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“Pogo” Pectoral in the Context of Ethnocultural Identification of Khakass People

Maya G. Smolina and Valeria S. Saymova*
Siberian Federal University
*79 Svobodny, Krasnoyarsk, 660041 Russia*¹

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The authors of the present article base their research on the existing versions of the semantics of Khakass women's pogo pectoral and suggest a new way of considering the idea of ethnocultural identity of the Khakass through the genetic and comparative analysis of the visual whole and the elements of this artefact of the folk culture.

Keywords: Ethnocultural identity, Khakass, wedding pogo pectoral, goddess Umay, stone monuments of Khys Oba, Ulug Khurtuyakh Tas.

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Point

Nowadays, ethnocultural identification that is impossible without studying the past is especially significant for the original existence of small peoples. Researching artefacts becomes topical in the context of the peoples' self-determination. Analysis of a certain object of the Siberian people's culture enables the researcher not only to form the concept of the rituals and everyday life of the ethnos, but also to see the key features of its world outlook typical for their ethnocultural worldview.

There is a series of humanitarian and sociological researches devoted to the problems of the small peoples of Siberia, preserving their ethnocultural peculiarities, including researches done at Siberian Federal University by

N.P. Koptzeva, N.A. Bakhova, K.V. Reznikova, N.M. Libakova (Koptzeva and others, 2010, 2011) being conducted in Krasnoyarsk. The present work is done within the framework of the Federal Target Program grant “Social Design of Russian Identity in Central Siberia”. In the modern world, in the conditions of globalization process, the processes of ethnical identification and self-identification is a reaction to the processes of acculturation, the scale of which are dramatically increasing. Researches of different fields state that belonging to this or that ethnic group always includes three aspects: language, religion, identification or self-identification processes (Koptzeva, 2011).

Ethnical self-identification is a sense of belonging to this or that ethnos according to some certain parameters of ethnogenesis: racial and

* Corresponding author E-mail address: sulberekova@mail.ru

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biological (generic roots), climatic and geographic (historical territory, historical homeland), social and cultural (national history, ethnic traditions, language, cultural and religious symbols) that form themselves in the process of historical and cultural development of the ethnos.

Ethnocultural identification is now regarded as an organic form of existence of a human being that essentially reveals itself in some features typical for the ethnos. A person takes his/her ethnocultural belonging for granted, as something that reveals itself through the language and the culture, common for all representatives of the ethnic group. The culture provides the connection between the generations; it includes the experience of the past into the modern social context. Orientation to accepting the past and to adapting it for the actual historical context, along with the well organized present, determines the ethnocultural identity of this or that nation (Malygina, 2005).

Example

Pogo is a female pectoral typical for Khakass culture that has no analogues in the culture of other Turkic or Siberian peoples. A vaguely resembling kind of attire we can find in the national costumes of Yakuts and Bashkirs. The ancient origin of pogo is proved by drawings on stone monuments dated as the third millennium before Christ. The nature of this pectoral is enfolded in mystery; it provokes a lot of questions that have not been answered yet.

Pogo is a rounded piece of closely woven fabric or leather, the face of which is covered with velvet and richly decorated with colourful beads, corals, coins, golden and silver plates, pearl buttons. All these elements form a cohesive pattern that is created in conformance with the aesthetic traditions of the past and bears some certain cultural significance. The pogo pattern

includes such elements as a circle, a square, a heart, a wave-like element, a clover. These elements are often seen within the elements of Khakass national costume as a whole.

The base for this attire called "chaba" was usually made of four layers of cotton fabric glued together with flour paste or a piece of tannage. The size of the base usually was 30 by 30 centimetres. It was usually cut in the shape of a half-moon with rounded horns, wrapped into plush or velvet. To its face some pearl buttons were sewn, and the space between them was filled with corals or beads, making patterns of circles, hearts, sprouts, clovers and other ancient patterns. The edges of the pogo were usually decorated with pearl buttons called "uzumchug". On the bottom edge, a fringe of "silbirghe", or beaded threads with small silver coins on the ends, was made. On the top edges, there was some lacing to fix the pogo on the chest (Butanayev, 1998; Shibayeva, 2008). The most common numbers of round buttons on the pogo were three, five, seven, nine and twelve (Tinikova, 2006). Probably the number of the buttons depended on the number of children in the family.

