

HEALER, WELFARE AND 'LIMITED GOOD' IN ORTHODOX FINNISH BORDER KARELIA IN THE LATE 19TH CENTURY AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY

TEUVO LAITILA

Abstract

The article introduces to readers the activities of healers among the Finnish Orthodox people of Border Karelia (located on the northern shores of Lake Ladoga). The period discussed here focuses on the two decades between the First and the Second World War.

The activities of healers consisted of finding and explaining a problem (usually the cause of an illness), and finding a solution.

In Border Karelia, the most common explanations for an illness were that it had come from water, a forest or a graveyard. It was believed that all three were controlled by spirits, which the ill person had somehow offended, or, occasionally, which had been set on the ill person by somebody malicious. In both cases, the ill person's share of limited good had diminished, and had to be enhanced. In the first case, the spirit(s) had to be conciliated. In the latter case, a counter-charm was needed.

Key words: Karelia, healers, illness, popular religion.

Introduction

Border Karelia is an area on the north and northwest shore of Lake Ladoga. For at least the last three thousand years, it has been inhabited by Finnic peoples. Their neighbours, the Slavs, arrived in the latter part of the first millennium CE. The Finnic and Slavic peoples evidently did not mix much, but a mutual exchange of cultural features was common, particularly from the Slavs to the Finnic peoples (Kalima 1952). Borrowings can be seen, for example, in religion, both in its pre-Christian and its Orthodox Christian forms.

Politically, Border Karelia was for a long time a conglomerate of clans which, when menaced by an enemy, formed alliances either with each other or with outsiders, above all with Slavs, but who otherwise acted independently. In the early 11th and 12th centuries, the Slavs and the Swedes started to expand into Border Karelia and to tax its people. Until the early 17th century, the area was in the Slavic sphere. In the early 18th century, after a century of Swedish rule, it was annexed by Russia. From the Russian revolution and Finnish independence in 1917, and until the end of the Second World War, it was a part of Finland. At that time, a substantial majority of the inhabitants were Orthodox. The rest were Lutherans. Most Border Karelians lived in the countryside. There existed no real cities in the area in the period under review. In what follows, I will focus on maintaining and regaining welfare in the Orthodox Border Karelian countryside during the late 19th and early 20th century.

By welfare, I mean 'being healthy'. To be healthy, in turn, does not mean merely personal well-being. In traditional Border Karelian rural society, it meant general prosperity, such as the success of one's family and relatives, or success in farming, rearing cattle or hunting. Briefly, welfare implied a set or a system of depending relations between humans, animals and 'supernatural powers'. In Border Karelia, the latter were regarded as regulating the success or failure of economic efforts, as well as personal health and prosperity, and, depending on the situation, were referred to and acted upon as (Orthodox) Christian saints or 'pagan' spirits, or both (Haavio 1959).

Societal relations, in turn, can be conceived of as predominantly open (emphasising exchange and interaction with other societies) or closed (economically, socially and spiritually self-supporting). Traditional rural societies have been represented as closed, rather than open (Foster 1965; Stark 2005). According to the US anthropologist George Foster's view, though admittedly old (1965), people in closed societies tended to explain welfare in terms of a cognitive model which he labelled as a 'limited good' view. According to this, the amount of welfare within a society is finite and uncertain, and one feels always in danger of losing it or having too little of it. This leads, in Foster's view, to intra-societal quarrels, and one always has to be prepared to struggle in order to secure a share of the good (Foster 1965, p.296). Moreover, people have to constantly guard the distribution of good (or welfare), and if someone seems to flourish, s/he is suspected of unfairly tapping the good of others. Respectively, if

someone's luck fails, it is assumed that somebody else has abrogated it by dubious means. Foster argued that limited good is a vicious circle, within which there is nothing (or very little) one could do in order to increase one's share in welfare, except at the expense of others (Foster 1965, pp.297, 301).

In what follows, I reconsider Foster's argument¹ about the limited good view, and the possibility to increase welfare in a closed society, by using three Border Karelian examples. Two of them deal with healing an illness and a lack of physical attraction, that is, bodily welfare. The third is about finding lost cattle, or economic welfare. In all these cases, a specialist (whom I call a healer) is used to improve the situation. In his article, Foster focused on the economic dimension of limited good, and referred to healing only in passing, when stating (1965, p.299), that 'health is a "good" that exists in limited quantities'. I take this to mean that, for him, health, too, was a 'thing' similar to economic resources, for which, in Foster's view, one was constantly struggling.

Healer and healing in Border Karelia

It seems that in pre-modern Orthodox Border Karelia, practically everyone was somehow familiar with certain ways of treating illnesses and other troubles. However, not everyone had the skill to treat a wide variety of cases, or to do so with success, because this required a particular ability to negotiate with, and in some cases to be possessed by, the 'powers' that were considered responsible for the illness or trouble (Piela 1989; Stark-Arola 1998).

