

The Source of Living Tradition

International online conference, dedicated to the 70th jubilee of Udmurt folklorist Tatiana Vladykina

An International online conference under the heading “Kalyk kyloslen vizyl oshmesyesz” – “The Source of Living Tradition” – “Elava traditiooni lätetel”, dedicated to the 70th jubilee of Udmurt folklorist Tatiana Vladykina, was held on October 4–6 2023.

The conference was organized by the Department of Folkloristics of the Estonian Literary Museum (Tartu, Estonia) in partnership with the Udmurt Institute of History, Language and Literature of the Udmurt Federal Research Centre of the Ural Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences and the Udmurt State University (Izhevsk, Russia) and was continuation of the series of conferences “Keelest meeleni XI” – “From Language to Mind XI”, dedicated to famous folklorists.

Tatiana Vladykina is a well-known Udmurt folklorist, Doctor of Philology, Professor of Folkloristics, laureate of the State award of the Udmurt Republic in the field of literature and art, foreign honorary member of the Finno-Ugric Society (Finland), laureate of the “Soul of Udmurtia” award of the Udmurt Republic in the field of traditional culture, leading researcher of the Department of Philological Research of the Udmurt Institute of History, Language and Literature of the UdmFRC UB RAS. The main direction of her scientific activity is the traditional culture of the Udmurts, genres and figurative system of Udmurt folklore. She graduated from the Udmurt State University in 1975, and in 1975–1978 she was a doctoral student at the University of Tartu. She has been collecting, studying and publishing Udmurt folklore since 1972; since 1978 she has been organizing expeditions to collect folklore and ethnographic materials; she supervises the compilation and publication of the Udmurt Folklore collection, a series of books “Cultural Monuments. Folklore Heritage”, “Udmurt Ritual Alphabet”. Tatiana Vladykina is the author of more than 300 publications (monographs, scientific articles, popular scientific and popular publications, educational and teaching aids), scientific editor of dozens of books on the problems of Udmurt folklore research in the context of traditional cultures of the Ural–Volga region peoples and kindred Finno-Ugric peoples.

The conference was aimed at discussing issues of folklore field studies, problems related to the study and preservation of the traditional culture of the Finno-Ugric peoples. It brought together more than 50 specialists in the areas of folklore and ethnomusicology, anthropology and cultural studies, history and ethnography – scientists from Estonia, Russia, Hungary, Austria and France. Within three days 24 scientific reports were heard, three new publications were presented with Nikolai Anisimov (Estonian Literary Museum) as the moderator. At the Estonian Literary Museum an exhibition of Tatiana Vladykina's scientific works was organized and the Museum staff read excerpts from them in Udmurt, Russian, Estonian, English and French.

On the first day Piret Voolaid, Director of the Estonian Literary Museum, Lyudmila Bekhtereva, Deputy Director for the Socio-Humanitarian Direction of the UdmFRC UB RAS, Galina Glukhova, Director of the Institute of Udmurt Philology, Finno-Ugric Studies and Journalistic of the Udmurt State University and Mare Kõiva, Head of the Department of Folkloristics of the Estonian Literary Museum, delivered welcome and congratulatory speeches to the organizers, participants of the conference and the hero of the day. The speakers noted Tatiana Vladykina's significant contribution to the development of Udmurt and Finno-Ugric folklore studies, accuracy, depth, modern methodology and world-class research, her tireless energy and curiosity as a scientist and expressed hope for further scientific cooperation and cultural interaction.

Warm and heartfelt congratulations were addressed to Tatiana Vladykina from foreign and Russian friends and colleagues representing the Institute of Philology of the Siberian Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences (Novosibirsk), the Institute of Humanitarian Studies of the Ural Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences (Perm branch of the Perm Federal Research Center of the Ural Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences) (Perm), the Institute of Ethnological Research named after R.G. Kuzeev of Ufa Federal Research Center of the Russian Academy of Sciences (Ufa) and the Institute of Language, Literature and History of the Karelian Scientific Center of the Russian Academy of Sciences (Petrozavodsk).

