

“I Thank Folklore for Everything”: On the Anniversary of the Udmurt Folklorist Galina Glukhova

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Abstract: The article is dedicated to Galina Glukhova, a prominent Udmurt folklorist and researcher. It highlights her significant contribution to the study of Udmurt folklore and traditional culture. The author emphasizes Galina’s role as a dedicated scientist and educator, focusing on her extensive field research and numerous scientific publications. Special attention is paid to the researcher’s work on the study of mummery, calendar ceremonies and ritual attributes of the Udmurts. The article also examines Galina’s personal traits that help to build excellent working relationships with colleagues and students.

Keywords: Galina Glukhova, folklorist, the Udmurts, traditional culture, field research, scientific publications, mummery, calendar ceremonies, ritual attributes

The name of Galina Glukhova, a Candidate of Philological Sciences, a Distinguished Educator of the Udmurt Republic, the Head of the Institute of Udmurt Philology, Finno-Ugric Studies and Journalism at the Udmurt State University, and an Associate Professor in the Department of Udmurt Literature and the

Literature of the Peoples of Russia, has gained a strong reputation in the Udmurt folklore community.

Galina Glukhova was born on January 28, 1965, in the village of Kvaser, Kezsky District, northeastern Udmurtia. After graduating from Kez Secondary School in 1982, she entered the Udmurt department of the Faculty of Philology at the Udmurt State University.

During her studies, Galina demonstrated a keen interest in the cultural heritage of the Udmurts, and her thesis, “The Image of Lopsho Pedun in Udmurt Social and Everyday Tales”, was supervised by Daniil Yashin, a distinguished scholar of Udmurt folklore. Through his guidance she developed her fieldwork skills and gained valuable experience.

In 1988, Galina returned to the Faculty of Philology at Udmurt University as an assistant at the Department of Udmurt Literature and Literature of the Peoples of the USSR. As a lecturer in Folkloristics she needed a deep knowledge of traditional culture, and there is a particular situation that she likes sharing that shaped her career. One day, after a seminar with students, Galina met Tatiana Vladykina, a Professor of Folklore Studies, and asked her the question, why paremias were classified as minor genres of folklore when they contained such deep folk wisdom. Tatiana suggested that if Galina joined her graduate school, she would find the answers to all her questions.

In 1994, Galina entered the postgraduate program at the Udmurt Research Institute under the supervision of Tatyana Vladykina. The Professor’s personal example of respect for the word and symbol inspired Galina and her fellow students to pursue their goals. Tatyana taught them to analyze materials, seek confirmation from various sources, double-check all data, highlight significant aspects, and consider materials from different perspectives. Along with high expectations for both individuals and their work, Tatyana consistently provided encouragement and support. She was always prepared to assist, mentor and guide students. It was essential for her that students fully understand the material and appreciate the significance of their research.

Galina was a highly responsible and hardworking student. She had analyzed numerous theoretical books and articles and worked with various archives. During her visit to Tartu in 1995, she had the opportunity to explore the extensive folklore collection at the Estonian Literary Museum, attend lectures at the University of Tartu and work in the academic library. These experiences had a significant impact on Galina and contributed greatly to her personal growth. She also paid special attention to field expeditions, which were considered a valuable source of information.

The results of her meticulous work were summarized in her thesis, “The Symbolism of Mummery in Udmurt Traditional Culture”, which she successfully defended in 2002. The work offered a fresh and comprehensive perspective on Udmurt mummery as a multifaceted cultural phenomenon. It examines mummery within the context of calendar and family rituals as an intricately

interconnected system that is deeply rooted in the traditional worldview of the Udmurt people. The terminology of mummery is organized into a linguistic map of the Udmurt world that elucidates the relationships between various ritual practices and their verbal expressions. Furthermore, the thesis delves into the dynamics of various ritual codes. The significance of the work is marked by the materials Galina personally collected during numerous field expeditions. The firsthand data provides valuable insights into the living traditions of Udmurt mummery.

Over the years, Galina's research has significantly expanded and today covers a wide range of aspects of the Udmurt traditional culture. An analysis of publications from the last decade reveals that most of the researcher's works focus on calendar rituals and various aspects related to this topic. Her work has been enriched through collaborations with other Udmurt scholars, such as Tatyana Vladykina, Tatyana Panina, Nikolay Anisimov and others.

Collaborative work with Professor Tatyana Vladykina has been a significant part of Galina's academic journey. She has not only served as the supervisor of her scientific research, but also as a close colleague and friend. Together, they have conducted extensive research on various topics related to Udmurt traditional culture.

One of their most notable contributions to the field is the publication of their monograph "The Cycle of the Year" in 2011. This work explores the concept of time in Udmurt culture through the lens of the traditional calendar rituals, presenting a comprehensive analysis of the findings.

The uniqueness of this work lies in its first attempt to systematize Udmurt ritual culture. It incorporates features of ethnodialectical, mythological, linguistic and folklore dictionaries. The scope of this work is impressive, with over 500 terms and definitions identified and explained from more than 200 different materials, including archival and published sources.

The article "The Udmurt National Calendar and Rural Society" (2017), co-authored with Tatyana Vladykina and Tatyana Panina provides a comprehensive analysis of the relationship between calendar traditions and the social structures of rural Udmurt communities.