There is no detailed documentation on the number of skilled healers, or on the scope of their activities in Border Karelia from any period of time; but we may suppose that they were quite common. Some of them maintained their status even after the gradual modernisation of local culture (economic changes, state-provided education, the increase in social mobility, the medical treatment of illnesses, and so on) questioned the social, economic and ideological basis of local, indigenous rituals and beliefs since the late 19th century. During this transition, Karelian peasants kept resorting to persons renowned for their skills in healing, either right from the beginning or as their last hope, after noticing that medically trained doctors, who were rare in Orthodox Border Karelia until about the eve of the Second World War, could not help them (Genetz 1870, pp.92-96; Tenhunen 2006, p.91).

¹ Related views have been presented, among others, by Stark (2005) and Vuorela (1960).

Skilled pre-modern Karelian healers seem to have been both men and women, although for a long time men evidently predominated. Most health troubles were treated indiscriminately by healers of each sex, but there were some exceptions, one of which (relating to a lack of power to attract) is discussed below. As for the other welfare problems, roughly speaking, healers looked after the prosperity of activities associated with their respective sex: male healers looked after hunting and fishing, for example, and female ones looked after cattle rearing. However, there were exceptions. Modernisation changed more quickly and more forcefully the position of Border Karelian men than that of women. With modernisation, men became more and more a part of 'unlimited' systems of exchange with outside societies, and started to resort to other than local resources for their material well-being. Therefore, roughly at the beginning of the 20th century, the number of women among Border Karelian healers started to increase, whereas the variety of cases they treated remained limited to healing illnesses and dealing with matters related to activities carried out by women.

The main reason for illness continuing to be treated as part of the healers' field of activity seems to have been the local people's preference for a traditional reason for the causes of an illness over the medical understanding put forward by outsiders, such as doctors and government officers. The traditional reasoning was that if someone fell ill, a (personified) force from water, the forests, or death or dead people had infected him or her. Alternatively, one could fall ill if a person with wicked intentions had cast the evil eye on him or her (Stark 2002, pp.77-110). Such a rendering was both easier to comprehend and gave more options to treat the problem than a precise medical rationalisation coupled with the use of only one or two remedies. Therefore, local healers were seen as being more competent than medical doctors. The former said they could negotiate with or discuss the cause of the illness that the patient had, whereas the latter only prescribed medicine, which either helped or did not, but did not establish any societal contact with the illness. In other words, local rendering integrated the illness into the society and the tradition familiar to the patient, whereas the medical explanation connected it with the foreign (that is, outside, unknown, and hence, perhaps, menacing) world of germs, bacteria, and so on. Moreover, local healers could offer help even in cases which medical doctors ruled as being outside their sphere of authority, such as love potions or finding cattle lost in a forest (Nenonen, Rajamo 1955, p.78).

Let us start with the latter. The episode discussed here took place in the 1930s in the parish of Suistamo, northeast of Lake Ladoga, where the mistress of

the house of Kuljukka asked a local 'medicine-man', Kröpin Prokko, to assist her in finding some cows that were lost in the forest where they usually grazed. According to the local idea, the cattle were not lost, but were hidden by the forest (in Finnish *metsän peitossa*, literally 'blotted out by the forest'), that is, the spirit of the forest (in Finnish *haltija*) had become angry, and supposedly seized the cattle (Holmberg 1923). The story does not say whether the forest was just airing its opinion, was consciously malevolent, or was insulted by some member of Kuljukka's household.

Prokko's actions suggest the former suppositions. He took three strings of different colours from the mistress, and proceeded along a path leading to the grazing. Near the pasture, he used the strings to tie two alders² down from their tops to make an arch over the path. Then he picked up a small stone and put it on a larger one right by the path, saying: 'Here is a hernia, carry it if you cannot find the cows.' Here, the alders stand for the spirit of the forest, which was metaphorically 'bound' by the threat that if it did not release the cattle which it was believed to be hiding it would suffer from a hernia. The informant telling the story added that if the cows were not found within three days, the alders were to be unbound. In this case, they were found the next day (TSE, p.29). The deadline of three days is common, but not the only way in Karelia. The alternative would have been to leave the forest tied until the cattle were found. The habit of tying itself was widely known in eastern Finland, and on the Russian side of the border (Holmberg 1923, pp.30-41).

Applying Foster's model, we may reason that the forest (or the pasture it provided) was the foundation of the prosperity of the Kuljukka cattle. The local view was that, if treated correctly, the forest should share the pasture with the villagers. In this case, the forest refused to cooperate (or so the situation was understood) for some wanton or arbitrary reasons. Nevertheless, in such a case, the owner of the cattle was not helpless. She was ready to fight back, and could use various means to force the forest on to the defensive. Binding the forest was one of them. However, by saying that it was effective merely for three days, the informant suggested that the human ability to affect the situation was limited.