Pogos were usually worn by married women but not by widows. Pogo was considered to be an amulet that protects women and their families, that is why it was traditionally worn by married women. The amulet function of pogo is also proved by the fact that pogo was usually made with the help of the woman's mother or husband. This attire used to play a special role on weddings when it was a special element of the matchmaker's costume; the bride would wear pogo for the first time on the day of the wedding.

It is worth mentioning that wedding ceremony, along with the birth and the death, is one of the most important events in the circle of life in Khakass society.

The bride was usually called "naa pala", which means "a new child". It was connected to

the fact that the bride entered the bridegroom's family as its new member, and they would separate from the family as a married couple only several years after. This "new birth" of the bride allowed her to wear her pogo for the first time on the wedding ceremony, when she was admitted to be a wife and a future mother.

The matchmaker played a special role during wedding preparation and on the ceremony itself. Khakasses had two main forms of marriage. The first is matching little children, called *chakhsydat alyskhany*, "marriage in honour". Close friends, good neighbours or distant relatives, if one of them had a son, and another had a daughter, could arrange a marriage for them.

In the morning of the wedding day, matchmakers of the bridegroom would come riding beautifully decorated horses, carrying a cart full of wine. All of them would wear special costumes that included a wedding fur-coat (*idektigt ton*) and a sleeveless waistcoat (*segedek*). On their chests they would wear pogo pectorals decorated with beads and pearls, over their kerchiefs they would wear special wedding hats (*tulgu porik*), and decorate their braids with large coral charms (*zyryga*). The charms were made of 12 corals, including 4 big ones.

Among the matchmakers, the head matchmaker (*pas khugaday*) would be selected; usually she was the bridegroom's eldest sister-in-law. The matchmakers would take the bride away from the family and bring her to the wedding ceremony. The parents of the bride were not allowed to be present at the wedding and to visit their daughter for one year. So, the head matchmaker was a kind of a "new mother" for the bride, and the pogo played not only the amulet role, but also pointed at the matchmaker's role in this initiation ritual.

The second and the dominating wedding form was kidnapping the bride with further bride-money payment. Usually the lovers would

agree on the day and time of the kidnapping. If the bride was chosen by the bridegroom's parents, they would send their matchmaker (*argychag kizi*), who would secretly speak to the bride and conceal this agreement from her parents.

In the morning after the kidnapping, the bride's father and the bridegroom's parents would agree on the bride-money sum. This stage is a kind of "purchasing" the bride.

The people from Sagay and Kyzyl, the next day after the bride's arrival at her husband's house, would make a so-called *kichig toi* – a small party devoted to braiding her hair. The bride's small braids were undone and then her hair were arranged into two braids. The woman undoing the braids was called *pazyrtkhan idje*, or "designated mother", and she was the one responsible for all the rituals connected with the bride and the wedding. She wore the same costume as the matchmaker, and the pogo was its inseparable element. Just like the matchmakers, the "designated mother" played a huge role during the whole wedding ritual that lasted for several days.

On the wedding day, the matchmakers (*khudalar*) would come to take the bride. The wedding train arriving from *khys toy* festival would make three circle around the village sun-wise. Then, the bridegroom would take from his "assistant's" hands the reins of the horse that the bride was riding, and the matchmakers would help the girl get off. The "designated mother" would lead the girl into a new yurt and make her sit behind the curtains. It was the initial stage of her new "birth" as a young wife and a future mother.

