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## NENETS PERSONAL NAMES

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Both linguists and ethnographers have studied Nenets personal names<sup>1</sup>. Series of Nenets personal names have been recorded in the *Nenets-Russian Dictionary*<sup>2</sup> and the *Reference Book of Christian Names of Peoples of The Russian Federation*<sup>3</sup>. Despite the fact that there are available studies on personal names, being a part of people's spiritual culture, a reflection of its historical fate and landmarks of remote and unexplored epochs, the anthroponyms are of indisputable interest to researchers. In the present paper the author devoted her attention on phenomenon of giving names from birth to death and after death among Nenets.

The problem of Nenets personal names is rather knotty and complicated. Quite often children do not know the names of their parents, not to mention the

names of their grandparents. There are cases when children are disinherited because their parents' names in civil registration books and children's patronymics in their passports do not coincide.

Why is it so? It happens if people have several names.

An old man from Lapsui (Lapsui) family was called *Nabtiko* all his life. According to A. T. Lapsui, he was called so because as a child he used to say *nabte* ('it smells') when something smelled nastily or when he saw an ugly object. Thus it became the name of his child (*natseky nyumda*) and later his own name. Such sanctioned substitution names are called *perabts*<sup>4</sup>. Sometimes a person may have a nickname which is also called *perabts*<sup>5</sup>, but a nickname has more emotional colouring than a sanctioned substitution name. For example, a cunning person is called *Nyalku* ('a wooden mulberry mortar for stirring and shaking') or Academician, King, Apple – Russian loan-words. A teasing nickname or *vekolabts* has a more negative colouring than the *perabts* nickname. A collective usually calls a person by this name behind his back. For example, a woman who takes the liberty of having a nap when everyone stays awake is called *Khoni Nedeta* ('Madam Sleepyhead'), a corpulent woman 'A Merchant's Wife' and a dark-skinned woman *Paridyenya ne* ('Black Woman').

While addressing each other in everyday life, the Nenets used words denoting relationship: *ama* ('mother'), *natsei* ('father'), *irikei* ('grandfather'), *khadakei* ('grandmother'), *khada* ('address to any old woman'), etc.

These kinship names are changed during one's lifetime. Before young people get married they are usually called by *perabts* ('sanctioned substitution names'). When they start a family they become *Khatyako' neka* ('brother Khatyako') and *Khatyako naya* ('aunt Khatyako'). When Nenets give birth to children they are called by the names of their children: *Venka' nebya* ('Venechka's mother'), *Vityako' nisya* ('Vitenka's father'). Children grow up, get married and give birth to children, i.e. they become respected people in society, then the parents of grown-up people are called by the names of their grandchildren: for example, *Ilko' iri* ('Ilme's grandfather') *Máimane' mhade* ('Máimane's grandmother'). A kinship name is changed when the member of the family, whose name was used, dies. For example, *Vladik' nebya* ('Vladik's mother'). When the son dies, the kinship name is changed at once – *Zhenka' nebya* ('Zhenechka's mother'), i.e. her name contains the name of another son.

*Perabts* in its both meanings, *vekolabts* and kinship name, is not a name in the full sense of the word. Previously mentioned *Nabtiko* Lapsui said before his death: *Syurda nyumi Senda. Nyuda tiky nyumgana nyumdebaida. Tiky nyumma nyoya yukhu.* ('My taboo name is Senda. Call children by this name. Do not let this name disappear.') According to the words of deceased, this name belongs to Lapsui (Lapsui) family, it should be passed on from genera-

tion to generation. *Syurda nyum'* is a taboo name which is known by few people and which, as a rule, is a basic unit of the name belonging to the mentioned family. Only representatives of this family can be called by this name, while other people were not allowed to adopt it. If it was adopted by the representatives of another family, a conflict would arouse between the families.

When a child is conceived, parents and their relatives go through the list of the names of their father's and mother's families. They co-ordinate the name with many parameters: family ties (according to the family – *Yerkarovna*, *Tu'teruvna*, according to lineage – *nob' myad'teruvna*), euphony, etc.