My second case is about illnesses believed to be caused by the forest. In Finnish, these kinds of afflictions were called *metsännenä* or *metsän viha*. The former literally

² In Karelian the word for 'alder' means both a species of tree and blood. Alternatively, the tree could be a birch (Holmberg 1923, p.34). In general, the alder was an ambivalent tree considered both able to expel evil forces (Paulaharju 1995, p.219) and having been made by the devil.

means 'the nose of the forest', and the latter 'the anger of the forest'. The notion was most typical of the area going from southern Olonets through Border Karelia to the present Finnish northern Karelia and the eastern Finnish province of Savo (Åstedt 1960, p.318). The terms 'nose' and 'anger' indicate simultaneously an illness, of which the origin is unknown or vague, and a spirit or power (in Finnish *väki*, literally 'folks', but also an authority embedded in one's person or available to him or her) of a particular place, whom someone has offended by inappropriate behaviour or talk. The spirit has therefore, so it was believed, become angry and afflicted the offender with an illness, often some sort of skin disease or eye disease (Manninen 1922, pp.69-70; Åstedt 1960, pp.308-312). To recover, the sick person had to apologise. The form of the apology depended on the offence, and to find the correct way to apologise, they had to contact a healer (Stark 2002, pp.147-154). This particular case is from the 1860s, but it is typical of later times as well.

Paraskeva, a four-year-old girl from the parish of Suistamo, suffered from ailing eyes (the trouble is not specified exactly). An elderly local widow³ diagnosed the illness as *metsännenä*, which means, although the story does not mention it, that probably the girl had been in the forest and had been frightened by something, a common cause of illness in Lithuanian tradition also (Mansikka 1929, p.31), or she had touched a wild animal, dead or alive.⁴

The widow took Paraskeva to the forest, probably to the place where the disease was supposed to have been transmitted, and buried in the moss a 'gift', a small roll of cloth containing a tiny portion of quicksilver,⁵ saying three times: 'It might be our fault or your wrongdoing, forgive us.'⁶ This was rather a common expression when soothing an angry spirit, although it was usually preceded with a greeting addressed to the forest spirits. Then, she and Paraskeva returned home (TSE, pp.66-67; Warttainen 1935, p.75).

The report does not say whether Paraskeva actually recovered or not. However, that is not the point. The point is that the illness was presented as an interruption in the correct relations between human beings and the forest, just as in the previous case of the cattle. If we

³ She was evidently regarded as an expert in healing, although the story does not indicate this.

⁴ These are the most common causes of *metsännenä* illnesses in Finnish tradition (Åstedt 1960, pp.309-310).

⁵ Quicksilver was one of the ingredients by which new-born babies in Orthodox Border Karelia were 'insured' against evil spirits (Vilkuna 1959, p.20).

⁶ The place where the spirit was apologised to was not usually chosen at random, but villages had particular places for it (Warttainen 1935, pp.70-71). In Paraskeva's case, it is impossible to be sure.

reconsider this in societal terms, my argument is that it really makes a difference how one behaves within a closed society. If one transgresses the limits of proper behaviour, one shatters the (supposed) balance in traditionally accepted correct relations, and endangers the societal welfare maintained by socially correct and fitting behaviour. Seen from this point of view, the illness was the forest's way of forcing the villagers not to forget themselves.

In Paraskeva's case, and in Orthodox Border Karelia in general, the process of falling ill and getting better was conceptualised in human, and often emotional, terms: the forest could be offended, become angry, and had to be apologised to. In other words, illness and recovery were treated in the same way as human relations. This, I presume, indicates that both were considered to be highly important: human welfare depended as much on human-human as on human-forest relations. Here, the Border Karelian (and eastern Finnish) way of diagnosing and healing differed from the western Finnish one, in which the healer conceptualised the illness and its (argued) causes in a less personified way (Piela 1989, p.82).

The third case is about a love potion. Strictly speaking, wooing someone or trying to win his or her affection is not an illness, although we can figuratively call a person 'lovesick'. Relationships and love affairs are an essential part of the human condition and prosperity, and, not least, the reproduction of the family line and local society. Therefore, although problems with them are usually not treated by medical doctors, they play an important part in the healing activities of a closed society.

A well-known Border Karelian lady of the early 20th century, Matjoi Plattonen (1842–1928), herself a pious Orthodox believer from the parish of Suistamo, when interviewed about folk traditions in the 1920s, said how when it seemed that a girl would have no suitors, she advised the girl to make a bath whisk of nine sorts of flowers and to warm a bath (sauna). Then she took the girl with her to the bath, during which she recited a love charm saying (in prose translation): 'Rise o love [in Finnish *lempi*, actually 'amorousness'] to stream, [rise o] honour to be heard over six denominations, over seven parishes, [rise] on the loins of this baby, on the heights of this maiden. Virgin Mary,⁷ our Mother, our maiden saint, come and help me to assist this baby ...' After the bath, the bath whisk was placed on the top of a stick, which then was asked to bend towards the direction from which the suitors would come (Tenhunen 2006, pp.91-92). Evidently, during the bath, the

⁷ Summoning the Virgin Mary occurs, but it is not common in Karelian love incantations (Piela 1990; Stark-Arola 1998).

bath whisk was considered somehow to have contracted the power of *lempi*, dormant in the girl, and spread it beyond the village borders. Similar bathing and charming often predated occasions in which girls had the opportunity to meet young men (for example, at village feasts) (Stark-Arola 1998, p.121).