On the day of the bride's arrival from *khys toy* festival, the ritual of worshiping the Moon and the Sun would begin. The designated mother would cover the bride with a woollen cloth cover and lead her out from the yurt. They would walk

three circles around the yurt sun-wise and then make deep bows to the east, to the south and three times to the west. The people of Kyzyl would spread some white cloth on the ground for the bride and the bridegroom to step on it. The designated mother would cover them with a white cloth cover and turn them three times sun-wise. This ritual of worshipping the Moon and the Sun was a kind of a wedding ceremony itself, and an oath of marital fidelity against the face of the Orbs. The special role of the pogo in this ritual is also worth mentioning, because some of its details carried solar symbols, so we can suggest that in this worshipping ritual the designated mother played the mediator role (Butanayev, 1987)

So, the matchmakers and the designated mother played an extremely important roles in running the wedding rituals, taking their part in the "new birth" of the bride as a young wife and a future mother. The pogo in this case demonstrated the special status of the women wearing it, as they played the mediator role in the girl's induction process, in bringing her to her new life and responsibilities. The pogo was an amulet carrying some solar symbols, connected to worshipping the Orbs, and, being put on the bride, demonstrated her re-birth as a potential mother.

The range of versions about its semantics is extremely wide, from the image of a demon to the image of the Sun.

Version 1. "According to many researchers' opinion, pogo depicts a demon, a devil (ayna). The question is, why would the Khakass grant honours to an evil spirit and wear its image as an amulet? Probably they believed that the image of the Underworld Lord could protect them from evil spirits. The sea-shell "kauri", that is called by the Khakass as "chylan pazy" (the snake's head), stands in the same semantic line. In this case the snake is regarded as symbol of the devil. The shell would be fixed on pogos, hats, bracelets,

baby bassinets as an amulet. The shaman usually tried to sew as many "kauri" shells to his clothes as possible, to be protected from the evil spirits. According to Khakass beliefs, evil spirits should be treated with respect to neutralize the negative influence they can cause on human beings. And it is a manifestation of the people's wisdom, not weakness" (Kurzhibekova, 2007: 22). However, the version of making an image of a demon concerns the significance of only one of the pogo materials (the shell), so this version is quite far from the explanation of the entire idea of this original attire that plays such an important role on the wedding ritual.

Version 2. The most seriously treated version is the second one. It says that pogo carried the image of the Old Turkic goddess Umay. V.Ya. Butanayev (Butanayev, 1984) suggests that Khakass pectorals worn on weddings contain the image of Umay, which at the same time symbolically shows the faces of Khakass stone monuments. Goddess Umay is the earth goddess in pre-Christian, Old Turkic cults. Umay gives children to families, she gives souls to the children. "Umay... protects the souls of the small children; the people believe that if a baby is smiling in its sleep, it means that Umay is playing with it" (Chertykova, 2007). "It is curious that childless Khakass women asked the stone monuments erected in the steppe, for help... Probably, the Turks of Sayano-Altai had a long-lasting idea of the stone monuments as their cult objects. It is essential to mention that the period of existence of oblation ritual that usually took place at the feet of the stone monuments, corresponds with the time of Kyrgyz period, which is Middle Ages. The most important point here is the close bond between the Umay cult and the stone monuments that were used as the earth cult objects" (Skobelev, 1990:156).

Version 3. Solar theory. "One of the common elements in Khakass ornaments has always been the symbol of the Sun, a circle with a burr,



Fig. 1. A photograph of a Khakass woman from Ust-Kinderla village wearing pogo pectoral

sometimes with a dot in the middle. The dot considered to be the soul of the Sun. Deciphering the symbols this is especially interesting for the present research if we recall the participation of women wearing pogo in the ritual of worshipping the Sun and the Moon. We can see the circles with dots in the centres on the stone monuments of Khakass-Minusinsk Hollow. Analysing the symbols found on the stone monuments, the researchers of these archaeological monuments suppose that identification of the Progenitress Woman with the Sun surrounded with some separate stars and constellations of stars was typical for the ancient Khakass cultures. The constellations of stars were depicted as concentric circles on the side edges of the monuments. So, the semantics of the wedding Khakass pectorals is quite complicated, it originates from the ancient solar cults, the earth cult and at the same time performs the amulet function. All these functions

were initially connected with the complex image of goddess Umay” (Romanova, 2009:70). This theory supports and completes the previous version of depicting the image of Umay on pogo pectorals.

