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## Cosmogonic Motifs in Folklore of the Evens

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*The article analyzes cosmological motifs of folklore of the Evens. The Evens are a group of indigenous peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East. The author examines the basic images of cosmological myths of the Evens, explores the vocabulary with which these images are present in the Even language.*

*Keywords: Evens, folklore, cosmogony, indigenous peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East.*

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The study of the Evens folklore is associated with the names of such famous Russian ethnographers, linguists, folklorists as V.G. Bogoraz-Tan, V.I. Levina, B.L. Krongauz, K.A. Novikova, V.D. Lebedev, Zh.K. Lebedeva, V.A. Robbek, K.S. Cherkanova, A.A. Burykina, E.N. Bokova, M.P. Fedotova and others.

In 1937-38 of the last century a teacher of the Arka village of the Okhotsk region N.P. Tkachik wrote from the words of narrator N.G. Mokrousov such epic monuments of the Evens as “Delgeni”, “Chivdevel”, “Geakchaval” that were republished in Yakutsk in 1986. The folklore-ethnographic part was written by Zh.K. Lebedeva.

In 1958, the Magadan book publishing house issued a collection “The Evens folklore”, the author of which was K.A. Novikova. This collection includes stories, legends, songs and riddles collected by the author from 1934 to 1956

in the territory of the Far North, Magadan Region and Khabarovsk Territory. K.A. Novikova was the first who clearly identified the Evens folklore genres:

1. Nimkan – an ancient epic narration
2. Telen – a legend, personal stories of a historical character
3. Yike – a song-improvisation
4. Nenuker – riddles
5. Dyontan yike – a song of praise
6. Dyonchidyak yike – a song-reminiscence
7. Dyargan yike – a mocking song
8. Alma yike – a song-imitation
9. Riddles
10. Shamanic songs – spells
11. Lullabies
12. Works of religious and magical content of the underground, above ground worlds, spirits and witches.

As noted by the researcher the Evens folklore works are notable for the diversity of themes, originality, artistic imagery, rich expressive poetic language. Tales about animals were especially prevalent and, as noted by the author, their “origin refers to very ancient times when the Evens superstitiously worshiped the animals and attributed to them a particularly mysterious power and believed that the animals lived like people” (6:15;)

E.N. Bokova, an Evens writer and folklorist identifies the following types:

- Khaman nyayan – shamanic chant
- Gamachin kurum yikelni – wedding songs
- Bini dyugulin yike – songs about life
- Khokanchin-orelden yiken – a song of joy
- Nabuchin-khonan yiken – a song of sorrow
- Kinrin-kengelin, ach torene yike – wordless songs

The work of a great scientist, anthropologist and linguist A.A. Burykin titled “Small genres of the Evens folklore” published in St. Petersburg in 2001 is of great scientific value. The book of 273 pages contains over 1,100 Evens original riddles, proverbs, charms, customs, regulations and omens in Evens and Russian.

The author provided not only the material of other researchers of the Evens folklore written at different times from the words of the Evens of Kamchatka, Chukotka, Magadan Region, but also he expanded the scope of the research view on folklore, he provided valuable sources that differ with great authenticity, plenitude of the scientific work and a comprehensive analysis. It should be noted that the researcher for the first time in the history of the national folklore study collected bit by bit, analyzed a wealth of factual material revealing the ancient spiritual culture of the Evens that reflects the philosophical, poetic,

language and socio-psychological picture of the ethnic group.

The Evens nimkans – epic tales, the heroic tales contain mythological motifs of the origin of the universe. In mythology of the Evens the cosmogonic world is divided into three layers – Hergide, Hergeg tor – Underworld, Dulag tor – Middle land and Oyguide, Oyig tor – Upper World. According to Zh.K. Lebedeva – a folklore researcher of the Evens, the texts have “historical roots and heroic motifs, go directly back to the period of early philosophical ideas, as evidenced by well-defined residuals of totemism, the cult of fire, nature and archaic traditions – such as putting the body of an enemy to fire, killing of a neighbor in the hour of his painful death, pinning an enemy’s head on a battle tree” (5:6;)

As mentioned in the folklore texts, the creator of the universe is Hevki, Hevkie, Hevkinde – a Higher deity that lives in the Upper world. Hevki created the Middle land and its inhabitants, protects and punishes them. And the inhabitants of the Earth come to him in difficult situations with prayers and ask for help. The inhabitants of the Middle world are people – Bey, birds – degil, animals – delgenkel.

In the Underground Lower world lives Arinka, Arisag – a human-like creature with one eye and one horn covered with hair. Sometimes Arinka takes human form and sometimes comes to the Middle world in the form of an animal or a bird, kidnaps people and takes them to the Underworld, lurks deers, totem animals, sends them diseases, incites them to commit evil acts.

Many animals, birds and animals lived under the protection of Hevki, had the gift of transformation and could speak. Initially Bei the man was a son of the Dog. The Dog was bare then. Once Hevki said to Ning the Dog that a person would become its master, but he must be hidden from Arinka – the Evil Spirit. The Dog hid the man in its bosom and lay shivering.