Matjoi's case contains several interesting details. First, she summoned a 'power', *lempi*, to help the girl. The concept of *lempi* indicates the female's personal attractiveness, her 'share' in love, but also her sexual reputation (Piela 1989, p.97; 1990, p.215), which the girl was diagnosed not to manifest (and the lack of *lempi* was the reason why the suitors did not come). The healing was meant to reinvigorate the girl's power of *lempi*, to make it reappear. And in the same way as every illness had to be treated separately, *lempi* had to be summoned anew in each particular case.

At a general level, Matjoi's actions are an example of the female way of increasing the power of love within a particular area (a closed society), and not so much of redistributing its amount among the members of a given area, as Foster's view would suggest. It cannot be supported even if we add to the above story the popular Karelian notion, not mentioned in the source quoted, that the lack of *lempi* was seen as being caused by an envious person (who could be another villager or an outsider) (Piela 1989, p.98; 1990, p.215). If we take this into account, we still cannot say that Matjoi's restoration of the girl's love power meant a deduction from someone else's power. Rather, it was, from this perspective, the return of the evil intention (the envy) back to its 'sender', much in the same way as in the case mentioned above of tying the forest.

Further, Matjoi's charm indicates that in popular belief, elements of Orthodoxy, the local official or institutional religion, mixed freely with non-official or folk views. That is, she used various means to restore, increase or strengthen the girl's welfare.

Thirdly, Matjoi's charm (a variation of some commonly known verses) contains explicit sexual connotations (the loins⁸), suggesting that in the local perception, health, fertility and reproduction belonged together. Lastly, Matjoi shows, like the cases mentioned above, that in her view, human destiny was not predetermined, but could be changed. The overall tune of Matjoi's love ceremony is rather optimistic: after the ritual, suitors will come, because, I presume, their coming is both socially expected and good for societal relations.

Within the framework of limited good, this kind of optimism is only possible if someone else's *lempi* diminishes, causing her to fail to find suitors. However,

⁸ Other versions often use more explicit sexual terminology.

II

BALTIC
WORLDVIEW:
FROM
MYTHOLOGY
TO FOLKLORE

Matjoi does not suggest anything like this. On the contrary, she states that the girl's *lempi* will be famous in six denominations and seven parishes.⁹ Thus, nobody's *lempi* will diminish, but different people will gain something by Matjoi's 'raising' of the love power of this particular girl.

The healer's control of powers (spirits) distributing welfare, but also being able to take it back, was evidently a major reason why healers were regarded not only as restorers but also as destroyers of health. Agnes Viisanen, a daughter of the son of the brother of Mäki-buabo, a healer from Suistamo who died in 1944, argued that Mäki-buabo could not only restore health, she also knew how to hide a cow or cattle. They were found only after their owner gave Mäki-buabo something as a gift. According to Viisanen:

such episodes were common. If Buabo became angry with someone, she could cast a spell and summon a bear to that person's farmyard. Only a few dared to drink her coffee, because they suspected she had added something to it. Once at a wedding, she made the bride such a concoction that another girl, who tasted it by accident, became mentally ill and was in hospital for the rest of her life (MKE, p.73).

I do not know how common this kind of malefaction was for other healers in early 20th-century Border Karelia. However, it was commonplace in Russia in earlier times (Warner 2002, p.63). Nevertheless, Mäki-buabo was not necessarily a malevolent person. It could be that by 'getting angry' she aimed at strengthening her societal position. As Laura Stark has suggested in another context (2005, pp.86-87), respect and awe by others could give the healer more autonomy in local relations, and thus make her (or him) more independent. Foster would perhaps say that Mäki-buabo struggled over limited authority within her society.

To return to the case of *lempi*, according to the view of limited good, an increase in the welfare or happiness of a girl who is just about to marry would require that someone else loses her love power. From this perspective, the girl could never be sure of her welfare, and had therefore to engage in constant negotiations and struggles with forces that are supposed to distribute *lempi*, and also with other people who are supposedly attempting to seize her power in love. But speaking about love and health as something limited (in the same way as, say, the harvest or catch or quarry), in my opinion, does not make much sense. Unlike material

goods, *lempi* and apologising are unlimited. They cannot be cultivated like, say, grain. The human's share of them can differ and fluctuate, and therefore give rise to quarrels; but they do not run dry, because they are continually generated, as in the above cases, by the might of the power of the word and symbols to reestablish correct societal relations and social order.

