

Der Eibenfreund

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7. Tsey gorge yew-tree

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Tsey gorge occupies the territory of the Northern Osetia between the Lateral and Watershed mountain ranges, it stretches from the south-west to the north-east. On its upper level there are mountain peaks: Adihoh, Zis, Zaramag, etc, having attracted the attention of mountain-climbers. The highest point of Tsey gorge is the peak Uilpata (4646 m above the sea level).

The main mounting rock forming Tsey gorge is granite, crystal schist, gneiss, etc.

The most typical kind of soil of these places are mountain and meadow, subalpine, mountain and forest. The most spreading kinds are poorly concentrated road metal, brown turf and secondary subalpine mountain and meadow.

The climate of Tsey gorge is typically Alpine with rather low average annual temperature. The July average temperature is 17-18° C, rising up to 20-22° C in some years. The average annual precipitation quantity is 960 mm, reducing with the territory height to 500-520 mm per year in the lower part of Tsey gorge (near the settlement of Buron). In the high-mountain zone (in the upper reaches of the Lateral and Watershed mountain ranges) it is 1200-1300 mm per year. The essential climate forming factor here is solar radiation. For the geographic latitude 42° the total solar radiation is 168 kc/cm². For Sochi such an indication is 110 kc, for Tsey gorge up to 200 kc. The annual solar hour quantity for Tsey is 2256 that considerably exceeds the indicators of such health resorts as Davos (1804), Red Glade (1675), Teberda (1483).

Yew-tree grove of Tsey gorge is within the region of the settlement Tarskoye at the height of about 1000 m above the sea level. Several dozens of yew-tree specimen grow on the northern slope of the non-deep gorge covered with beech forest. The highest yew-trees are 10-14 m and their diameter is 18-25 cm that corresponds to 150-200 years age.

Historical evidence of yew-tree growing in the Northern Caucasus is the cult construction Rekom situated on the left bank of the Tseydon river at the height of 1800 m above the sea. The Rekom is timbered framework covered with wooden roof descending with a wide shed. The logs are propped without nails. The diameter of carved poles propping the roof is 20-35 cm.

The ridges on the construction are decorated with the Osetian national ornament. The figure hooks backing up the gutter are covered with the unique fretwork on three sides and crowned with stylized similarities of the animal heads with queer bids.

As a result of archeological excavations and according to the opinion of some researchers dealing with the Caucasian monuments it has been found out that the sanctuary Rekom was built in the XII century of yew-tree. There are some suppositions that the timber for that reconstruction was delivered from the southern slope of the Caucasus through one of the easy-to reach passes (there are some of them in Tsey gorge). The possibility of sanctuary building of the local yew-trees seems to be more likely. The evidence of it is the present existence of yew-tree grove.

In the XVIII century the cult reconstruction Rekom building of yew-tree was burnt out but was restored of the local pine. As a result of the fire in 1994 the reconstruction was burnt out in its turn and was restored of the pine in 1998.