Musical compositions in honor of the hero of the day were performed by Emma Lotta Lyhmus (Tartu, Estonia), folk ensemble "Gozhnya kenakjos" from Gozhnya village, Malaya Purga district of Udmurtia (Russia) and the Udmurt ensemble "Oshmes" ("Spring") (Tartu, Estonia).

A presentation of new books made on the first day of the conference became a significant event.

Tatiana Panina and Elizaveta Lozhkina introduced the collective monograph “Tuzh uno kylyo verano kylyosy ...” = “How Much is Left Unspoken ...” (Izhevsk, 2023). It was prepared by the Udmurt Institute of History, Language and Literature of the UdmFRC UrO RAS and was dedicated to the birthday of the celebrant. The book contains a lot of unique archival materials collected by Tatiana Vladykina directly or under her leadership and scientific research of eminent and young scientists on Udmurt traditional culture and folklore, as well as congratulatory essays by her students and colleagues. The publication begins the planned “Udmurt Traditional Culture. Performer – Text – Research” book series which is a folkloristic research and publishing of authentic Udmurt folklore based on collecting activities, field research into specific local traditions.

Elena Popova presented another edition of the Institute – a collective monograph “The Bee and Honey in Folk Culture” (Izhevsk, 2023). The publication is based on the research of participants of the IV International Field Ethnographic Symposium “Mush Gur: Bees and Honey in the Culture of the Peoples of the Ural-Volga Region”, held in 2022 in Izhevsk. The book is devoted to the role of beekeeping in traditional and modern cultures, the reflection of the occupation in language and folklore, and the place of beekeeping in the economy of private households, tourism and modern cultural events. For the first time, the book presents extensive field material, archival and written sources, ethnographic, folklore, linguistic data on beekeeping and the place of beekeeping in folk culture, considering different sources and ethnocultural traditions of beekeeping.

Aado Lintrop presented his book “Soome-ugri reisid (Finno-Ugric Journeys)” (Tartu, 2022), which accumulated his personal impressions, memories and field diary entries covering 28 Finno-Ugric trips. These are stories of the discovery of kindred peoples and the Finno-Ugric world, and the author’s formation as a scientist. This is a description of a journey that began many years ago and continues to now day. This is a book about oneself, about people and peoples (the Finns, the Nganasans, the Estonians, the Votians, the Veps, the Khanty, the Mansi, the Seto, the Udmurts, the Sami, the Ingermanlanders, the Izhorians, etc.), their past, present and future.

The scientific program of the conference opened with a speech by Tatiana Vladykina (Izhevsk, Russia) on the topic ““Houses” and “Roads” of Heavenly Bodies in Udmurt Mythology”. Information concerning the main heavenly

bodies in Udmurt mythology – the Sun and the Moon – is not particularly extensive. Data in ethnographic literature mainly relates to them as foremothers, along with other archaic images of ancient mothers and ancestral goddesses (*Shundy-Mummy*, the Sun-Foremother, *Tolez'-Mummy*, the Moon-Foremother, *Kaldyk-Mummy*, Foremother-Primipara, etc.). To create a complete picture of these images, the researcher engaged with other complementary sources, for example riddles, conspiracy formulas, motifs and fairy tale plots. According to the existing corpus of folklore texts, the scientist reconstructed the ideas of the Udmurts about the “houses” and “roads” of the heavenly bodies and their main purpose to stabilize the world cosmic order.

