



Folk Belief Today

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INSTITUTE OF THE ESTONIAN LANGUAGE &
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*What road were we coming here by?
By the road where hazel-grouses pipe
What road shall we go away from here by?
By the road where bees fly.⁶*

The image of a swarm of bees is typical for non-ritual poetry as well and indicates friendship, consent and love. These descriptions are more frequently represented by symbolical situations, for example, in Komi and Udmurt wedding songs; the coincidence is almost complete:

*Across the Tomtit river in bast-baskets
We sailed to pick pinks.⁷*

The flower is the main symbolic image of the bride in the East Finno-Ugrian wedding poetry. The motif of crossing the river is even more habitual in the wedding poetry. The song extends the framework of the rite by the symbolic images and other connections of the text rather than by the text itself.

Songs which are immediately connected with the rite and songs describing the rite are not frequent in East Finno-Ugrian wedding poetry. Usually the ritual detail itself and its description in the song have a symbolic meaning. The description loses touch with the rite when a symbol is developed irrespective of the course of the rite on the basis of the associative connections of the image outside the song. For example, a white bird is the symbol of the bride in Mordvinian poetry.

*I give you, mother-in-law, a white birch
Keep this birch till we come
So that it wouldn't get thin
So that its leaves wouldn't fall
So that its branches wouldn't break.⁸*

In the wedding and ritual poetry there is a whole cycle of songs showing the attitude of the participants to the rite itself. Symbols are present there only as taboos, they have no development and bring about no realisation of associative connections.

The semantic connections between the text of a song and a rite are not always evident or important. The texts having no immediate rite redaction can be used as wedding ones. The connection is performed through symbols. Melody appears to be a more universal means of connection a text or a rite. The melody enables to use the texts if these are used for similar situations. For example, the motif of parting which is frequent in the wedding poetry is used in other rites, for instance in recruiting. The connections of the ritual text and its poetical language extend and grow oblique, revealing the connections with the rest of the rites and with all the cycle of vital conceptions of the people.

Literature

¹*Ustno-poeticheskoe tvorchestvo mordovskogo naroda*. VI.2: Saransk, 1968.

²*Expeditions on Dialectal Studies*, Udmurt University, 1973.

³Plesovsky, F. *Svadba naroda komi*. Syktyvkar, 1968, p. 79.

⁴*Estonian folklor*. Tallinn, 1980, p. 82.

⁵NIJJaLI UO AN SSSR manuscript funds, folder 2, No. 284.

⁶See Note 5.

⁷See Note 5.

⁸See Note 1, p. 61.

THE MUSIC OF MANSI BEAR-FEAST

Galina Soldatova. Novosibirsk, Russia

The traditional Mansi beliefs have found their reflection in the ritual sphere of folklore – the bear-feast. The origin of the bear-feast is connected with the totemic cult of bear, whom Mansi regard as one of their ancestors. In ancient times the Supreme God Numy-Torum changed his son into a bear and ordered him to live among the people and govern their fate. From that time the Mansi worship this animal.

The hunter, having killed a bear, must persuade the ghosts that he killed his wild brother by accident. For this purpose he invites all inhabitants of his settlement and their relatives from other settlements to a bear-feast – *Uy yikvave* ('to dance bear'). The feast lasts five days, or four days, if the bear is female. The bear's head is placed on the table in the hunter's home, and is decorated with birch-bark circles, coins, rings, etc. The food (bread, berries, nuts and wine) is placed nearby. When the day is closing in, the Mansi begin singing, dancing, performing comic plays. They are dressed in specially sewn gowns and their faces are covered with birch-bark masks. Though traditions of the bear-feast have local peculiarities, there are parts obligatory for all dialectal Mansi groups.