The images of female faces on menhirs of Tazmin culture of the beginning of the third millennium before Christ are really mysterious for the modern researchers. Usually they depict gracious, smiling faces, sometimes they are double (under one face there is another, more conventional, so the researchers regard this second face to be a pogo pectoral).

Here are the examples of such monuments.

Ulug Khurtuyakh Tas Monument (Great Old Woman of Stone) (Fig. 1) was considered to be able to heal infertility. The monument has always been and it still is a cult place, lots of young married couples come to it every year. Under the anthropomorphic face there is something



Fig. 2. Pogo from the collection of Minusinsk Museum of Regional Studies

that can be interpreted as a pogo pectoral. The suggestion about the cosmic “pregnancy” of Khurtuyakh Tas can be proved by the image of the world “embryo” on her belly, and this drawing consists of three parts. The upper part of the drawing is the image of the Upper World, Ooryu Chayan. It is the World of Creators, or Chayans. A human lives there as a *hoot*, or a “red embryo”, in a lake of milk. Following the Great Rivers of *hoot* life, the human goes down to the Middle World, Kunni Cheer, the World of the Sun, where the human lives from the childhood till anility. Here the human must live in love and harmony with himself and with the surrounding world. This world is populated with powerful spirits, and the life in this world is very short. For this reason, there is no space for evil in this world, the mission of the human is to live in Love, Harmony and Creation. Coming to this world, the human must know that everything that has been created before was created by the Gods. Only in this world the human has the happiness to give birth to a child and to bring him up. The lower drawing on Ulug Khurtuyakh Tas’ belly is the image of the Underworld called Syn Cheer

in Khakass language. It is the world where the human lives after having left the Middle World” (Gorbatova, 2007).

The synthesis of the ideas of pregnancy and amulet-jewel in the Khurtuyakh Tas monument reminds of the origin of the pregnant woman amulet. A mother going through some hard times would take the kauri shell and go to the shaman, to call the “Koot soul” into the shell. Then the woman would wear the shell, and with time it transformed into the idea of pogo as a women’s amulet, a talisman that would protect a pregnant woman for her to deliver a healthy baby (Tinikova, 2006).

Khys-Oba monument used to stand in Sorga Hollow, but later it was brought to Minusinsk Museum of Regional Studies by I.T. Savenkov. It is a rare stela with two images on its surface; the lower face looks as though it has been hung on the chest of the upper one (Gorbatov, 2007), (Fig. 2). It is also understood as a depiction of a pogo pectoral. The idea of a symbolic twin of the deity is easily understood from the pogo image. The face of the deity with a beaming smile is doubled on the pogo.

