

# Tatiana Vladykina's Contribution to Udmurt Folkloristics<sup>1</sup>

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We dedicate this article to Tatiana Grigoryevna Vladykina. Let us list her titles: Doctor of Philology, Professor, leading researcher at the Udmurt Research Institute<sup>2</sup>, author of more than three hundred publications (monographs, popular-science publications, didactic writings, scientific articles), honoured scientist of the Udmurt Republic. It is impossible to overstate Tatiana Vladykina's contribution to the development of Udmurt folkloristics in particular, and Russian folkloristics in general. We do not exaggerate when we say that she is the leading folklorist not only in the Udmurt Republic, but also in the whole Urals–Volga region. Her dedication to research, her selfless work, her uninterrupted self-improvement and endeavours to find new fields and results, her fidelity to her people, these are some of the fundamental personal qualities that have determined her biography and scientific career.

Tatiana Vladykina, née Perevozchikova, was born on September 8<sup>th</sup> 1953 in Staryye Keny, Zav'yalovo district, Udmurt Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic. Her parents worked all their lives in village schools. Her father, Grigoriy Karpovich, was the director of Yakshur secondary school; he was the first person in the Republic to organise work on local history and founded the school's museum. Her mother, Sophia Grigoryevna, was a teacher of mathematics and supported her husband devotedly. Tatiana Grigoryevna always remembered her parents warmly and lovingly. For her, they were indisputable authorities and their understanding of life formed her character, her strength of purpose and her decency.

When she finished school in 1970, Vladykina entered the philology faculty of the Udmurt Pedagogical Institute and, once her course was successfully completed, she became a doctoral student at the University of Tartu (Estonia). She was interested in studying Udmurt riddles. For her PhD (Russian candidate) dissertation, she had to explore thoroughly the archives of the Udmurt Research Institute, as well as to collect material herself during field expeditions. She acknowledges that she discovered her genuine taste for research in her years as a doctoral student, and that this determined her scientific fate. In 1980, she defended her PhD on Udmurt folk riddles in Moscow and in 1999 presented her doctoral thesis *Udmurt Folklore: Syncretism and the Functional Specifics of the Genre* (Moscow). In 2005, the Supreme Attestation Commission awarded Tatiana Vladykina the academic title of Professor of Folkloristics.

At the end of her doctoral studies in 1978, she was appointed senior researcher at the Udmurt Research Institute<sup>3</sup>, with the rest of her fate, researching Udmurt folklore for more than forty years, remaining connected with the Institute. In the first years, the young researcher systematically collected folklore materials according to a wide and complex programme: with her colleagues and students, she investigated many districts in Udmurtia and

worked in territories inhabited by the Udmurt in the bordering regions and republics. Thanks to her collecting work, the folklore funds of the Institute were enriched with hundreds of songs, legends, riddles, beliefs, narratives about calendar and family rituals and other folklore genres. From her first years as a professional, Tatiana Vladykina reflected on systematising the funds of the Institute's archives. Her work collecting fieldwork materials and systematising published and archive sources were the origin of one of the first volumes of the *Udmurt folklore* series, which included *Proverbs: Riddles* (Izhevsk 1982), *Folk Aphorisms and Folk Sayings* (Izhevsk 1987), *Songs of the Southern Udmurt, Vol 1* (Izhevsk 1992), *Songs of the Southern Udmurt Vol 3* (Izhevsk 2014) (these last two volumes in cooperation with musicologist E. B. Vershinina-Boykova). She also published important articles with rich text appendices: "The Genre Peculiarities of Chants in Udmurt Folklore" (Izhevsk 1986), "Omens and Beliefs about the Weather" (Izhevsk 1989), "Udmurt Beliefs in the System of Ethnic Social Regulation" (Izhevsk 1992).