Conclusions

The concept of limited good presupposes the notion that the quantity of welfare, including health, is restricted and can be increased only at the expense of another. In the field of the economy, the other usually meant the human neighbour. This could be so in the case of health or cattle as well, but in two of the above cases it was not. Contrary to the limited good view, here the increase in good (finding cattle, getting well) did not happen at the expense of, but in relation and in connection with, the other. Thus, regaining one's welfare did not diminish that of one's co-villagers (Foster 1965, pp.306-307), but improved it vis-à-vis the non-human other (the forest, the *nenä*). The third case (the manifest lack of love power) implies a co-villager's or a stranger's malevolence as the cause of the problem; but welfare (the reinvigoration of the power of *lempi*) was regained by activating the girl's own dormant power of *lempi*, rather than by seizing that of someone else.

Although my three episodes are only a tiny selection of different types of healing actions, I see Foster's model as needing some rethinking in cases where societal relations are not based merely on rational choices, but where emotions, attitudes and other 'irrational' elements are involved. Good and luck may be limited in the sense that not all have them, so there may be arguments and dust-ups. However, emotions and actions related to them (threatening an unfair spirit, apologising, reinvigorating the power of *lempi*) are unlimited; they can be resorted to over and over again. I do not claim that economic aspects, emphasised by Foster, are untouched by emotions. I only argue that emotions cannot be deduced to economic struggles and disputes.

Therefore, welfare in rural societal relations should not be seen merely from a rational and material perspective, but as consisting of diverse, intertwined and overlapping approaches to solving various problems in local life. In my opinion, Foster's perspective makes most sense in cases in which a person accuses a neighbour of 'stealing' his or her luck in farming or hunting (Stark 2005, pp.92-97). In such cases, we certainly have a real struggle over limited resources (land, game). However, if the trouble is not about material competition with a

⁹ By denomination, Matjoi evidently meant parishes, not different confessions. In Finnish, she used the words *kirkkokunta* ('denomination') and *seurakunta* ('parish'), which rhyme nicely. I am quite sure that the rhyme, not the exact meaning of the words, is what matters here.

neighbour but is seen in relation to (local) spirits, as in the case of Paraskeva and the mistress of Kuljukka, we no longer have a struggle over limited good, but a negotiation about fair or righteous or proper behaviour on the part of, or towards, the spirits. In such cases, the issue is not about fighting over resources, but about restoring or re-creating proper relations.

Taking this into account, I would restate Foster's proposition that a major driving force behind the (peasant) view of limited good is the human desire to maximise one's own (or, what amounts to the same, to minimise the other's) security. The statement itself is, of course, a commonplace. What I think needs further clarification is, first, what is considered to endanger security, and, second, how the danger is averted.

In two of the cases discussed above, the danger comes from outside (the forest, although one could, of course, argue that the forest is a metaphor for a malevolent co-villager), and is somehow, if only vaguely, personified, having a will (to seize cattle) or feelings (in being angry). In the third case, the danger may be caused by someone who (for some unspecified reason) envies the girl, thus affecting her with a trouble comparable to that caused by a *nenä* (spirit), but the data does not support this. To sum up, in the cases of the cattle and Paraskeva, danger is presented as the emotion of a malevolent being. In Matjoi's case, the danger comes from within, from the girl's own inability to use her power.

It may well be that in all three cases the main characters (the owner of the cattle, Paraskeva, and the unnamed girl) wanted to maximise their share of good; thus far, Foster's model may work. But it does not actually, in my view, explain the attitudes behind the 'will' to maximise security. In the cases related to the forest, the healer did not merely pursue his or her vested interest, or that of the main characters, the mistress of Kuljukka and Paraskeva, but also aimed for a reconciliation with the forest. That is, he or she tried to maximise the benefit to both parties. The Kuljukka woman benefitted by getting back her cattle and by forcing the forest to behave itself, that is, fairly. Paraskeva, whether or not her eyes improved, evidently benefitted emotionally by being apologised to, and, I suppose, so did *nenä*, the cause of her illness. The case of the unnamed girl is more obscure, but it seems that at least the healer aspired not to harm anyone, except, perhaps, the implied envying person. On the contrary, she aimed at waking up the girl's dormant power for her own benefit. Again, inner feeling, the girl's belief in her own power, was (at least) as important as the rational maximising of limited good.

In all three cases, a specialist (a healer) was recruited to strengthen an affected person by restoring a proper

societal-like relation. The means which they used to gain the desired goal were the same: charms and rituals, which outsiders commonly dub as magic. My conclusion is that when proper relations between humans or between humans and non-humans were regarded to waver in Orthodox Border Karelia (or when, in Foster's terms, a struggle over limited good took place), local people did not just let things happen, but had at their disposal various corrective means, mastered by healers, by which they could affect the course of events. Neither did people simply quarrel or pursue their own interests. They were also willing to cooperate, not only for their own benefit but also for those they needed, or were (or felt to be) dependent on in everyday life, be they humans or spirits.