The report of Nadezhda Shutova (Izhevsk, Russia) under the title “The Cheptsa River in the Rituals and Beliefs of the Northern Udmurts” covered the meaning of the Cheptsa River in the traditional religious and mythological representations of the northern Udmurts. The researcher considered the semantics of the river as a symbol of the motherland, the road in the real and mythological dimension, boundaries between worlds, as a means of getting rid of diseases, as a sacred value of the local Udmurts supported by personal field materials of the late 20th and early 21st centuries, archaeological and folklore-ethnographic literature of the late 19th to early 21st centuries. The author came to the conclusion that at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries, the Cheptsa River was a key economic, natural landscape, culture-forming and mythological object for the northern Udmurts.

In the period from 1990s to 2000s Hungarian researcher Agnes Kerezhi (Budapest, Hungary) participated in six expeditions to Alnashi, Balezino, Debesy, Zavyalovo, Kiyasovo, Malaya Purga, Yukamenskoe districts of Udmurtia, Buraevo and Kaltasy districts of Bashkortostan, Agryz district of the Republic of Tatarstan – the territories where the Udmurts and Besermians reside and where she studied archaic aspects of their life and mentality, folk customs and rituals. In the report based mainly on her own field research and entries, the scientist analyzes the changes that occurred in the Udmurt wedding ceremony and noted that at the end of the 20th century it preserved the essential elements and basic structure but became simpler and shorter compared to the wedding ceremony of the past, the participants of the ceremony changed, the rules of behavior of the bride and a young wife transformed.

Aado Lintrop (Tartu, Estonia) spoke about a modern Seto holiday – the Seto Kingdom Day, which appeared at the end of the 20th century (the first one was

celebrated in 1994) and quickly gained popularity as common public holiday. The researcher separately drew attention to the prerequisites and conditions for the emergence of the holiday, noted the role of individuals in the preservation, development and popularization of the language, history and culture of the Seto: they were the Estonian scholar Paulopriit Voolaine, who tried to create the Seto epic King Seto in 1922, and the traditional Setu singer Anna Vabarna, who, at the request of the scholar created and sang the epic about Peko in 1927, and the leader of the folk group Hellero Paul Hagu, who worked between 1991 to 1993 with the manuscript of the Seto epic “Peko”, preparing it for publication, and resulting from its basis and ideology he actually came up with this holiday. Today, the Seto Kingdom has become one of the four main landmarks of Seto culture along with folk costume, the song tradition and orthodoxy.

Mari researcher Natalia Glukhova (Yoshkar-Ola, Russia) considers such an important component of the ethnic picture of the world as space. The types of space in Mari proverbs and sayings, lyrical songs, fairy tales, conspiracies and prayers were determined using a systematic approach that included semantic analysis techniques and the use of quantitative assessment and ranking, which made it possible to identify the types of space that are particularly significant for the ethnos.

Several other reports were devoted to certain genres of Udmurt musical folklore.

Pavel Kutergin, a doctoral student at the University of Tartu (Estonia), focused his attention on the song tradition of Dyrdashur village, Sharkan district of Udmurtia. In the repertoire of the local folklore collective, ditties performed in two languages (Udmurt and Russian) were of particular interest. The analysis of poetic texts made it possible to identify three groups of ditties that differ not only in content, but also in degree of concentration of resources of the Udmurt and Russian languages, the nature of the borrowing Russian vocabulary, the attitude towards it, and the functional properties of the borrowed word in the recipient language.

The genre of Udmurt lullabies came to the attention of musicologists rather late. Recordings of lullabies made since the late 1980s have shown the ubiquity of variants of one song. After a long discussion, philologists came to the conclusion that the author of its poetic text was the Udmurt educator Grigory Vereshchagin. The peculiarities of the melody, rhythm and compositional structure of the tune also allowed them to attribute the origin to the author,

rather than the folklore. Irina Nurieva (Izhevsk, Russia) in the report “The Udmurt Lullaby. Once Again to the Problem of the Original Source” shared her thoughts about the probable author of the melody of the Udmurt lullaby *Chagyr, Chagyr dydyke* (“Blue, blue dove”).