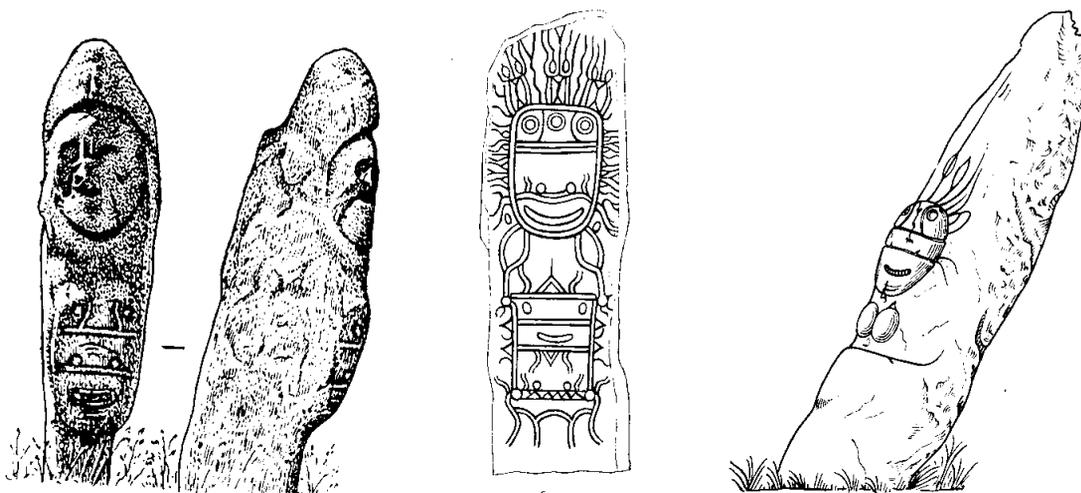


Fig. 3. From left to right: a) Ulug Khurtuyakh Tas, the monument located close to Onkhakov Ulus (at the moment, an open-air museum). Photographs edited by L.A. Yevstyukhova, 1947. B) Khysh-Oba monument (Menhir Girl) from Sorga Hollow (Figure from the book by L.R. Kyzlasov); c) An example of a stela with bulbous breasts, "horns" and "ears": monument no.1 in Sorga hollow (Figure from the book by L.R. Kyzlasov)

Probably the meaning of wearing a pogo is for the divine grace to bring happiness to its owner.

The three-eyedness of the Great Mother Umay's images draws a lot of attention. A possible interpretation of this sign can be connected with the mythological concepts from other oriental cultures, Shaivistic in particular, where the third eye denoted its all-seeing ability, and also the ability of the deity to destroy all miscreants (when the eye is open, it can burn anything to ashes) (Kyzlasov, 1990). The combination of grace and ability to destroy is typical for pagan deities including hindu Siva, the cult of which also includes Linga cult and combining the feminine and the masculine in one entity. Both of these features are also present in old Khakass menhirs as they often contain the images of coitus and the phallic shape of the menhir itself, that also carries the image of a female face on it. On the pogo depicted on the stela there is no all-seeing eye which emphasizes its being secondary, being a copy, not the original. So, pogo is a symbolic twin of the deity.

The pearl buttons on pogos symbolize the eyes of Umay; their quantity can magically affect the number of children the woman has. Probably the buttons with coral beads in the centre of the pectoral symbolize a feeding breast able to feed lots of babies with its milk. It makes the authors of the present research recall the stone monuments of Umay with distinct sculptural depictions of female breasts. It is interesting that after clearing some ground and turf off the base of the stela, the researchers found the depictions of female breasts as two bulbous ovals. Unfortunately, some of the monuments were damaged by vandalism during the modern times and their breasts were hammered off. In the ancient times the breasts were likely to be the cult objects (Fig. 3).

The images of goddess Umay are also completed with the elements interpreted as "horns" and "ears". It drives us to the idea about depicting a demon (ayna), according to one of the versions. However, it can be referred to more ancient mythology. In this case it is possible to draw a parallel with the Ancient Egyptian



Fig. 4. From left to right: Multibreasted Artemis (Diana) of Ephesus, b) an image of Isis, 14 century BC. Egyptian Museum in Turin

mythology and iconography: the celestial cow, the combination of the human body and an animal (a woman and a cow)... The image of Isis-Hathor, the deity mother of the divine baby Hor, usually depicted as a woman with cow horns and the Sun between her horns, meant that she was the one who gave birth to the Sun (Fig. 4). The Khakass culture is a contemporary of Ancient Egyptian and Ancient Sumerian cultures. Researcher L.R. Kyzlasov draws a lot of parallels with these cultures as he studies the petroglyphic drawings and stone monuments of Khakassia (Kyzlasov, 1990). The celestial cow and its cult in Ancient India, along with Ancient Egyptian goddess Isis usually depicted with the head of cow are brought to mind due to the drawings of cows in the upper structures of Khakass drawings (Kyzlasov, 2010). In his work, L.R. Kyzlasov expresses his confidence that the ancient Khakass who made the drawings

were familiar with the Ancient Egyptian cults. The celestial cow version proved the version of Umay's being a fertility goddess. Umay was an analogue of Isis. Similar analogues can be found in other ancient cultures like Mayahuel for Aztec, that was depicted with 400 breasts (Meletinsky, 1990). The Ancient Roman invariant of Isis was one of the aspects of Artemis, or Diana as the goddess of maternity, the many-breasted Great Mother of the Gods. The image of Artemis of Ephesus is similar to Egyptian iconography (her frontal pose reminds of the ancient Egyptian mummies, and there is a stripe of fabric at her feet to show that the woman's feet are wrapped, and the wider stripes are the ribbons tied over the fabric) (Nikonov).