This mutual aid (to borrow Kropotkin's term), or constant re-creation of correct (from the villagers' view) societal relations, was not disinterested, because each party was expected to benefit from it. But it was not a struggle. Rather, it was an operation aiming at restoring a functioning society and social order, endangered by a sudden burst of malevolence, an offence, or lack of power. Therefore, a closed society was not only a world where the inhabitants were forced to struggle over (limited) resources, as Foster seems to imply. It was also a world where they took care of ways to (temporarily) eliminate causes of struggles by restoring everything to its proper place. In this world, healers had an important role.

Abbreviations

- MKE – A. KALKKINEN, ed. *Muistoissa kylät elävät: Suistamon Perinneseuran keräämiä muistikuvia ja tarinoita Suistamon kylistä ja niiden asukkaista*. Helsinki: Suistamon Perinneseuura r.y., 1993
- TSE – A. KALKKINEN, ed. *Tälleh siel elettih: Aleksanteri Saralan tallentamaa muistitietoutta Suistamon Koitosta*. Joensuu: Karjalaisen Kulttuurin Edistämissäätiö, 1987

References

- FOSTER, G.M., 1965. Peasant society and the image of limited good. In: *American Anthropologist*, 67, 293-315.
- G[ENETZ], A., 1870. Kuvaelmia kansan elämästä Salmin kihlakunnassa. In: *Koitar: savokarjalaisen osakunnan albumi*, I. Helsinki: SKS, 84-109.
- HOLMBERG [HARVA], U., 1923. Metsän peitossa. In: *Kalvalaseuran vuosikirja* 3, 16-60.
- HAAVIO, M., 1959. *Karjalan jumalat*. Porvoo & Helsinki: WSOY.
- KALIMA, J., 1952. Slaavilaisperäinen sanastomme: tutkimus itämerensuomalaisien kielten slaavilaisperäisistä lainasanoista. *Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seuran toimituksia*, 243. Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura.
- MANNINEN, I., 1922. Die dämonistischen Krankheiten im finnischen Volksaberglauben: vergleichende volks-

- medizinische Untersuchung. *FF Communications*, 45. Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia.
- MANSIKKA, V.J., 1929. Litauische Zaubersprüche. *FF Communications*, 87. Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia.
- NENONEN, V., RAJAMO, M. eds., 1955. *Suistamo: muistelmia ja kuvia kotiseudustamme*. Pieksämäki: Suistamon pitäjöseura.
- PAULAHARJU, S., 1995 [1924]. Syntymä, lapsuus ja kuolema: Vienan Karjalan tapoja ja uskomuksia. *Kansanelämän kuvauksia*, 41. Helsinki: SKS.
- PIELA, U., 1989. Loitsut 1800-luvun Pohjois-Karjalassa. *In: Kalevalaseuran vuosikirja*, 68, 82-107.
- PIELA, U., 1990. Lemmennostoloitsujen nainen. *In: A. NENOLA, S. TIMONEN*, eds. Louhen sanat: kirjoituksia kansanperinteen naisista. *Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seuran Toimituksia*, 520. Helsinki: SKS, 214-223.
- STARK, L., 2002. Peasants, Pilgrims, and Sacred Promises: Ritual and the Supernatural in Orthodox Karelian Folk Religion. *Studia Fennica Folkloristica*, 11. Helsinki: SKS.
- STARK, L., 2005. Taikuus ja kristinusko: suomalaisen maalaisyhteisön kaksi moraalijärjestelmää 1800-luvulla. *In: Kalevalaseuran vuosikirja*, 84, 84-103.
- STARK-AROLA, L., 1998. Lempi, tuli ja naisen väki: dynamistisista suhteista suomalais-karjalaisessa taikuudessa ja kansanuskonnossa. *In: J. PÖYSÄ, A.-L. SIIKALA*, eds. *Amor, genus & familia: kirjoituksia kansanperinteestä*. Helsinki: SKS, 117-135.
- TENHUNEN, A.-L., 2006. Itkuvirren kolme elämää. Diss. *Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seuran Toimituksia*, 1051. Helsinki: SKS.
- VILKUNA, A., 1959. Die Ausrüstung des Menschen für seine Lebensweg. *FF Communications*, 179. Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia.
- VUORELA, T., 1960. Paha silmä suomalaisen perinteen valossa. *Suomi*, 109(1). Helsinki: SKS.
- WARNER, E., 2002. *Russian Myths*. London: British Museum Press & Austin: University of Texas Press.
- WARTIAINEN, E., 1935. Entisillä taikamailla. *In: Vanhan runon mailta. Raja-Karjalan Säätiön julkaisuja*, 2. Porvoo & Helsinki: WSOY, 59-78.
- ÅSTEDT, K., 1960. Mytologisista *nenä*-yhdyntäisistä. *In: Kalevalaseuran vuosikirja*, 40, 307-322.