The musical folklore of Korotaevo and Kuregovo villages in Glazov district of Udmurtia became the object of research by Ekaterina Sofronova (Izhevsk, Russia). During her expedition to the north of Udmurtia with the team of the “Actual Ethnography” project they recorded a lot of musical, game and choreographic folklore. The project team managed to fix almost living existence of unique ritual improvisational tunes: two wedding *syuan krez'*, one recruit *soldat kelyan krez'*, two guest *dzhöks'ör krez'* and *dzhök s'öryn s'ektan krez'*, and one woeful *yn vuron/köt kurekton krez'*. The ritual tunes were supplemented with three funeral and memorial and guest tunes. The proximity to Russian villages with Old Believer population diversified the repertoire of the song and dance culture of the northern Udmurts.

Nikolai Anisimov (Izhevsk, Russia; Tartu, Estonia) and Irina Pchelovodova (Izhevsk, Russia) spoke about their experience of preparing for publication a songbook on ritual folklore “Songs of the Eastern Udmurts”. These collection was another book from the Udmurt Folklore series. The authors analyzed their field studies carried out in the period from 2016 to 2023 in Baltachevo, Buraevj, Kaltasy, Tatyshly, Yanaul districts of Bashkortostan with the aim of fixing calendar and family-generic song folklore. They described the painstaking work on song notes due to the peculiarities of the traditional musical intonation (all kinds of melismatic decorations), the specifics of working with texts to preserve the most striking dialect features of the Eastern Udmurts; the principles of material presentation.

Corresponding Member of the Russian Academy of Sciences Alexander Chernykh (Perm, Russia) introduced different approaches to the publication of folklore texts on the example of several projects. The desire of modern folklorists for the most authentic presentation of texts faces such difficulties as an adequate reflection of the phonetic features of colloquial speech and local phenomena of the language, and in the case of publication in several languages the problem of translation. When approaching the publication of the entire array of recorded narratives, difficulties arise with the perception of the integrity of a folklore text itself. Modern folklorists strive for a comprehensive publication of folklore texts, using different methods of publishing on different media from

text collections to multimedia projects. The researcher pointed out that with a significant volume of modern folklore publications, there was no single approach, but rather a variety due to the peculiarities and quality of the material, the orientation of publications towards a particular readership, as well as the researcher's specialty and the author's concepts.

The folklore of the Udmurts living in the Republic of Bashkortostan is strongly linked with an identity that developed in isolation from the mother ethnos, under the influence of a foreign ethnic (Turkic) environment. The affiliation of the bearers of this folklore with the traditional Udmurt religion ('paganism') also gave it certain unique features. By the beginning of the 21st century, the range of folklore genres decreased sharply. Many samples had been lost or were preserved only in the memory of the older generation, but were not reproduced in everyday or ceremonial life. Researchers Ranus Sadikov (Ufa, Russia) and Tatiana Minniyakhmetova (Innsbruck, Austria) spoke about the need to preserve and study the Bashkirian Udmurts' folklore heritage, its publication and popularization, modern aspects of existence and trends in collecting and studying of their oral folklore, musical, ethno-choreographic and folk game culture.

Ekaterina Suntsova (Szeged, Hungary) studies the herbal traditions of the Udmurts, so she shared the plans to publish the herbalist's reference book of medicinal plants and book structure. Her study was conducted in the summer of 2017 in some villages in the northern, central and southern regions of Udmurtia. Herbalists, healers and ordinary Udmurtia's residents contributed to the knowledge about plants, methods of collecting, ways of use and other crafts. Those materials of the expedition formed the basis of the future book.

Irina Vinokurova (Petrozavodsk, Russia) in her report "Chapels in the Orthodox Traditions of the Shim Lake Vepsian region (late 19th and early 20th centuries)" summarized information from scattered sources on the chapels of the Vepsians of Shim Lake Znamensky and Vysokoe Lake Nikolaevsky parishes of Lodeynopolsky, Olonets Governate (late 19th and early 20th centuries) and analyzed it from the point of view of landscape approach. The author considered the topography of chapels in the cultural landscape of Shim Lake region, revealed the motifs for their construction (the vow, the appearance of the icon, the restoration of the lost shrine, the burial of unbaptized infants, etc.), identified the dedication of chapels and related holidays, and determined the functions of chapels in the parish life of Vepsian villages.