It is possible to compare Umay with Artemis, the goddess of hunting, for one more reason: both of them have a martial aspect or state, when both of the goddesses were depicted with a bow

and some arrows. Another version of the pogo origin, is from warriors' armour. "Pectorals are interpreted as remains of warriors' armour from some Middle Asian material: Turkmen women's pectorals bukov, pectorals of Kirgiz bird-hunters jagoo etc. We can find some analogues of Khakass pogo in Bashkir and Yakut women's costumes as well" (Romanova, 2009:70). In Kustkamera Museum of St. Petersburg we can see some Tahitian pectorals the warriors used to wear to protect their chests and shoulders from arrows, decorated with a fringe of fur and some round buttons. The main elements of Khakass and Tahitian pectorals match, and it makes Khakass pectoral be visually similar to the Tahitian one. Developing this idea, we face the following paradox: the warrior armour was made for... a mother?

In many settlements of the Ancient Greek and Roman world Isis and Artemis were considered to be two different aspects of the same deity. Xenophon describes some adventures of a priestess who was equally devoted to the two goddesses and admitted them as one divine entity bearing two different names. Artemis, the virgin goddess of hunting, is extremely different from the maternal and erotic aspects of Isis. Nevertheless, in many Greek temples and sanctuaries there are images of these goddesses and the altars devoted to Isis-Artemis or Artemis-Isis. As both of them are considered to be the deities of the Moon, they have more in common than it may seem at first. Diana and Artemis can be recognized from the half-moon that they wear on their heads, and this symbol is one more bond between them and Isis. Being independent, Isis and Artemis/Diana teach their successors to be self-confident and trust in their own powers. We can find some unexpected similarities between the two goddesses: for example, Isis cult required the priests to observe the vow of chasteness, and pregnant women would pray to Artemis to ease the birth (Regula, 2000). One of the variants of depicting Isis is a

woman with wing-arms, while Umay was also often depicted with a pair of wings (Skobelev, 1990).

So, we can find some visual similarities of a pogo with an image of breast with many nipples (pearl buttons with corals in their centres), and prove this similarity, first, by the traditional belief of the Khakass that pogos can "program" the future (or fix the needed) number of children in the family and therefore can serve as an ideal family project; second, by the similarity between the stone statues of Umay and the depictions of Artemis of Ephesus, and the similar features they have with the Ancient Egyptian goddess Isis-Hathor. The idea of fertility is visualised in the statue of Artemis by the illusion of a naked, open and big breast; the sculptural image of Artemis is ornament-like as it consists of many repetitive elements. Her face expression is gracious, her hands in the gesture of benevolence. From the mythology we know that this is not the permanent state of Artemis but only one of her multiple aspects. The faces of Umay drawn on the ancient Khakass monuments are also looking at those who are praying for the prosperity of the family. The bulbous breasts under the faces looked open to the pilgrims for ritual touches, expressing the idea of symbolic breast-feeding and protecting the prayers. The breasts of the ancient Roman and Khakass statues are usually open, while the pogo worn by mortal women is first of all a way of covering the breasts, it protects the breasts with its sacred ornament. The idea of fertility is visualized in the pogo by emphasizing the sacred significance of the female breasts with its decorative symbolic "twin" with the meaning of the "divine power source".

In the process of the research the authors have convinced themselves that pogo has a magical function of programming family life; for this reason it contains the symbol of female breasts as white round buttons and coral "nipples".



Fig. 5. Capitoline Wolf. Beginning of the 5th century BC

The shining of beads and pearls, silver and gold is supposed to draw the attention of the gods to the woman's breasts while she is performing rituals and ceremonies, for them to fill the breasts with milk, the drink of life and the magical gift that grant prosperity to the family, provides the spiritual bond between the mother and her child. It's no coincidence that the word "umay", besides the name of the goddess, has a meaning "umbilical cord", the connection channel between the mother and the child. The sacrament of breast-feeding is performed wearing the pogo, and it is magically fixed in the ornament language. So, we speak of some sort of an induction ritual, where pogo symbolizes a sign of a woman introduced into the sacrament of maternity. Khakass women had other ways to line out the borders of different social statuses of women, like, for example, wearing many braids before marriage and two braids after marriage. Preserving the institution of marriage should be regarded as one of the leading ethnocultural traditions.

