirit *sewekhí*. When the fox opened his mouth wide, the bird flew out and stuck the old woman's knife upright into the fox's mouth.

N 63. (Variation of parts of N 61 and N 62). There lived an old man and woman. Once the old man went fishing and the old woman began to feed puppies, with *kabámi*-hat on. Here came the fox and offered to watch over the puppies. The woman agreed and went inside. And the fox stole all the puppies and the hat as well. The old

woman started to cry. A small bird came and when she learned what had happened, she flew away to search for the fox. She found the fox dwelling and managed to bring back the old woman's hat. The woman out of gratitude fastened many-coloured rags to the bird's tail and wings and told her not to perch on a dry tree as the fox might eat her.

N 64. A tale. There lived a man. He caught a lot of fish and made supplies for the hunting season. In autumn, after putting his supplies on the hand-sledge, he went to his hunting place. On the way he met a fox who offered his help. The man yoked the fox in and they started pulling the sledge together. When they stopped for some rest, the fox pretended to have hurt his leg and the man put him on his sledge together with his food bags. The man pulled the sledge alone. Every now and then he asked the fox the names of the rivers they were passing by. The fox answered: the Beginning, the Middle, the Scratching (i.e. the fox was naming his actions, when he started eating the food in the bags, when he ate half of the food and when he was already scratching at the bottom). At the last river the fox advised the man to stop there. They started making their night camp and the fox promised to bring the firewood and disappeared (that is, ran away). The hunter waited for the fox a long time, then he went to look for him and understood that the fox had made off. He made the fire and started unloading the sledge – here he found out that the fox had eaten his supplies and only his broken tooth was rolling in the empty bag of fish skin. The hunter got very angry and went to search for the fox. On the way he thrust everything he met into his jacket and pants: the hazel hen, the partridge, the squirrel, the bird and so on. By the evening he had found the fox dwelling, and they had started the shaman performance. So he also pretended to join the performance and began to leap, while from out of his jacket and pants jumped out squirrels, birds and chipmunks. The foxes started to laugh and a fox, who was sitting in the corner, laughed with his mouth closed. The hunter jumped up to the fox and grabbed him, and this was the fox with the broken tooth. The fox begged for mercy and promised to find the hunter a good wife.

Then the fox went to an old man, and he at the time was making an ice-hole. He made the hole and started drinking water. Here the fox ran up to him and thrust the man's head into the water. And he held the old man under the water until he agreed to give his daughter to the fox. The fox brought the girl to the hunter and the hunter was pleased, and they lived happily the three of them together.

N 65. Once the fox was making an ice-hole. A lynx came up to him. When the lynx asked him what he was doing, the fox answered that he was going to fish in the ice-hole with the help of his tail. Then the lynx made an ice-hole and put his tail into it. They both sat for a long time, each beside his ice-hole, but the fox had not put his tail into the water, of course. Finally the lynx decided to stand up and he could not: the tail froze to the ice. He pulled and tugged and finally tore the tail off. After that the lynx has no tail.

N 66. There lived a fox. Once he made a lot of fish-glue. Here came an old big bear

(*satmár*). The fox explained to the bear that he was going to treat his eyes with this fish-glue. The bear said that he also wanted to treat his eyes. The fox applied the fish-glue to the bear's eyes, then stuck some fish-skin and told him to have it dry by the fire. The bear had been drying his eyes covered with fish-skin for a long time, and the fox meanwhile had run away. Then the bear started tearing the fish-skin away and it would not tear off. He scratched and scratched and finally managed to make two small holes to be able to see through them. After that the bear has very small eyes.

N 67. Addition to the tale. A fox was cutting something on a hillside and suddenly a bear came up to him. When the bear asked the fox what he was doing, the fox answered that he was making a sledge that he needed to cure his backache: if you go down a high hill on a sledge, you feel better. The bear said that he also needed treatment and started helping the fox to make the sledge. When the work was finished, they found a high hill and the fox put the bear on the sledge and pushed the sledge down the slope. While going down, the bear broke the sledge, his fore legs and the backbone. After that the bears have short fore legs and long hind legs.