Received: 26 April 2011; Revised: 5 May 2011;
Accepted: 16 May 2011.

Teuvo Laitila
University of Eastern Finland
Department of Orthodox Theology
PL 111
80101 Joensuu
Finland
E-mail: teuvo.laitila@uef.fi

GYDYOJAS, GEROVĖ IR „RIBOTO GĖRIO“ SAMPRATA SUOMIŲ ORTODOKSUŲ PARIBIO KARELIJOJE XIX A. PAB. – XX A. PR.

Teuvo Laitila

Santrauka

„Riboto gėrio“ samprata išreiškia idėją, kad gėrio kiekis, įskaitant sveikatą, yra ribotas ir gali būti pagausintas tik kitų sąskaita. Ekonominiu požiūriu „kitas“ dažniausiai reiškė kaimyną. Tas pat gali būti ir su sveikata ar galvijais, tačiau dviem aukščiau aprašytais atvejais tas negalioja. Oponuojant „riboto gėrio“ perspektyvai, čia gerovės pagausinimas (bandos atradimas, pasveikimas) vyko ne kitų sąskaita, o palaikant su jais santykius bei ryšius. Taigi kieno nors gerovės pagausinimas vykdavo ne per kaimynų išteklių mažinimą (plg. Foster 1965, p. 306–307), bet per santykių gerinimą su nežmogiškoms būtybėmis (mišku, *nenä*). Trečiu atveju (akivaizdus meilės jėgos trūkumas) tikėta, kad problemą sukelia kaimynas ar piktavališkas šalaitis, bet gėris (*lempi* jėgos atgavimas) atkuriamas sužadinant neveikiančią pačios mergaitės *lempi* galią, o ne atimant ją iš ko nors kito.

Straipsnyje, remiantis trimis paribio Karelijos pavyzdžiais, persvarstoma Fosterio idėja apie uždaroje bendruomenėje gyvavusią riboto gėrio ir galimybės jį padidinti sampratą. Dviejuose pavyzdžiuose atitinkamai pasakojama apie gydymą ir ligą bei fizinio patrauklumo trūkumą, t. y. kūno gerovę. Trečiame pavyzdyje kalbama apie pasiklydusios bandos suradimą, arba apie ekonominę gerovę. Visais atvejais situaciją pagerindavo specialistas (kurį aš vadinu gydytoju). Fosteris straipsnyje sutelkė dėmesį į ekonominį „riboto gėrio“ aspektą, o apie gydymą užsiminė tik teigdamas, kad sveikata yra „riboto kiekio gėris“ (1965: p. 299). Dėmesį į tai atkreipiu todėl, kad sveikata, dėl kurios, Fosterio nuomone, vyko nuolatinė kova, yra artimas ekonominiams ištekliams dalykas.

Net jei šie trys epizodai tėra tik mažytis pasirinkimas iš gydymo veiksnių įvairovės, manau, kad Fosterio modelį reikia permąstyti tais atvejais, kai socialiniai ryšiai yra grindžiami ne tik racionali pasirinkimu, bet ir kai figūruoja emocijos, požiūriai ir kiti „iracionalūs“ elementai.

Gerovė ir sėkmė yra ribotos dėl to, kad ne visi mes jų turime, ir todėl gali kilti ginčų bei kivirčų. Tačiau emocijos ir su jomis susiję veiksmai (piktosios dvasios

bauginimai, atsiprašymas, *lempi* galios sužadimas) yra riboti; jie gali būti nuolat persidalijami. Aš netvirtinu, kad Fosterio išryškinti ekonominiai aspektai nėra palytėti emocijų. Aš tik įrodinėju, kad emocijos negali lemti ekonominio varžymosi ir konfliktų.

Taigi gerovė kaimo bendruomenės santykiuose turi būti vertinama ne tik iš racionalumo ir materialinės perspektyvos, bet ir kaip susidedanti iš skirtingų, susipinančių požiūrių, sprendžiant įvairias socialinio gyvenimo problemas. Mano nuomone, Fosterio požiūris labiausiai akcentuoja tuos atvejus, kai asmuo apkaltina kaimyną vagiant jo/jos ūkininkavimo ar medžioklės sėkmę (plg. Stark 2005: 92–97).

Tokiais atvejais išvelgiama reali konkurencija dėl ribotų išteklių (žemės, laimikio). Tačiau jei problema kyla ne varžantis su kaimynu dėl materialių gėrybių, o dėl santykių su dvasiomis (vietinėmis), kaip minėtais Paraskeva ir Kuljukka šeiminkės atvejais, mes susiduriame jau nebe su riboto gėrio atveju, o su derybomis dėl gero, teisingo ar deramo dvasių ar žmonių elgesio. Šiais atvejais esmė yra ne kova dėl išteklių, o tinkamų santykių susigrąžinimas ar atkūrimas.