The symbolic depiction of the feeding breast on pogos can have an analogue in the animal world where multiple nipples is a natural thing. In Etruscan culture there is a bronze sculpture

of a she-wolf feeding the twin brothers Romulus and Remus, the founders of the ancient Roman civilization (Fig. 5). Probably the sources and the analogues of this legend have really ancient roots. The legends of children brought up by animals are present in many ancient cultures. A wolf, or a she-wolf is one of the totem animals of the Turkic peoples.

According to an old Khakass legend, the mother of Turks, a white she-wolf living in the Sayan mountains, had 133 sons. In the daytime they were humans, and at night they turned into wolves. The children were supposed to become noble warriors and protect their motherland. But their enemies found out that the she-wolf is about to bring up an army, and attacked them. Then, to protect the children, the she-wolf turned them into beads, and threw them away, letting them fly away with the wind. In the places where the beads fell on the ground, a Turkic people would appear (Yatzkevich). This legend has an amazing connection with pogo, especially its beads motive, because the main material used for pogo decoration is beads. According to this version, the space of the pectoral is taken up by the Khakass nation represented as a whole that has one source

of life, a whole ornament consisting of many small pieces, a set of beads connected with one thread.

There is one more legend about the origin of the Khakass nation (coming from Askiz region): "In a river valley, so far that "you would reach it only after thirty days of riding a horse in the direction of the midday sun", there was a peaceful wandering tribe. The grass was high in the valley. The kettle grew big and fat eating this grass. In the evenings, the women would make fires, and the smell of fresh fried meat would fill the valley. Early in the morning, when the white mist was still floating over the high grass leaving crystal clear dew drops on it, the people of another tribe came. There were so many of them, that the valley that looked white in the mist, turned dark. The intruders killed the peaceful people. Only one boy who had been playing with his tame she-wolf, managed to escape. The she-wolf grabbed him and brought him to a cave. In the end, the she-wolf gave birth to ten sons of that boy. When her sons grew up, they went to some wandering tribes and brought their women into the cave where they lived. The women gave birth to more children. The people lived by finding oar, hammering iron and selling it. They called themselves "the descendants of the wise she-wolf". The Chinese chroniclers called them, "Tuku", and Tuku became the tribe where Turkic language came from. No one could jump over gorges, escape from rockfalls and climb the mountains like Tuku could. These people were the descendants of the wise she-wolf!" (Zyabrev, 1976)

Some Turkic nations had a ritual that demonstrated their bond with the totem animal, or the wolf: the skin of a killed wolf is taken off in such a manner that the fur of the head and mouth remains whole. The skin is dried and preserved. When a baby is born, it is dragged through this skin, as though it comes through the wolf's mouth (Kyzlasov, 1990). This ritual symbolizes the

second birth of the baby through the she-wolf's womb, and enriches the baby with the secret code of the nation's cultural values.

"Veneration of ancestors has found its manifestation in the totemic attitude of the Turks (and Mongols) to the Wolf – Bozkurt, their ancestor, the guarantee of immortality of the Turkic nation sent to the world by Tengri, which is symbolized with the sky-blue colour of Bozkurt's fur. The ancient Turks believed that their ancestors came from the Sky, and the "celestial wolf" – a divine animal, their ancestor spirit, protector spirit came together with them. A golden wolf head was depicted on their victorious gonfanons, scaring the enemies away. The Turks worshipped the wolf as a wise, self-sacrificing, devoted animal, the leader of the animals. The wolf is brave and freedom-loving, the wolf cannot be tamed, and this is its basic difference from dogs and mean jackals. The wolf is the forest keeper, and when the Spirits of the Sky and the Earth could not bear the filth anymore and they needed to clean the world, saint people and Bozkurts were born in the Turkic tribes, and they would lead the whole Turkic world with their example" (Shaydullina).