N 68. A tale. There lived an old man and a woman who had no children. Once the old man went to get some firewood from the forest and the fox made himself two eyes from dark cowberries, became a boy and approached the old man. The old man brought this "child" home. The old woman was doubtful whether that was a real child but the fox stayed to live with them. Once the fox wanted to sail in the boat and asked for the best things that the old people had to be loaded into it. The old man brought out everything valuable and put them all into the boat. The fox pretended to be having fun, sailed behind the nearest headland and disappeared. So the old man was left without his boat and his things.

N 69. Addition to the tale. At first the hares were big. Once a hare suggested testing who was stronger, he or the bear. They fought for a long time and the bear pressed the hare so hard against the ground that the hare's teeth were all smashed to pieces. Also the bear broke the hare's front legs and scratched his eyes. And the hare was kicking the bear at his belly. After that the hares have slanting eyes and short front legs and the bears' kidneys became lobules.

N 70. There lived an old man and a woman and they never had enough to eat. The old man once went to the taiga and saw some ripe hips. The old man ate the hips and one berry he stuffed into his bottom, lay down and started crying: "Birch-trees, help me! Larch-trees, help me!" The hares thought that the old man was dying and took him to his home. They brought him in and put him on the floor. While pretending to be moaning, the man told the old woman to close all the windows, the door and the air-hole. Then he grabbed a stick and the old woman grabbed the poker and they started killing the hares. They killed a lot of them. Only one did the old woman miss: she

caught him on his ears and he ran away. The old people had a lot of meat then. But after a while they ran out of meat again and the old man decided to repeat his trick. He did everything as before and the hares ran to him and lifted him and carried him home. But on the way they met a hare with black ear-tips, the one that the old woman had hit with her poker. The hare told the others about the old man's trick. Then the hares flung the old man down and ran away. And the old man hurt his back and could hardly get back home. And the hares after that incident have the trace of the soot from the old woman's poker on their ears.

N 71 (Partial variation of N 70). There lived two families at the mouth of a river: a poor old man with his wife and granddaughter and a rich old man with his wife and granddaughter. Once the poor old man went upstream and found ripe hips. He ate some and then stuffed the berries into his eyes, mouth, nose and ears. And he lay down on the snow. Small forest animals thought that he was going to die and dragged him towards his home, pulling him by his arms, legs, ears or hair. When they were dragging the old man into his house, he told the old woman to close all windows and doors. And they began to kill the animals with whatever they had handy – the old man with the fur-scraper and the old woman with the rod for hanging the cauldron over the fire, and the granddaughter with the hook to hang the cauldron by. Several times they missed: the old woman hit one fox at his ears and an ermine and a partridge – at the tail-tips, while the granddaughter hit one of the hares at the tips of his ears. All these creatures managed to escape. After that, hares, foxes, ermines and partridges are born with black ears or tails (because they had been hit with things covered in soot).

The poor old man thus killed a lot of animals. The rich old man came to visit him, asked a lot of questions and decided to repeat his trick. He did everything exactly as the poor old man had told him but when the animals came and lifted him to take him home, he could not bear the pain and uttered a scream. All the animals were frightened and dispersed.

The meat the old man had got from his trick finally ran out. Then he made a lot of fish-glue, climbed a thick tree in the taiga and then climbed down, covering the trunk and the branches with the glue. After a time a lot of small animals and birds stuck to the tree. There were so many that the old man had to take his wife to carry all the game. The rich old man saw that and asked a lot of questions of the poor man and decided to do the same. He made the fish-glue, found a thick tree in the taiga and started covering it with the glue. But he was doing it the wrong way as he was putting the glue on the tree while climbing up, not down. As a result, when he climbed half-way up, he got stuck himself. His wife waited a long time and then went to look for him. She found him and started climbing up and stuck to the tree as well. Their granddaughter waited for her grandparents, went to search for them, she also climbed the tree to help them and also got stuck to the tree.

