

Mjandasj – both reindeer and human

Well into the 20th century, the Sami people on the Kola Peninsula told about Mjandasj, the wild reindeer, who is also human. Maybe he is still being told about, because now the myth about him is at least partially written down and preserved. Perhaps it is several thousand years old. It may have been spread over all or large parts of the Sami area but only been written down on the Kola Peninsula. At least one petroglyph has been found there which is dated to the last millennium BC and which has motifs found in the Mjandasj myth.

The myth of Mjandasj depicts a timeless primordial state, a reality that exists beyond the visible. In it is not only about Mjandasj, but also his mother, his woman taken from the world of men, and the reindeer herd.

Also important are the horns that he fell on the tundra, and said: "This is the Mjandasj tundra", the reindeer skin that must not be soiled by children's urine, the Mjandasj coat of reindeer bones and reindeer skins and the Mjandasj river, the bloody river where the waves are lungs and the stones live. It separates the Mjandasj world from the human world, but it is not like an impenetrable wall. The Mjandasj creatures can swim across it as reindeers, and the humans can cross it either with great effort or great wisdom.

In the Mjandasj myth, there is a closeness between Mjandasj and the other Mjandasj creatures and people. The good, the wild reindeers, on which the people live, comes from the world of Mjandasj. His woman from the human world gives birth to reindeer calves. Mjandasj and the people meet and can talk to each other.

Mjandasj also exists in the myth as a celestial reindeer that is hunted by the god of thunder. He is then a symbol of the entire universe. When and if he is struck down, everything falls apart: the fire envelops the whole earth, the mountains boil like

water, the ice boils, the stars fall, the moon goes out and the sun sinks far down:
"But on earth it becomes dust".

What the word 'Mjandasj' means is not known. In *Den vilda renen*, Ájttes scripts 4, 1993, there is a part of the mjandasj myth translated from russian.

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