

COSMOGONIC CONCEPTIONS OF THE UDMURT PEOPLE IN NAMING STARS AND THEIR IMAGES IN FOLKLORE

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Abstract: The cosmogonic concepts of the Udmurt people can be detected through the names of stars, the names of which are usually based on mythological cognition. Additional and very significant information about space objects is contained in folklore texts. The images of stars are included in a stable triad of heavenly bodies along with the sun and moon. Their constant feature is 'bright' light, opposed to images of negative energy, forces of darkness – diseases or sorcerers. Therefore, images of stars are frequently used in charms, where they are presented as an insurmountable barrier to those who do evil. The stars, along with the sun and moon, became metaphors and comparisons in the song culture, prayers and charms of the Udmurt people. They are used as analogies in the characterization of family and kinship ties, testifying the relationships within the clan. The stars and constellations, when seen as symbols of unattainability and indivisibility, are a kind of guarantor of stability of the world.

Keywords: stars, stars in folklore, cosmogonic concepts, naming of stars, charms, triad of heavenly bodies, the Udmurt people.

Cosmogonic representations are one of the important components of the mythological picture of the world of any nation. The images of heavenly bodies – the sun, moon and stars – are the basis of the foundations of the entire system of ideas about the universe, which, in relation to the Udmurt worldview, can be reconstructed according to the nominations of heavenly bodies and their images in folklore.

The stars in Udmurt folklore are a permanent component of the cosmic triad along with the sun and moon. Their main feature is **light**: "...*shundy lyugyt, tolez' lyugyt, kizili lyugyt...*(The sun is bright, the moon is bright, the stars are bright...)" (Wichmann 1893: 179). Stars (*kizili*) are the symbol of multiplicity, uncountability, the constellation *in kizili syuros* is a symbol of indivisibility and unattainability. The light of star clusters-constellations, their innumerable multitude, their indivisibility makes them one of the guarantors of the stability of the world, its integrity, therefore the desire to "count / destroy the celestial stars / constellations" in charms is given as

an impossible condition to an otherworldly force (disease / sorcerer): “...*In kidz'ililes' syurosse... siny-yuny ke byttid, soky si-yu ta adyamiyez...* (Munkácsi 1887: 178) (...The constellation of heavenly stars ... destroy (lit.: eat-drink) when you can, then destroy this man ...); “*Siz'yndon siz'ym kizili mynam yyr yylam, soye byttid ke, soku bydty ta adyamiyez*“ ... (“Seventy-seven stars above my head, when you destroy them, then destroy this man” (Wichmann 1893: 185, №21).

One of the images of stars that have now been eroded in contemporary society is the image of pillars supporting the firmament. This image is more clearly correlated with the sun in the riddle “*Bydes dunnely gord yubo*” (“The red pillar for the whole world”) (Riddles 1982: 214). But, judging by the texts of spells, “the number of heavenly pillars is great, (as) the number of stars is great” (Khudyakov: 8), and it was believed to be known only to initiates, ‘knowledgeable’ people who included this image in the spell formula to strengthen protection from negative circumstances, drawing an implicit parallel between the images of stars and pillars.