The poor old people with their granddaughter lived on as before and their rich neighbours became burls on the tree trunk. Now you can see burls on the tree trunks, and they began to appear after the old man and woman and their granddaughter had got

stuck to the tree.

N 72. (Variation of N 71). There lived two neighbours – a rich one and a poor one. The poor old man once ski'd to the taiga to look for hazel-hens. On the way he saw a lot of hips, ate them and then thrust some berries into his nose and ears and lay down on the snow. Some hares came, felt sorry for the poor dying man and carried him to his home. When they were bringing him into the house, the old man told his wife to close the door and the air-hole. Then they both started killing the hares. One hare managed to escape: the old woman had only hit him at his ears. The next day the rich old man came and the poor man told him how he had bagged a lot of hares. The rich old man decided to use the same trick. He did exactly the same thing as the poor old man, and hares came, grasped him at whatever they could and tried to carry him. But the old man could not bear the pain and cried out: "It hurts!" So the rich old man had no game.

N 73. The hare and the Sun. A tale. The hare took into his head to compete with the Sun. He said that he could outrun the Sun. But however fast he ran he could not outrun the Sun. The Sun prevailed over the hare. Then the hare told his kin never to compete with the Sun as it was too powerful: it could burn or freeze if it wanted to.

But the wind said that he was stronger than the Sun: if he blew with the cold, everything would freeze and if he blew with the heat, everything would melt.

N 74. A tale. There lived together a chipmunk, a squirrel, a flying squirrel, a rat, and a hare. The chipmunk used to store up the red bilberries for the winter: he picked the berries and brought them to the burrow. When he next time went to gather red bilberries, all his supplies had been stolen by the rat. The chipmunk returned home and could not find his supplies. Then he started looking for the thief. All the animals gathered together, only the rat did not come. Then they found the rat, and his belly was round of the berries he had eaten. The chipmunk demanded that the stolen red bilberries be returned to him. The rat found some berries that had been gathered by somebody else and brought them to the chipmunk (i.e. he stole them from somebody else this time). After these thefts performed by the rat, the friendship of the animals ended, and they lived separately.

N 75. A tale. There lived together animals and fish and they all liked to gather on the pebble bank. The elk and the Siberian sturgeon were particularly good friends. An evil shaman did not like this happy friendship and he called winds and whirlwinds and sent them to the animals. The animals suffered the incessant winds and whirlwinds a long time and then decided to leave that place. At parting, the Siberian sturgeon cut off part of the cartilage of his nose and stuck it on the elk's nose, and the elk cut off a part of his haunch and stuck it on the sturgeon's cheek. After that the elk went to live in the taiga and the Siberian sturgeon lived in the water. After that the Siberian sturgeon has a long nose and the elk has a huge nose (i.e. the elk's nose is, as it were, hanging over his lower jaw).

N 76. The hazel grouse's body. A tale. At first, when the world was just forming, there appeared the hazel grouse. The master-spirit of the land looked at the hazel grouse and said that it was too big and could not fly. And he told the hazel grouse to give part of his body to the fish: the pike, the sturgeon, and the Siberian sturgeon. The hazel grouse did as he was told and became light and can now fly.

N 77. A tale. The master-spirit of the land came to the hazel grouse and told him to open the door as the master-spirit was going to eat him. The hazel grouse pretended that he did not understand and suggested that the master-spirit of the land write the following words on his entrance door: eat tomorrow. The master-spirit did that. Every day he comes up to the door and reads the words "Eat tomorrow" and leaves. Finally he had enough of that and he let the hazel grouse live. (The text is based on the similar sounding Negidal words, meaning "to open" and "to write").

N 78. The pike and the snake. There lived a pike and a snake. The snake wanted to come to an agreement with the pike: let the pike live in the water and the snake will live in the taiga. But the pike did not agree to the snake living in the taiga as he thought that then the snake would start killing men. They agreed upon the pike living in the water and eating fish and the snake not eating anyone in the water but eating chipmunks and small birds. And the snake would not touch the men.