

**The International Exhibition-Competition
of Children Artistic Creativity «Yenisei Mosaic»**

The topic of the essay in 2022 is "Journey to the End of the World"

All of us love travelling. Some of us have been travelling since his or her youth, others start at a mature age. But everyone who returns home brings with them a large baggage of vivid emotions and impressions.

In today's world, we can travel openly, participate in ecological, research, scientific expeditions, go on a round-the-world cruise or organize a team of like-minded people who aren't afraid of even going to the end of the earth.

People have always made up stories about places they haven't been to. Travellers had been searching for the end of the world since long before the era of the Great Geographical Discoveries began. Every nation had had its own sacred boundary to the edge of the world.

According to the Hellenes, the edge of the world was beyond the Pillars of Hercules. This was the name given to the two cliffs at the entrance to the Straits of Gibraltar. The Hellenes claimed that on each of the two cliffs separating Europe and Africa, Hercules built stelae and inscribed on them the words: "There is no further". Medieval mariners who reached the Pillars of Hercules claimed to have been to the end of the world.

People were searching for the land's edge right up to the Renaissance era. Cartographers believed genuinely that this eerie place was a place of constant storms and terrifying sea monsters, and that seafarers who ventured there would meet with imminent doom. The idea of the existence of the edge of the world has always been shrouded in mystery.

In modern times, during the era of the Great Geographical Discoveries, the extremes of the continents were regarded as the frontier. For South Americans, Cape Froward was regarded as the edge of the world. In North America, it was the Cape of Prince of Wales. Cape Agulhas ("Cape of the Needles") was the edge of the world in Africa and Cape York in Australia. For Europeans, Cape Rock was the end of the landmass, and for Asians, Cape Dezhnev and Cape Piai were considered symbolic geographical points.

The ancient Chinese had their own particular view of the search for the edge of the world. The inhabitants of this eastern country believed that the world was bounded on four sides by four nominal seas. The mountains of Tibet were called the "Rocky Sea". The Gobi Desert was regarded as the "Sand Sea", and the "Eastern Sea" and "Southern Sea" were the waters of China.

When talking about the search for the edge of the world in different historical eras, it would be unfair to leave out the legendary countries lost in time. The most famous of these is undoubtedly Atlantis. The Greek philosopher Plato described Atlantis as being situated west of the Pillars of Hercules. The mighty island represented a perfect state in which all architecture was made of noble metal, and its

inhabitants, who were descendants of Poseidon, god of the sea, were the epitome of wisdom, goodness and beauty. Atlantis disappeared, sinking into the depths of the sea.

At the same time, Hyperborea is suitable as the land of the gods at the edge of the world. Its history is described in the sacred texts of the earliest civilizations. This mysterious land was inhabited, as the ancient Greeks claimed, by descendants of the god Apollo, who regularly visited his people. Its inhabitants, free from disease, lived in harmony with nature and possessed invaluable knowledge. Hyperborea was situated on an archipelago of islands at the North Pole. But like Atlantis, this amazing country was destroyed by a natural cataclysm.

A popular search in the Middle Ages was for the mythical kingdom of Avalon, where fairies are said to have lived. It was the island where the famous sword Excalibur was forged and where the legendary King Arthur found his final resting place. When knights set out in search of Avalon, they invariably proclaimed that their journey was 'to the ends of the earth'.

Among the marvellous countries at the edge of the world, Shangri-La is also a very important place. Described in 1933, it is the epitome of Shambhala - the object of many an Oriental traveller's search. There are written accounts of people who were in this mythical land, as well as ancient Oriental manuscripts telling how to get there.

As Tibetan legend claims, Shambhala is the place at the end of the world where the superhumans, like the gods, know the secret of immortality, reside. The famous Russian artist Nikolai Konstantinovich Roerich was obsessed with the search for Shambhala, attaching particular importance to the place. During his travels in Tibet and Mongolia, he painted mesmerizing landscapes.

In the age of modern technology and opportunity, we can travel around the world and make new acquaintances without hindrance. But how does the modern man imagine the edge of the world?

In 2019, the "Sirius" Educational Centre initiated an educational and scientific expedition around the world for children. It was designed for 283 days, during which the participants walked, sailed, cycled and drove around 34,000 kilometres!

An expedition to Antarctica was scheduled to start in 2020, under the banner of the supporters of the 'flatlanders'. A society by that name was formed in the second half of the twentieth century. The travellers believe that the North Pole is located at the centre of the earth and that the South Pole does not exist. Antarctica, on the other hand, is a high wall of ice built around the world, protecting it from falling into the unknown.

You, too, dear participants of the exhibition-competition, are invited to fantasize and make a "journey to the edge of the world" in your creative works.

What is it, the edge of the world, like in your imagination? Is it a place on a map? A distant country? Or is it a lost world? Or maybe it's something we'll have to experience in the distant future...