To date, linguistic researchers have identified more than 50 Udmurt cosmonyms (Kirillova 2010; Kirillova 2016), which include the names of individual stars or constellations. Among them, for example, Venus / *Zarnitsa – Saktonkizili / Dz'ardonkizili*, or Star of Dawn / *Chulpon*, Orion – *Tarazi kizili / Tarazi*, Pleiades – *Sherpuzh kizili* (the Constellation of the Sieve), etc. The analysis of the names of the stars allowed us to identify the basic principles of their nomination by the location of the stars, the relative time of appearance in the sky visible to man, the number of stars in the constellation, the relative size of the object, association with any item of household, bird, animal (Kirillova 2011). It is noted while even if there is a concept of a constellation in the definition of a *cluster* of stars (*ogazeyas'kem, syuros, suz'yet*) in the proper names of constellations, as a rule, only the word *kizili*, or ‘star’ is used, and on this basis, it is concluded that in the Udmurt language, stars do not differ from constellations. But this statement, in our opinion, does not consider the nuances of the Udmurt language, where the use of the plural with collective nouns can be represented without any morphological indication, and in relation to the heavenly bodies, this curious fact is found only in translations. The concept of *kizili* (‘star’), thus, can denote both a single object and a combined set. The constellation Ursa Major, for example, has several names: *Tshözkh kar* “Duck’s Nest”, *Baddz'ym koby* “Big Ladle”, *Kuz'-byzhokizili* – lit.: “Long-tailed Star / Long-tailed constellation / Constellation with a long tail”. This row can be supplemented with a variant of the “Long Tail Star”. But such meanings, as it turns out, are applicable to cosmonyms formed considering only the external appearance of the constellation. If the cosmonym is formed considering the location of the object, as for example, in the case of another name for the Big Dipper, “*Yryyl-kizili [suros]*” (Above the head [located constellation]), then the perception of this name causes difficulties. At the same time, it is the translation that makes it possible to clarify the meaning of the cosmonym: “Stars above your head” is the entire starry sky, “The star above your head” as the main one is the North Star. Therefore, *Yryyl-kizili* in relation to the Big Dipper should mean “The Head / The Main Constellation”, which does not contradict the significance of this celestial object for our northern latitudes.

Another variant of the name was found in the riddles, at the head of which is a metaphorical image in the likeness: “*Yyr ylyyn dzhök kuk. – Dzhökkuk-kizili*” (Above the head is a table leg. – The constellation of the Big Dipper, or, literally; Constellation-the-Legs-of-the-Table’). The metaphor of the riddle, in our opinion, is a kind of “rolled-up myth” containing the idea of a Heavenly House, in the sacred locus of which there is an altar table corresponding to the table in “the red corner” of the peasant hut (Vladykin 1994: 71). Judging by the answer, the question part of the riddle has undergone some metamorphoses, having lost the epithet *ин* – ‘heavenly’ in the image [*in*] *dzhök kuk* (leg of [heavenly] table) = *dzhök kuk* (table leg), as in a case with *ingur* = *gur* “heavenly furnace=furnace” in the meaning of ‘the firmament’ / ‘the eternal vault’. Researchers of cosmonyms in the languages of the peoples of Siberia correlate the Udmurt term *dzhök kuk* / *dzhök kuk kizili* with the names of constellations, in the semantics of which there are concepts of “having legs (supports)” (Anikin 1991: 39-40); the Udmurt nomination of the Big Dipper *Siz’ym kizili* “Seven Stars / Seven Stars” («Семь звезд / Семизвездие») also correlates with the ‘Siberian’ variants (Ibid).

The loss of the attributive epithet *in* (‘heavenly’) in the perception of the firmament as a ‘heavenly furnace’ led from macrocosmic proportions to microcosmic, which is why celestial objects acquired a quite close, ‘homely’ appearance: stars (round muffin cakes (*biskyli* / *kömech* / *yuacha*), small muffin balls-*shekera*, *perepechi*) along with the sun and moon (loaf of bread, *shanezhka*) were “inserted” into a home oven. The abundance of cookie images in the image of the heavenly bodies, of course, is not accidental. The identity of space and home is the main ‘world-building’ idea of almost all times and peoples: “Home as the world, the world as home – this metaphorical identity largely determines the system of traditional worldview” (Traditional worldview ... 1988: 61; see also: Gemuev 1990). Poetic images of the sun, moon and stars in the form of various kinds of cookies in riddles are also recorded in Russian folklore. But if we analyse the territory of distribution of these texts, we will find that they were recorded mainly in the area of contact with the Finno-Ugric peoples, in particular, on the territory of the Perm or Vyatka province (Mitrofanova 1968: 18–21, 165–166), basically the stars and the moon in the Russian tradition are likened to grains (peas / millet) scattered on the field / bed curtain / bast mat, sheep on pasture under the supervision of a ‘horned’ shepherd, which seems more typical of the East Slavic tradition.