Therefore, pogo can be the fixer of the cultural program of the all-Turkic significance that means that the pogo bearer is not just a mother, but a mother of Turkic origin, the progenitress of the Turkic nation (and Khakass nation in the narrow sense), and the protector of the ideals for her future children. The parallel with the sacred celestial she-wolf makes a Khakass woman able to provide immortality to her children, to their souls (koot), and, therefore, a pogo is not an amulet of some individual woman's maternity; it is an amulet that protects the whole nation.

The ambivalence of the deity which has the connection with pogo (ability to both create and destroy according to all the existing

versions, the depiction of both chthonian creature (demon) and the totem animal (she-wolf) does not oppose the Khakass nation to the world of other nations (demons and wolves in the folklore of different countries are not necessarily presented as the representatives of the Underworld, but also as positive supporter-characters). The images of a cow and a she-wolf as possible progenitresses are common for the Khakass ethnos and other tendencies, Ancient Roman, Ancient Egyptian, Ancient Indian, not to speak of its powerful bond with the Turkic world.

Resume

It is possible to point out a series of important aspects of the ethnocultural identity of the Khakass that manifested themselves in the process of the research of pogo pectoral semantics.

1) The ornament of pogo is a visual model of the Creation. It is the declaration of the pagan values system, the sacred knowledge of the fundamental mysteries of the world that has been transferred from mother to daughter for ages.

2) Pogo acts as an amulet for the family when it is being formed. It is worn on wedding day by matchmakers and the designated mother of the bride, who work as mediators in the induction ritual of the bride, in the ritual of her new "birth" as a wife and a mother, because the pectoral is connected with Umay, the goddess of maternity. The role of the pectoral as an amulet is especially significant during the ritual of worshipping the moon and the sun, as some elements of the pectoral bear the solar symbols.

3) In the context of ethnocultural identity of the Khakass nation, pogo pectoral is a value of matriarchal social order; the maternity cult is directly connected with the ethnogenesis of the Khakass, which is also reflected in their folk legends.

4) The ethnocultural consolidation of the Khakass with the Turkic speaking peoples of Siberia is worth mentioning because, first, pogo visualises Umay goddess which comes from the Ancient Turkic pagan pantheon; second, the symbolic of the beads ornament and fringe of pogo together with the breast-feeding idea draws the parallel with the she-wolf, the progenitress of the Turkic people.

5) The pogo wearer is a woman who feels her ethnical belongingness, she is a symbolic representative of the whole Khakass ethnos as the progenitress of the nation. The pectoral acts as a symbol of female breasts, which manifests her ability to feed and bring up children. Besides, it is a kind of armour, protection of the woman from enemies and evil spirits. The wearer of the pectoral, as one of the guises of the Great Mother, has the ability to protect her family and her ethnos as a whole.

6) The visual similarity between pogo and the depiction of breast with many nipples (pearl buttons with corals in the centres) has been noticed; it proves the traditional belief of the Khakass that pogo "programs" the future (or fixes the wanted) number of children in the family, so it works as an ideal family project; secondly, it is proved by the similarity between the stone monument of goddess Umay and the depictions of Artemis of Ephesus and Ancient Egyptian goddess Isis-Hathor.

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**Нагрудное украшение пого
в контексте этнокультурной
идентификации хакасского народа**

М.Г. Смолина, В.С. Саймова
*Сибирский федеральный университет,
Россия 660041 Красноярск, Свободный, 79*

В данной статье авторы в качестве фундамента исследования рассматривают существующие версии семантики хакасского нагрудного женского украшения пого, предлагая новый путь прочтения идей этнокультурной идентичности хакасского народа через генетический и компаративистский анализ визуального целого и отдельных компонентов артефакта народной культуры.

Ключевые слова: этнокультурная идентичность, хакасы, нагрудное женское свадебное украшение пого, богиня Умай, каменные изваяния Хыс-Оба, Улуг Хуртуях Тас.

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