

## **THE MODEL OF THE THREE-LAYERED UNIVERSE IN ANCIENT TURKISH FOLKLORE**

**Mirfayzieva Nilufar Rakhimshikovna**

**Tashkent State University of Uzbek Language and Literature named  
after Alisher Navoi  
graduate student**

Myths and legends are the first forms of artistic thought, the beginning of fiction. In our opinion, no nation's literature has been left out of this natural process. The value of myths, which served as a wide field for the emergence of epic genres, is that they convey the truth to us in a simple and understandable way. For this reason, myths and legends are the first stage of the literary process, as well as the philosophical views of the Turkic peoples, their inner world, and their attitude to natural phenomena. If we pay attention to the plots and motives of the myths and legends created by the ancient Turkic peoples, we can find traces of different religious currents in them. In particular, some sources show the existence of myths and legends that appeared under the influence of Buddhism and Monism. However, despite this, it should be recognized that the main mythological character, plot and motifs are dominated by shamanism.

Most of the ancient Turkic myths are related to the creation of the world and mankind. In general, the main theme of cosmogonic myths is related to how the universe and man were created. The myths and legends created by the ancient Turkic peoples were created as a result of the primitive desire to know the world.

Imagining the universe in the direction of vertical and horizontal layers is a common plot for world cosmogonic myths. Such myths are mainly preserved in the works of Chinese and Greek historians, "Khuastuanift", Monian poems, Orhun-Enasoy petroglyphs, "Irq Bitik", "Golden light" and folklore examples of Turkic peoples. At the same time, their syncreticity should not be neglected. In this sense,

even in ancient Turkish myths, the universe was imagined in a horizontal position and was understood to consist of three layers.

The first floor is the upper world of the Blue God (Heaven). The ancient Turks called this world "Uza", i.e. "Higher" [𐰽𐰺𐰍 – *uza*] called Along with the Blue God and his helper Umai, there were also auxiliary spirits such as Mangdashira, Moytora, Yapqara, Shalyma, weather manager Urker (Hulkar), and lightning manager Nasigai.

The second floor is the Holy Earth-Water middle world. The ancient Turks called this world "Ekin ara", that is, "the middle of the two - between the sky and the earth." [𐰽𐰺𐰎𐰏𐰚 – *kin<sup>a</sup>ra*] called Together with the main god of the middle world, the Holy Earth-Water, his seventeen good assistants (spirits), powerful Io-kan, water, forest, mountain spirits and people lived in this world.

The third floor is the underground world ruled by Erlik Khan. The ancient Turks called this world "Asra", i.e. "Lower, Lower" [𐰽𐰺𐰙 – *sra*] called In this world, Erlik Khan (Erklig in some sources), his nine sons - Karash, Mattir, Shingay, Ko'mir Khan, Badish Biy, Yabash, Temir Khan, Uchar Khan, Kerey Khan and two daughters - Kishte Ana, Erka Sultan, Tez inhabited by evil spirits such as Burt, the summoner of death (in some sources rendered as Burt).

All the rulers and spirits in the three realms are worshipers of the Blue God. As a result of considering each of these worlds on the basis of myths and analyzing the diversity of views, it will be possible to restore the content and plot of ancient Turkic myths.

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