Every night the bear-feast begins with singing *uy-erygh* ('bear song'). This term defines songs about the bear: about his life in the forest, his meeting a hunter, and his coming to the bear-feast. Besides, the cycle of *uy-erygh* includes songs about other animals coming to the feast: *oghsar erygh* ('fox song'),

ē l'e jo e - γ'e - je - e - je γo
 S'ak-wj xo - nj pj - γae kw'e - γol
 Sim na er - ne-vo aηkw pj-γa - ke - mo,
 Aηkw pj γa - ke-mo ta ra te - ej - no
 Mor(i)utwar - ne-γo xar la - γj - lo
 Karj'stak - wj - so wa - rjγ - lj - jo
 Sa(a)tkanša - ηj - lo tus' - ti - eu - mo.

1. *An'uta erygh* (Song of An'uta). Song by Pjotr Taratov from the village of Verhneye Nildino (north Sosva) in 1988.

urinekva erygh ('crow song'), *hulim hul erygh* ('fish song'), etc. *Holy erygh* ('awakening song'), which opens every night, also belongs to that part. The *uy-erygh* are sung only three or four times a night and they are rather long (30-40 min.). Only men may sing them. One uses a special way of sound transfer – pharyngalisation and laryngalisation. All that points to the fact that the Mansi have preserved an archaic type of intoning.

The obligatory parts of the feast are *yanygh yikv* ('great dances'), *hum yikv* ('men's dances'), *ne yikv* ('women's dances'). These prominent parts have con-

(k)Wi - tγ xon pjγ sa-γinso -
 mj - jo numijo to - rum a - s'e na-γo(γ)
 ak-wjsun to - po sa(e)tj s'a - (a)
 rj's'na (γ)otjγ o-sasa - tγ - la - li - ma - na
 wi - tj - no si-r(i)po s'i - rjγō -
 lj - ηu wi-tj-nu p'erjap'eriηkol(e) j - la

2. *Wit hon pygh erygh* (Song of the Water-God's son). Song by Pjotr Vyngilyev from the village of Verhneye Nildino (north Sosva) in the September of 1989.

(According to the singers both songs were sang at the bear-feast and were *uy erygh*-s. Transcribed by A. Sainakhova.)

necting sections of *tulyghlap* ('performance'). The Mansi perform short comic plays, while their faces are covered by birch-bark masks called *sas nyol* ('birch-bark nose'). The songs in this section have also scenic embodiment. The end of every prominent part is marked on a special wooden stick called *sorhylin-yiv* ('nicks on the tree'). *Tulyghlap* is marked on a separate stick.

Musical instruments have the function of connecting all parts. *Yonghyl* ('instrumental melodies') sound in every part of the ritual. They can accompany *erygh* ('songs'), *yikv* ('dances'), and *tulyghlap* ('comment'). In modern ritual music, a 5-stringed zither is used, which is called *sangkyvyltap* ('sounding'). Musical characteristics of the melodies are defined by their function in the bear-feast. *Yonghyl*, accompanying songs, have typical signs of Mansi folk songs.

The function of dance accompaniment causes the use of rhythmical invariants corresponding to ritual dance. From the ethnographic sources referring to 18-19th centuries, we can find that the Mansi used a cornered harp with 10-12 strings - *taryghsyp yiv* ('the wooden crane-neck'). We have information that the Pelym Mansi used two variants of this instrument during the bear-feast. Nowadays only non-ritual melodies are played on the harp.

At the last night of the bear-feast only men stay at home. They sing *yalpyng erygh* ('holy songs') and tell *yalpyng moit* ('holy fairy-tales'). This sacred moment of the feast is inaccessible for women and children. The reason of disappearance of this moment from the ritual is probably explained by this fact.

As we can see, different forms of folk art exist and interact in the frames of this ritual: singing, dancing, instrumental music. These forms made a definite impact on the non-ritual sphere of the Mansi folklore. The results of investigations made by the musicological-ethnographical expeditions in 1987-1990, prove that the specific genre correlation during the bear-feast became the main factor in forming the system of the Mansi folklore genres.