The most convincing oath that Udmurt gave in convincing someone of his rightness was the one where, in addition to the Supreme God, heavenly bodies and his native land were mentioned: “*Inmar ponna, shundy ponna, tolez’ ponna, tyle ponna, lyëgono mu’yeme ponna, az’ ulone ponna – ta uzhez öy kar!*” (I swear by God, I swear by the sun, I swear by the moon, I swear by fire, I swear by the earth I walk on, I swear by my future life – I did not do this!) (Munkácsi 1887: 192); «*Inmar ponna!.. Nyan’ ponna!.. Shundy ponna!.. Tolez’ ponna!.. Kizili ponna!* (I swear by the Lord... by bread... by the sun... by the month... by the stars)” (Vereshchagin 1995: 92).

The favour of the heavenly bodies to a person, their influence on his fate is traditional in folk culture and constitutes a fundamental moment in mythopoeic perception. And, if in more archaic genres, ætiological motives prevail, then in later ones, moral attitudes become the predominant ones. Heroes are rewarded for their moral quali-

ties. In this sense, a fairy tale is typical, in its characteristics close to the legendary and novelistic at the same time:

Once upon a time there was a little girl in the world. When she was seven or eight years old, her parents died, and she was left homeless. There was no one to give her water – to feed, clothe, warm her. Apart from the poor clothes and the poor handkerchief, she didn't have anything. She had to beg. One day, a kind man gave her a piece of bread. She left him, and another hungry beggar came to meet her.

“Daughter, give me a piece of bread, I'm very hungry,” the beggar began to ask her for a piece of bread. The girl gave him all the bread and said, “Eat, Grandpa, you're welcome!”

They say she went further. Went and went, they say, and it was getting late. A guy comes to meet her.

“Give me something to cover my head, my head is freezing! – the guy asked. The little girl gave him her only handkerchief and went on, they say.

Suddenly, stars began to fall on her from the sky and turned into silver coins. The girl was delighted and began to collect them (Vatka no Kalmez: № 8).

‘Nominal’ constellations and individual stars in folklore texts are not so common, but are rather found in highly original comparisons in the associative parallelisms of songs. The time after midnight, for example, is determined by the position of the Big Dipper, which received another version of the name in the text below:

*Tunne dzhyt kuazed tuzh kez'yt,
Vay, urom, pas'te: kymis'ko.
Siz'ym-kizili byzhze berykte,
Vay, urom, kide: pyris'ko (Munkácsi 1952: 339, №125)*

The weather is cold tonight.

Give me your fur coat, my friend: I'm freezing.

Constellation-of-Seven-Stars turns its tail [night is coming to dawn],

Give me your hand, my friend, [to say goodbye]: I'm coming [home from a walk]

The cosmonym “Tail of the Constellation of Seven Stars”, which is included in the song, seems to us to be a peculiar combination of two ‘starry’ images: a certain ‘tailed’ beast and a visual cluster of a certain “number” of star objects.

The Milky Way, known as *Luddz'azeg-lobdz'on-syures / Luddz'azeg-syures / Kyrdz'azeg-syures* “The road of Flight of Wild Geese” / “The road of Wild Geese” in folklore texts, is used to denote an unattainable height and a spatiotemporal designation of a long-distance road:

*Lud-dz'azeg-syures tuzh vylyn,
Shundy ke potoz, ug addz'is'ky.
Anay, milemyz tuzh sagynod,
Asles'tyd pide ud addz'y*

The Road-of-Wild geese is very high,
The sun is not visible when it rises.
Mother, you will miss us,
But you won't see your son.
(Munkácsi 1952: 323, №73).

*Zhyngyr no zhangyr mi lyktim,
Syala no chibdya syuresti.
Mi tatys' kyti bertomy?
Luddz'azeg-Lobdz'on-Syuresti*

We arrived to the sound of bells,
Along the road where the grouse whistles.
How are we going to leave here / which way?
Along the [Constellation-] The Road-of-the
...-Wild Geese [guided by the constellation]
(Munkácsi 1952: 312, №34).