Not only did Tatiana Vladykina do a great deal of work collecting and systematising funds of folklore and ethnographic knowledge, she also contributed to conserving manuscripts, audio, photo and video materials of the archive by implementing modern digital technology. In 2006, under her leadership, the Electronic Database of the Traditional Culture of the Peoples of Udmurtia project was launched, supported by the Russian Scientific Foundation for the Humanities within the wider project Image of Russia in the Contemporary World. In order to realise this project, some questions had to be solved, such as the elaboration of a working model of the hypertext database, the structure of the information base, a system of classification, all taking into account the perspectives of information conservation and the principle of rational access.

In the formation and development of her personality, we may not underestimate the importance of the leadership of one structural

subdivision of the Institute. Between 1985 and 2000, Vladykina was the head of the Sector, later Department, of Folklore and Literature. It was a very tense period for the Institute as well as for Russian research as a whole. But this was also the period when the main directions in researching Udmurt folklore were determined, as well as the attention to precise issues and simultaneously to the general context of traditional culture. Tatiana Vladykina was connected with the legendary scholarly school of Yuri Lotman. Her years in Tartu and the discovery of older and newer ways of tackling philological issues became the starting point in the choice of a creative and scientific direction and the elaboration of a personal research strategy. She conversed much with Paul Ariste, Estonian academician, who was also an example of a genuine researcher-philologist, perceiving the world through words. Having started her CV with riddles and proverbs, Vladykina was able to implement rapidly her systematising potential, which led Udmurt folkloristics and humanities to a newer qualitative level. The characteristics of Vladykina's school and laboratory are systematism, complexity and creative comprehension of the heritage of her predecessors (N. Kralina, P. Pozdeev, D. Yashin, etc). One of the priority orientations of the sector became the study of Udmurt folklore as an integrated system, characterising the traditional Udmurt worldview, as well as the study of folklore genres, from the point of view of their functionality, narrowly local diversity, and overall text corpus. In order to achieve these goals, trained people were necessary, and so it was vital to keep those who already worked in the sector. Vladykina's friendliness, good interrelations within her team, as well as her defence of her co-workers came to the fore. She achieved her goals with her colleagues by organising conferences, monographs and collections of scientific articles.

Within such an approach to the study of folklore, we must emphasise the role for Udmurt folkloristics of Vladykina's monograph *Udmurt Folklore: Problems of Genre Evolution and Systematics*

(Izhevsk 1998). Following the experience of her predecessors, and taking into account the demands and achievements of today's research, Vladykina created an overview of the verbal sphere of Udmurt spiritual culture, through the prism of the genres of Udmurt folklore, their genesis and evolution. After analysis of the material it became possible to avoid the generic classification coming from literary studies, and identify three genres fundamental to folklore: magic folklore, educational and didactic folklore, and recreational and ludic folklore. Characterising each genre, Vladykina shows how these three parameters and functions determine the nature and structure of each genre as a whole.

The Department of Literature and Folklore, under the authority, and with the direct participation, of Vladykina, organised the participation of ethnomusicologists. They used the methods of areal and functional research to study the ritual musical and singing tradition as well as folk lyrical songs. Since 1992, the *Udmurt Folklore* series has published song collections with musical notation and translation into two languages (since 2017 sometimes with the addition of English). Each volume is dedicated to a particular local tradition. Among eight volumes, two, mentioned already, have been prepared and published by Vladykina with musicologist E. Vershinina-Boykova as co-author; for almost every issues Vladykina has been the scientific editor. The high level of the whole series was very much determined by the first collection: on the one hand, it combined the highly professional work of the musicologist, and on the other hand of folklorist and philologist Vladykina, "who has long experience with words and who perceives them very finely" (Irina Nurieva).

As a head of department, Vladykina gave her colleagues the important task of publishing classic material from the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. To accomplish this they founded the Monuments of Culture: Folklore Heritage series. Within the framework of this series, two books were publish with musical notations and

song texts: E. Gippius, E. Eval'd, *The Udmurt Folk Song*, Izhevsk 1989; and *The Udmurt Folk Song in the Work of D. S. Valsil'yev-Bugaev* (eds. T. Vladykina, M. Khodyreva), Izhevsk 1992. In these books, the researcher is present not only as editor but also making translations and scientific comments to the musical texts, looking at them from a contemporary point of view.