Arinka came and asked what it was hiding in its bosom, the Dog said, "I do not hide anything". Arinka then promised to the Dog shaggy warm clothes. The Dog gave its son up. Arinka grabbed the man and tore his joints so that he lost his strength and agility. God came, got very angry and deprived the Dog of speech, pulled its nose so that it became a muzzle and said that it would serve to the Man as a punishment. Arinka cursed the Man and ordered that although he would live in prosperity, he would remember God only in difficult times, and being strong would kill everyone on Earth (E.A. Danilov, born in 1909 in Oymyakon district, 1993)

Another myth says that in the past only one woman lived on Earth – Tor Eninni – Mother of Earth; she had three children – Munrukan – a Hare, Egdete – a Moose and Uyamkan – a Bighorn sheep. Because of disobedience they were deprived of speech, dispersed into different directions and even lost their former pleasant appearance. When Mother of the Earth left to search for food for the children, the Hare ate the whole food supply alone and the brothers were left hungry. When the mother returned she was very surprised by the fact that the Moose's lips became thick and puffy from strong weeping. The Hare jumped behind the heard and laughed so hard that his lips burst, and the Bighorn sheep was so scared that his horns curled.

In the past the Earth, the Middle world, was a small land, the only person on which was Omcheni – a man. He got lonely and he went to look for friends. Water was all around. And suddenly Omcheni saw Nyanin, a little Mountain in heaven, where animals and birds were flying, walking and grazing. The man put a Hurka-loop on them for the night. In the morning, he heard swearing, and this was Dog crying and cursing, and the rest fled. The man deprived the Dog of speech so it kept the secret and did not prevent

catching inhabitants of the Upper World. The Sun – Noltek got so frightened that it changed the time of the light. When it hides from the man the night comes, and in winter when the inhabitants of Heaven are inactive because of the cold the Sun does not shine for the man at all.

A small fragment of the myth written in 1998 from an Even – clan Gotninkan J.G. Gromov, born in 1928, a resident of the Oymyakon Region describes a dispute between Hevki – God, Oyinde – an inhabitant of the Earth and Arinka – an inhabitant of the Underworld. The cause of the dispute was wings hidden by Oyinde called Mana that were designed for a long-distance flight of God for creation of the world. God created the land in the middle of the water, made a Man, called him younger brother – Noine. Arinka asked, begged the man and promised him a silver circle, a horse, but Oindya did not say where the hidden wings were. If Arinka finds the wings, the end of the world will come. Our informant remembered the words and the melody of the myth from his mother – A.P. Gromovaya, who learned how to sing it from her grandmother. The myth contains outdated taboo words – archaisms – Mana – wings, geramka – a step, tonin – a land.

The text is replete with words that have emphatic vowels to indicate request, prayer, order, question, address. It should be noted that pronunciation of the words with emphatic vowels at the end of words gives the speech melodiousness and creates a special rhythm. For example: Gonis-e –told you-already, dyairis-a –is-it-you who hid them, tor-e –land-ah. Gele-e – come-on. When pronouncing the words the final vowels are stretched increasing the expressiveness of the thoughts expressed. Manav yile dyayris-a –where-indeed did you hide a wing-ah. Yile torle dyayris-a. In what land did you hid-ah? Oindechen-Oinde, gele goli, goli-ge, mindu. Oinde, come on tell me. Menem

chondukem Noinev-u – a Silver circle of Noine is mine. Dyayris-a –hid-a. Ereĳ tor-e oddyn yile? The end of the land where? In 2000, we also wrote a small myth “Ilan Uyamkan” from the words of the resident of the Oymyakon ulus in Yakutia E.A. Danilova. It tells how Arinka sent three heroes of the Earth to Heaven turning them into three hunters for killing everything on earth but the three bighorn sheep. These Bighorns were also turned into three Stars. But Arinka-Spirit warned that they would be chasing the sheep until the end of the Earth.

Here is some of the vocabulary associated with the cosmogonic ideas of the Evens.

Arinka – an evil creature of the Underworld

Omcheni – Umcheni – the name of a Hero in the Evens tales and nimkans

Matala – a human Hero

Orani – an upper hero

Nerikuy – an inhabitant of the Underworld

Nyanin nyunmeken – a hole in the sky

Helikey – a spelled arrow

Nyulgini – the one who puts iron arrows

Hevki – God

Hevkichen – minor god

Nermile – a thick slender larch on which heroes in the epos hang their armor

Tonin – a land

Mata Bey – a hero man

Oinde – Upper.

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## Космогонические мотивы в фольклоре эвенов

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*Статья посвящена анализу космогонических мотивов фольклора эвенов. Эвены относятся к группе коренных малочисленных народов Севера, Сибири и Дальнего Востока. Автор рассматривает основные образы космогонических мифов эвенов, исследует лексику, с помощью которой эти образы присутствуют в эвенском языке.*

*Ключевые слова: эвены, фольклор, космогония, коренные малочисленные народы Севера, Сибири и Дальнего Востока.*

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