The peculiarity of the images in the last text relate to the wedding ceremony, when the groom's guests comment on their arrival using the stable metaphorical imagery of wedding songs: the female grouse *syala* is the bride. By the call-up whistle of the 'forest hen' the road to her parents' house was found. They will fly away to distant lands, like a flock of geese with a young goose bride, the landmark will be the constellation of the same name – the Road-of-Wild-Geese.

*Oy, kuaz' saktos, kuaz' saktos,
Kuaz'yěsyz Chulpon saykatoz.
Ti tuganenym, todem bere,
Lyukis'kontem bur kime syětsal*

Oh, weather-nature is dawning, weather-nature is dawning,
Venus-Chulpan awakens the weather-nature.
To you, my dear ones, if you knew [about the breakup],
I would have given my right hand so as not to be separated.
(Munkácsi 1887: 296, №216)

The associative parallelism of the last example is built on deep connections of comparison according to the principle of psychological parallelism: relatives would not like to be separated (a handshake is a symbol of unity) in the same way as the dawn and the star Venus appearing in the sky in the predawn hours are inseparable.

The Udmurts' ideas about the connection of stars with the human world can be considered typical. At the same time, the belief about the stars as celestial counterparts of the human soul is usually found in parallel with the image of the butterfly soul:

*In kiziliye, vu vyl bubyliye,
Kylyëz [,] kaltak [,] vadz'kem yëz-kalyke!*

My heavenly stars, above the river are my butterflies.
They will stay, kaltak [unhappy me /unhappy them],
my peers are friends!
(Munkácsi 1887: 200)

*Inmyn gine kizili, vu vylyn bubyli.
En lyuky, In'mare, milemdy as vordylem nylpiosmyles'.*

There are stars in the sky, and butterflies above the river.
God will not separate us from the children we have raised.
(Boikova, Vladykina 1992: №16)

The belief in the existence of a soul in the form of a star can also be traced in the stable collocation *kizili usiz* – lit.: “the star fell [noted – **T.V.**]”; this is how they say about a paralyzed person, i.e. immobilized, but not yet dead, but already ‘spiritually devastated’. The condition of paralysis in cattle was explained by the same circumstance (Vereshchagin 1995: 81)

The presence of more common statements about someone's death at the moment of the fall of a star (“*Vylis' kizili usiz ke, kin ke kulem, dyr, shuo* (If a star falls from a height, someone died, they say)”) (Munkácsi 1887: 29, No.166) can be considered, apparently, as due to the influence of something which is universal for in Slavic mythology (and in European mythology more broadly), the belief in stars as the souls of people (Vinogradova 1999: 146).

Comets were considered a bad omen *byzhokizili* – lit.: ‘tailed stars’: “The world should expect some kind of misfortune. Misfortune will be greater in the direction where the comet will turn” (Vereshchagin 1995: 80); *In'myn byzho kizili vetliz ke, ya zhugis'kon, ya dunne byron luoz, shuo* (If a tailed star appears in the sky, or war, or the end of the world = peace will be)”) (Munkácsi 1887: 29, No.167).

The northern Udmurts associated the heavenly flashes, the heavenly fire of *invozh* with the flight of evil spirits: “*Uin invozhoez addz'id ke, “oste!” shu: so kulem vedinlen lulyz, adyamiles' lulze bas'tyny oz'y vetle* (At night, if you see an инвожо, say “Lord!”: this is the soul of a deceased sorcerer coming for the souls of the living)”) (Munkácsi 1887: 6, №40).

A very rare image of the *lek kizili* ‘evil / angry star’ is mentioned in the prayer-spell *kuris’kon* of the northern Udmurts. Appealing to the supreme gods Inmar and Kyldysin, they ask for protection from the effects of the ‘evil fire-flame’ and the ‘evil star’ (“...*lek tyllēs’-pules’, lek kizililes’ med utyöz-vordoz...*”) (Wichmann 1893: 132, №15). This image, obviously, can be associated with the concept of evil fate and in this sense correspond to the ideas of “being marked with a star” ((*kizili usiz / kizili usyöz* = ‘the star has fallen / the star will fall’ = paralyzed / paralyzes). Today, this expression has practically disappeared from everyday life, just like the adequate expression *peri shukkiz* – lit.: “evil spirit / *peri* struck.”