Turėdamas tai omenyje, aš performuluoju Fosterio idėją, kad pagrindinė „riboto gėrio“ įvaizdžio (valstiečių) varomoji jėga yra žmogaus noras užsitikrinti didžiausią saugumą (kitais žodžiais tariant, sumažinti kitų saugumą). Žinoma, šis teiginys pats savaime nėra naujas. Nuodugniau paaiškinti pirmiausia reikia tai, kas kelia grėsmę saugumui, ir, antra, kaip yra išvengiama pavojaus.

Dviem aukščiau aptartais atvejais pavojus ateina iš išorės (daugelis turbūt paprieštarautų, kad miškas tėra tik piktavališko kaimyno metafora) ir yra, nors ir neryškiai, personifikuotas, turintis norų (pagrobti bandą) ar jausmų (supykdytas). Trečiu atveju pavojų gali sukelti kažkas, kas (dėl neaiškių priežasčių) pavydi merginai, taip pakenkdamas jai panašiai kaip nenė (dvasia), nors faktai to ir nerodo. Apibendrinami bandos ir Paraskeva atvejus, galime pažymėti, kad pavojus pasireiškia kaip piktavalės būtybės emocija. Matjoi atveju pavojus kyla iš vidaus dėl merginos negebėjimo pasinaudoti savo galia.

Gali būti, kad visais trim atvejais pagrindiniai veikėjai (bandos savininkas, Paraskeva ir neįvardyta mergina) norėjo pagausinti savo gėrio dalį, kas peržengia Fosterio modelio ribas. Mano nuomone, tai nepaaiškina požiūrio į „norą“ sustiprinti savo saugumą. Atvejais, susijusiais su mišku, ar Kuljukka ir Paraskeva šeiminkių veikloje, gydytoja(-s) ne tik paprasčiausiai siekia savo teisėtų interesų, bet ir nori susitaikyti su mišku. Tai reiškia, kad ji(-s) mėgino sustiprinti abi sferas. Kuljukka moteris pagelbėjo, sugrąžindama bandą

ir įtikindama mišką pasielgti kitaip, t. y. sąžiningai. Paraskeva, nepaisydama, ar akys pasveiko, neabejotinai darė įtaką emociškai – atsiprašinėdama ir, mano nuomone, taip darė dėl savo ligos priežasties – *nenė*. Neįvardytos merginos atvejis yra gana neaiškus, tačiau panašu, kad gydytoja greičiausiai nesiekė niekam pakenkti, išskyrus numanomą pavydintį asmenį. Priešingai, ji siekė sužadinti pačioje merginoje slypinčią neveiksniają jėgą. Vėlgi vidinis jausmas, mergaitės tikėjimas savo vidine galia buvo (mažiausiai) tiek svarbus, kiek ir racionalus riboto gėrio pagausinimas.

Visais trim atvejais pakenktam asmeniui pagelbėti pakviestas specialistas (gydytojas) atkurdavo deramus socialinius santykius. Trokštamam tikslui pasiekti jie naudojo panašias priemones: užkalbėjimus ir ritualus, kuriuos pašaliečiai įvardijo kaip magiją. Darau išvadą, kad kai ortodoksų paribio Karelijoje derami santykiai tarp žmonių ir ne žmonių susilpnėdavo (ar kai, Fosterio žodžiais tariant, vykdavo varžymasis dėl riboto gėrio), vietiniai žmonės ne tik pasyviai šį procesą stebėdavo, bet ir turėjo būdų, vadovaujami gydytojų, jį koreguoti. Tačiau žmonės nesikivirčydavo ar nesiekdavo savų interesų. Jie norėdavo bendradarbiauti ne tik dėl asmeninės naudos, bet ir dėl tų, kuriems jų reikėjo ar nuo kurių jie priklausė kasdieniame gyvenime, nesvarbu, ar tai būtų žmogus, ar dvasia.

Ši abipusė pagalba (pasiskolinus Kropotkino terminą) ar nuolatinis deramų socialinių santykių atkūrimas (kaimo žmonių požiūriu) neprarado aktualumo, nes kiekviena pusė tikėjosi naudos. Bet tai nebuvo kova. Priešingai, tai buvo veiksmas, siekiant atkurti veikiančią visuomeninę ir socialinę tvarką, kuriai grėsmę sukėlė staigus blogio, skriaudos prasiveržimas ar galios trūkumas. Taigi uždara bendruomenė buvo ne tik pasaulis, kurio gyventojai buvo verčiami kovoti dėl (ribotų) išteklių, kaip teigė Fosteris. Tai buvo ir pasaulis, kuriame žmonės, atstatydami viską į deramas vietas, praktikavo konkurencijos priežasčių šalinimo būdus. Šiame pasaulio kūrimo procese gydytojai atliko svarbų vaidmenį.

Vertė Jūratė Šlekonytė

II

BALTIC
WORLDVIEW:
FROM
MYTHOLOGY
TO FOLKLORE