Social and cultural anthropologist Maria Vyatchina (Tartu, Estonia), relying on archive documents, media publications and propaganda materials, examined the issues of emancipation in the early Soviet period, when the new government relied on indigenous women as the main agents of change. In the attempt to implement socialist transformations in remote regions, the state contrasted two categories of women: those who were supposed to represent ‘backwardness’ (a category associated with the production of *kumyshka*, healing, non-compliance with Soviet hygienic standards, for which women were declared responsible) and those young women who were supposed to become the face of socialist change in the Udmurt village.

Tatiana Korobova’s report (Izhevsk, Russia) was devoted to the analysis of the character code of Udmurt wedding songs. The study focused on the terminology of kinship and properties, as represented in a significant amount in Udmurt wedding songs, but was poorly studied and therefore requiring more detailed analysis and description. The scholar came to the conclusion that the terms of kinship and properties, being in the context of a wedding ritual, acquire an additional semantic load and become ‘wedding’, since they characterize a participant who performs certain wedding functions. Such terms are carriers of cultural semantics and symbolic function on a par with the poetic terms of the Udmurt wedding text.

Through a stylistic analysis of musical features and poetics of four songs recorded by Tatiana Vladykina, Maria Slesareva and Nikolai Zubkov during the 1981 expedition, Svetlana Tolkacheva (Izhevsk, Russia) in the report under the title “Some Cultural Meanings of Russian Songs “with movement” in the Udmurt tradition of Varni village, Debesy district, Udmurt Republic” revealed the specifics of the functioning of Russian round dance songs in the traditional culture of the northern Udmurts. Considerable attention was paid to the characteristics of the sound fabric of the songs, and above all, acoustic and timbre parameters.

Pavel Shakhov’s report (Novosibirsk, Russia) focused on two popular songs that came out of the military (Cossack, Red Army) environment, and then became widespread in many folklore traditions: 1) “I know, raven, your custom” with the melody of a Cossack song and the text, which is based on P. Kozlov’s translation of the poem by the Polish poet V. Syrokomli “Pieśń Litevska” / “Lithuanian song”; 2) “How my own mother saw me off” with the melody of the Ukrainian song “Oh, what’s the noise is there” to the words of

D. Bednyi's "Seeing off". In the folklore traditions of the Siberian Mordvins-Erzya and Mordvins-Moksha, those songs were performed in Russian, as well as with poetic texts in Mordovian languages, which differ in content from folk versions and original authors. On the one hand, in the process of adapting the borrowed songs, historical realities and traditional poetic motifs characteristic of the Mordovian culture appeared. On the other hand, the borrowed songs served as a kind of impulse for the development of the Mordovian culture, became part of it.

The report by Sergey Minvaleev (Petrozavodsk, Russia) "Our Little Nationality": The Experience of Studying the Ethnic self-identity of Karelians-Ludiks (results of the 2021 expedition)" was the results of a field study of the ethnic self-perception of the Ludiks through the prism of concepts about their native language, ethno-linguistic environment, images of themselves and 'strangers'. The researcher analyzed the dual identity of the Ludiks, the characteristics of their ethnic group and native language, the nicknames of both neighboring Karelian groups and the Ludiks themselves and concluded that at the moment the boundaries of Ludik ethnic self-determination, according to the 'Karel – Ludik' paradigm, were shaky and floating and are most often associated with switching the language code.