This idea was pursued by researchers in literature. Between 1995 and 2011, V. Vanyushev organised the publication of six volumes in eleven books of the *Complete Works* of Grigoriy Vereshchagin, an Udmurt scholar, writer and folklorist who worked at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. As a member of the editing committee of this fundamental publication, Vladykina contributed to the scientific comments on precise terms and concepts in the thematic indexes of the first three volumes. The fourth volume, two books including G. Vereshchagin's research and material on Udmurt and Russian folklore, was fully prepared by Vladykina with the cooperation of her folklorist colleagues.

We must observe that Tatiana Vladykina has been the scientific and responsible editor of practically all the folklore publications in the sector since the 1980<sup>s</sup>.

Along with scientific publications, Vladykina has prepared a popular bilingual series called the *Golden Krez'*, with six books that contain different folklore genres, systematised according to theme.

In the last decade, in her scientific work, Vladykina has focused particularly on Udmurt ritual practice. Following modern scientific trends, she pays close attention to worldview and mythological aspects of folklore texts such as metaphor, the paraphernalia and the actions that have peculiar qualities in the ritual context. One of her last books (co-authored by Galina Glukhova), *Year-Circle: Rituals and Celebrations of the Udmurt Calendar*, is the first in the Udmurt Ritual Primer series. The work has been achieved according to the principles of N. I. Tolstoy's ethnolinguistic school:

each folklore term and its cultural definition are studied within a multidimensional worldview context.

Another important aspect of Vladykina's creative activity is pedagogical work. Between 1985 and 1987, she taught Udmurt language, literature and folklore at the Udmurt studio at the A. Lunacharski Russian Theatre Institute. She belongs to the category of people who permanently endeavour to enrich their knowledge, skills and qualities: she is always interested by new approaches in research, and new methods and tools in education. When she was in the Theatre Institute, she observed with great pleasure how they taught students stage speaking, and she went on to teach this subject based on Udmurt. She understood that this experience must be taken advantage of in other circumstances. She achieved her dream when she was invited to join the Faculty of Udmurt Philology at the Udmurt University. Here she delivered special cycles of lectures dedicated to folklore and the traditional culture of the Udmurt, as well as giving the course in rhetoric, teaching this subject with pleasure.

Vladylina has cooperated actively with the Udmurt University since the early 1980s as a permanent guest lecturer. She has been regularly appointed chairperson of the State exams and attestation commission. In 2003, she was invited to be head of the Chair of Russian Language and Literature in Interethnic Communication at the Faculty of Udmurt Philology. In the seven years that she was head of this chair she was able with her colleagues to implement new ideas and methods in the teaching activities of the University. She conceived and elaborated innovative folklore programmes for the older students and doctoral students. In her pedagogical activities, there is a special place for special cycles of lectures and textbooks for students, such as *The Basis of Mythology*, *Mythopoeitics*, *Folklore in the Culture of the Peoples of the World*, *Hermeneutics of the Folklore Text*, *Folkloristics Today: Methods, Orientations and Schools*, and *Local History*. Among her numerous productions let

us highlight *Ingur* (heavenly tune), a chrestomathy – textbook – for schoolchildren, students and a wide circle of readers. She included in the textbook folklore texts from the 19<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> centuries, reflecting the state of the folklore text in its dynamics. Thanks to this chrestomathy the reader can widen his or her representations of the spiritual culture of the Udmurt, and can take into account the systematised experience of the mythic and folklore understanding of the world.