Nenets do not identify their children by the names of living relatives, but also by the names of the deceased ones. It is connected with the Nenets world outlook. Children can be called by the names of the deceased relatives when the mourning taboo period for giving a name is over. In Nenets tradition exact deadline of a ban on giving a name has not been established. But it is known that even five years after the death of a person, not enough time has passed to call a new-born by his name, although fluctuations in deadlines do exist in reality. When parents and relatives are longing to name a child after somebody but the mourning time is not yet over, then such names as *Tada*, *Tadane*, *Ye'eikrne*, *Ye'eiko* appear which mean 'one succeeding the deceased'. These names may belong to representatives of different families as the mourning over the desired name can be in any family.

In conjunction with Christianisation Nenets were given Orthodox names. Nenets called such names *khekhe' nyumda* ('christening name'). During the years of Soviet power European names have been called *lutsa nyum'* ('Russian name'). As no taboo was placed under these names they became Nenets official passport names. The tradition of calling Nenets children by European names has persisted, although even now most Nenets have a *syurda nyum'*. It should be also pointed out that the Nenets personal names are also officially recorded in their passports: e.g., *Yadne Pudako Temzrisovich*, *Salinder Vesei Apayevich*, *Yar Maria Khabiyevna*, *Lapsui Natalia Khasavovna*, etc. *Yadne Pudako Temzrisovich* is never used in everyday life, he is called *Kako vesako* ('old man Kako'), but everyone knows that *Kako vesako* and *Yadne Pudako Temzrisovich* are one and the same person. Others are called by their names and patronymics even in an unofficial situation, as the placing of taboos under grown-up people is still a living custom in Nenets everyday life, and the name and patronymic bring down a taboo or lift it.

A man dies but memory about him remains in descendants' hearts. How do they call him then? *Nisyayeva'* ('our father'), *nebyayeva'* ('our mother'), *iriyeva'* ('our grandfather'), *yagodava'* ('our absentee'), *nytarmava* ('our *nytarma*'), *sidryangva'*. These are the names by which he is called by members of his

family. Suffix *-ye-* in kinship names means that the person in question is dead. When strangers speak about the deceased, they add suffix *-i-* to children's kinship names: *Galya' nisyai* ('Galya's father') or add the word *khasai* ('dear deceased') to the name of the deceased if the taboo period of giving his name is over. Actually the deceased is called by a horde of names, likewise when he was alive, the difference is that in all cases a classifier should be added.

Thus each Nenets has the following names:

- 1) taboo name (*syurda nyum'*);
- 2) nickname (*perabts*);
- 3) common name-address (the term has not been elucidated);
- 4) teasing name (*perabts, vekolabts*);
- 5) official name – a Christian name in Tsarist Russia (*khekhe' nyumda*) and a passport one during Soviet power (*lutsa nyum'*);
- 6) name after death (*yangodava', nisyaveva', nebyaveva', nytarmava', sidryangava', mhasai*, etc.).

For example a man from Lapsui family had following names:

- 1) Lapsui Vychu,
- 2) Lapsui Temko,
- 3) many versions
- 4) is not known to the author,
- 7) Lapsui Timofei Yefimovich (Suyoromovich),
- 6) *nytarmava'*.

The author will endeavour to find out what names people are given depending on their social functions and what people call themselves in the Nenets traditional society on the basis of ethnographic, folklore and archive materials.

## Literature

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<sup>2</sup>Tereshchenko, N. (ed.). *Nenetsko-russkii slovar*. Moscow, 1965, pp. 26, 46, 86, 90, 246, 397, 447, 476, 507, 518, 519, 581, 589, 729, 759, 833, 838, 855.

<sup>3</sup>*Spravochnik lichnykh imen narodov RSFSR*. Moscow, 1979, pp. 280-283.

<sup>4</sup>*Nenetsko-russkii slovar*. Moscow, 1965, p. 505.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*