Dreams are one of the types of folklore to which researchers return trying to explain something through symbols. The ancient Estonian faith tells about the wanderings of human soul during sleep. When a person wakes up, he remembers only some of these wanderings, of what was seen and experienced, while the remainder are hidden. Over time, language, environment and messages have changed, as have the places to which the soul migrate today. What has changed and what remains? Can today's man protect himself from what happens in a dream? Mare Kõiba, in her report "When We All Fall Asleep, Where Do We Go?" (Billy Ailish)" reasoned four story collections about dreams recorded from different people in different regions of Estonia, motifs and plots, signs and symbols, functions of those dreams.

Tatiana Panina (Izhevsk, Russia) continued the topic raised by the previous speaker. In the report "Udmurt Ideas About the 'Other' World" (Based on Oral Narratives About Dreams)" she examined the ideas of the Udmurts about the afterlife (*sopal dunne*), which were reflected in folklore stories about dreams. The analyzing narratives related to otherworldly dreams, the plot-forming motifs of which were of meeting and communicating with the deceased, usually close

relatives or acquaintances. Along with the fact that those texts actualize the view that the dead were forbidden to talk about the afterlife, dream narratives were one of the main sources of information about otherness. They contain information that allows us to draw some conclusions about the prevailing ideas of the Udmurts about posthumous existence. In accordance with those tales, the afterlife was presented as a locus with certain signs and characteristic conditions pertaining to the existence of its inhabitants.

In the report under the title “Narratives About Witchcraft in the Everyday Communication of the Modern Udmurts” Tatiana Russkikh (Izhevsk, Russia) provided an overview of ideas about magic and witchcraft preserved in modern rural Udmurt society. Supported by field materials collected during ethnographic expeditions to the northern and central regions of Udmurtia between 2003 and 2023, the author recreates image of witches and sorcerers, describing their supernatural abilities, as well as the unspoken rules governing behavior in the process of collision with the ‘magical’.

Eva Toulouze (Tartu, Estonia; Paris, France) shared her thoughts, observations and the results of her long-term research activity in Udmurtia and in Bashkiria. Traditional values, everyday life, their religion and culture, character traits, ways of communication, attitude to others – those aspects of life of the Udmurts that have remained under researcher’s review over the past 30 years.

Natalia Ermakov’s report (Tallinn-Tartu, Estonia) was devoted to a review of the activities of the Association of the Peoples of Estonia (ERÜ), founded in 1988, which united different nationalities of Estonia. The ERÜ represents the interests of Estonia’s minorities, and preserves, develops and introduces the native language and culture of the small-numbered peoples living in the country, helping to preserve their identity, customs and folklore. The activities of the association include several events aimed at introducing the cultural diversity of the country to the Estonians and guests, promoting national, regional and community identity, and preserving cultural memory and spiritual heritage, thereby enriching the cultural space of Estonia.

Independent researcher and singer Maria Korepanova (Izhevsk, Russia) acquainted the conference participants with an ancient vocal genre *krez’*, which exists among the Besermians and the northern Udmurts, and also its therapeutic potential. The performance of *krez’*, as the bearers of the tradition themselves note, facilitates the inner emotional state more than singing songs when everyone sings the same plot text. Spontaneous and asemantic texts in

which the performer expresses lived experiences, emotions and feelings while singing allow to be achieved. The author expressed hope that the vocal-therapeutic technique she developed in 2021 will help revive the tradition of creating improvisational texts and at the same time transform performer's inner state.

All three days of the conference were held in a warm and friendly atmosphere. As the conference was built following the principle "everyone listens to everyone", without the plenary session or thematic sections, everyone could listen and take part in the discussion of each report – be it a world-famous scientist's report or a novice researcher's one. The scientific reports alternated with music videos and educational videos introducing the traditional and modern culture of the Udmurts, the Estonians and the Seto to the conference participants . It also created the unique atmosphere of a celebration of science .

I would like to express my gratitude to the organizers of the conference for the intensive program, its high professional level and the relevance of the proposed issues. Good health, creative longevity, welfare, happiness and vivacity to Tatiana Vladykina!

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