Tatiana Vladykina is a sensitive, gifted and demanding teacher. She delivers her lectures passionately and with characteristic thoroughness, to undergraduate as well as postgraduate students, as well as to colleagues and schoolteachers. She holds her audience from the very beginning to the last seconds of her lectures. These lectures in part do not resemble ordinary academic lectures, they are more similar to a lecture dialogue, as is requested by modern education norms. Dozens of students under her leadership wrote their graduation theses on the serious problems in Udmurt folkloristics. She has thus created a scientific school of Udmurt folklore study in the context of the traditional cultures of the peoples of the Urals–Volga region as well as kin Finno-Ugric peoples. Under her leadership there have been doctoral studies in folkloristics since 1995. After graduating students attempt to have her as a scientific supervisor, for she is a gifted teacher, a genuine professional in her sphere. She was very demanding towards her doctoral students and was proud of them: more than ten students defended their PhDs under her supervision. The transmitted knowledge and spirit helped them find the right way in the modern world. She was the chairperson of the Council for Doctoral Defences in the discipline 10.01.09. Folkloristics (Izhevsk 2002–2008) and was a member of the dissertation council at Ulyanovsk State Pedagogical University. Today, she is member of the dissertation council of the Udmurt State University, in the disciplines 10.02.02 Languages of the Peoples of Russia (Finno-Ugric and Samoyed languages) and 10.20.19 Language Theory.



In 2000, a summer school was organised as an acknowledgment of Vladykina and Udmurt folkloristics in general, the International Summer School of Young Folklorists, in conjunction with the Open Society of the Soros Foundation, Russia. This project developed in Udmurtia and continued the tradition of international and all-Russian schools for young scholars, a particular phenomenon in Russian research. In 2005 and 2009, Vladykina organised another two schools, which also became events in our region.

We cannot praise Vladykina highly enough for her achievements in popularising scientific knowledge of traditional culture. Her professional consultations are of great assistance to specialists who prepare television and radio programmes, folklore festivals, exhibitions, competitions, forums, seminars. Her precious comments, her ability to find the pearl in the work of the folk ensembles, these features characterise her activity, which stimulates and inspires the people working in culture to look for new ideas. She is a tremendous educator, one always wants to improve, to reach further when with her.

Vladykina is a foreign member of honour of the Finno-Ugric society (Helsinki, Finland); she started as a regional representative at the scientific Traditional Culture almanac (Moscow), and then became a member of its editorial committee; she is also a member of the editorial committees of the *Scientific Education in the Humanities Messenger* (Moscow), the *Udmurt University History and Philology Messenger*, and the *Finno-Ugric Research Yearbook* (Izhevsk).

Tatiana Vladykina sees her husband, Vladimir Vladykin, as almost her main teacher. He played a huge role in her development as one of the key characters in the humanities, in the spiritual scientific and education life of the Udmurt Republic. They complement each other in scientific and everyday spheres.

Together, instead of their old family house, they built a new house of modern design. Combining their folkloristic and ethnographic knowledge, they reproduced in this house a whole complex:

a kinship sanctuary (*kuala*), a two-store granary (*kenos*), buildings that are no longer used but are interesting as part of a historical past. Today, it is a big household that requires permanent attention and care, intense work that goes unnoticed by observers.

The couple shows unquenchable vital energy and their home is permanently full of guests. People from the village who come as neighbours; foreign guests, colleagues, friends, kin, all of whom they host with joy. Regular visitors are doctoral students, who come for consultations, advice on life questions, and also just to honour their teachers. Tatiana Grigor'evna always offers Udmurt dishes that she prepares herself, and they are received as 'Vladykins' specials' with real enthusiasm.

The credo of Tatiana Vladykina's life is to live simply, without cheating or slyness, ready to help in any situation. She is a charming woman, a thoughtful researcher, a gifted teacher, a versatile personality. Few people know that she has written the text of the Udmurt Republic's anthem. Every time one meets her, one rejoices in her welcome and her kindness, admires her capacity for work, her innovative scientific ideas and her discoveries in the fields of folklore and traditional culture in general.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> This text has been published in Russian in the *Yearbook of Finno-Ugric Studies*, 2018, 12 (3), pp. 191–197.
- <sup>2</sup> Udmurt Institute of History, Language and Literature, Udmurt Federal Research Centre of the Ural Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences.
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