In folklore texts, images of stars are often found in the inseparable triad “sun–moon–stars” typical of spells, as well as in comparative constructions in song texts, which creating an original metaphorical picture of ‘heavenly’ and ‘earthly’ family-kinship relations:

Milyam, milyam mar mumyyēs, mar mumyyēs?

Tshuknala, tshuknala dzhuzham tyr shundy kades’ ik vylillyam.

Milyam, milyam mar bubyyēs, mar bubyyēs?

Dzhytaze, dzhytaze dzhuzham tyr tolez’ kades’ ik vylillyam.

Milyam, milyam mar nyunyayēs, mar nyunyayēs?

Dzhytaze, dzhytaze dzhuzham tyr kizili kades’ ik vylillyam...

Our yes, our mothers, what kind of mothers / what are our mothers comparable to?

In the morning, our mothers look like the rising bright sun in the morning.

Our yes, our fathers, what kind of fathers / what are our fathers comparable to?

In the evening, our fathers look like the bright moon that entered in the evening.

Our yes, our older brothers, what kind of brothers / what are our older brothers comparable to?

Our older brothers look like in the evening, the bright stars that have risen in the evening ...

(Molotkova 1925: No. 2).

The stars in folklore texts, just like the sun and moon, are not so much astronomical objects with their specific names (i.e. cosmonyms), but images of the wholeness of the universe, the main components of an unattainably distant celestial world, beyond the control of man:

Tolez’ly kuke sin usyöz, soku med usyöz sin taly!

Kiziliosly kuke sin usyöz, soku med usyöz sin taly!

Shundyly sin usyöz, soku med usyöz sin taly!

When the moon is jinxed, then only it will be jinxed!

When the stars jinx it, then they only jinx it!

When the sun is jinxed, then only jinx it!

(Wichmann 1893: 173, №4d).

In the general picture of the universe, however, they are correlated with the spatial and temporal parameters of a person's physical life, his fate and health. Their constant epithets are *yugyt* – “bright”, *tyr* – “full” – semantically close to the concept of **unfading light, whole, healthy / full-blooded**:

...Tyr shundyyez, tyr tolezez ogpala beryktemed luiz ke, inmys' kizililes' lydze-hotse todid ke, kyrymad kyrmemed luiz ke, ton soku sisa vetly ta visisez!

(The full-bright sun, the full-bright moon to turn back if you can, the number, amount of heavenly stars to count if you can, squeeze them in your hand if you can, then you will [only] eat-destroy this man!)

(Wichmann 1893: 192, №35e)

Yugyt shundyyez tshoksany kuke vormoz ke, soky potos med potoz!

Yugyt tolezez tshoksany kuke vormoz ke, soky potos med potoz!

Yugyt kiziliyez tshoksany kuke vormoz ke, soky potos med potoz!

Shundy yugyt, tolez' yugyt, kizili yugyt: ta murtlen potosez övöl ni!

Close the bright sun-put it out when the [sorcerer / enemy-*vorog*] overcomes, then let the abscess appear!

Close the bright moon-put it out when the [sorcerer / enemy-*vorog*] overcomes, then let the abscess appear!

Close the bright stars-put out when the [sorcerer / enemy-*vorog*] overcomes, then let the abscess appear!

The sun is bright, the moon is bright, the stars are bright: this man has no abscess anymore!

(Wichmann 1893: 177, №11c)

In the picture of the universe of the Udmurts, the stars, thus, were significant cosmic objects along with the sun and moon. The objectivity of their existence was associated not only with the fullness of outer space, but also with the inviolability of the existence of the entire physical world and the vulnerability of the life cycle of human being.

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BIO

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