Some works are devoted to the study of ritual objects. These include "Subject Realities of Calendar Rituals: Headdress" (2021, co-authored with Tatyana Vladykina) and "Chuk/Tug in Everyday and Ritual Contexts" (2021, co-authored with Tatyana Vladykina and Tatyana Panina). The latter paper explores multi-functional aspects of a significant cultural artifact known as 'chuk' (southern dialect) or 'tug' (northern dialect) in both the everyday life and ritual practices of the Udmurts. This artifact manifests itself in various forms such as red silk thread, bundles of multicolored threads, fringes, ribbons, and other textiles including rags, towels, coverlets, and shawls. Such objects hold cultural significance and are essential for understanding Udmurt ethnoculture.

Furthermore, Galina Glukhova and Tatyana Vladykina have collaborated on studies of gender and age stratification in Udmurt society, as seen in their

work “Gender and Age Stratification of Village Society in the Udmurt Calendar” (2015). The article explores Shrovetide and winter mummery in the context of socialization, with a focus on the gender and age-related aspects of participants. This is seen as a form of regulation within the ritual framework. The research also identifies key motifs and characters that served as symbols of qualitative transformations in the natural cycle and human existence. Particular emphasis is placed on the roles of these characters and the distinctive aspects of their behavior.

The impact of contemporary realities on the traditional Udmurt culture has been the subject of the research “Traditional Udmurt Culture and Modern Challenges in the Context of COVID-19” (2021, co-authored with Nikolay Anisimov). The work examines how the pandemic has affected traditional ceremonies and social practices. It also emphasizes the resilience of Udmurt traditional culture, demonstrating its ability to adapt to the unforeseen challenges posed by COVID-19 while preserving its essential cultural components through innovative approaches.

Today, Galina continues to explore a wide range of research interests. One of her areas of focus is the role of mummery in various rituals, with a particular emphasis on its significance within the Udmurt traditional wedding. Her article, “Mummers in the Udmurt Wedding System” (Glukhova 2024a), offers an in-depth examination of this topic. The article explores how mummery has evolved from its original serious ritual role to more playful and entertaining forms, mirroring broader changes in Udmurt wedding traditions. While many traditional aspects of the ritual have lost their symbolic significance, they continue to play a significant role as a source of entertainment and cultural continuity in contemporary Udmurt weddings. This study emphasizes the importance of finding a balance between preserving traditional practices and adapting them to modern society.

Another recent article published in 2024, “The Mythological Character *Chokmor* in the Traditional Worldview of the Udmurts,” explores the etymology of this term based on linguistic data and ritual practices within the Udmurt community. The article analyzes the use of the term “chokmor” or “chokmorskön” in both southern and northern Udmurt traditions during winter and spring/summer ceremonies (Glukhova 2024b).

The study of “chokmor” within the traditional Udmurt worldview suggests a possible origin from the term “chek” or “cheke,” and its use in rituals as a symbol of communication with the supernatural realm. During spring and winter festivals, it may represent the spirit of a deceased ancestor who appears in the form of a masked character. The author analyzes the symbolism, terminology and local features of this phenomenon in various ritual contexts, including calendar, family and occasional rituals. She draws conclusions about the magical nature of ritual disguise, which was associated with both the cult of ancestors and the fertility of earth, livestock and family well-being.

In total, Galina Glukhova has published more than 200 papers in highly respected journals and collective volumes. Her work is distinguished by its thorough study and analysis of folkloric texts, as well as the comparison and identification of patterns across various local traditions. She also examines the relationship between verbal texts and ritual contexts, contributing to an understanding of the most ancient layers of traditional culture.

Moreover, Galina's work has been widely recognized by foreign scholars, particularly by her Estonian colleagues with whom she maintains warm and productive relationships. From 1995 to 2022, she regularly participated in internships at the Estonian Literary Museum in Tartu.

From the very beginning of her career, Galina has successfully combined scientific work with a teaching career. She has a portfolio of various original educational and methodological materials, which she uses in her classes. At the moment, Galina teaches courses on Udmurt and Russian folklore, Finno-Ugric mythology and culture, current issues in the field of folklore studies, journalism in ethnic and cultural interaction and other related subjects.

Galina is a talented teacher who not only shares knowledge but also inspires her students to pursue scholarship. She strives to instill in her students a passion for research and practical work. Her efforts have resulted in more than three hundred successful graduates who have defended their diplomas. Many of her students have gone on to become successful teachers, researchers, editors and experts in education and culture.

Students appreciate her unique ability to find an approach to each student and inspire their interest in the subject. She is one of the few teachers in Udmurtia who engages her students to conduct research on traditional Udmurt culture, inspiring them to explore and learn about their heritage.

Due to her rigorous, fair and friendly approach, students choose Galina as their mentor and supervisor. Her sense of humor and communication skills help her maintain friendly relationships with students over many years. She serves as a role model for aspiring scholars, inspiring them with her dedication to teaching and her passion for education.

Galina Glukhova is an experienced teacher who successfully combines teaching and administrative duties at the institute. She began her managerial career as the Deputy Director for Academic Affairs at the Institute of Udmurt Philology, Finno-Ugric Studies and Journalism, and now holds the position of Director.

Colleagues appreciate her for her dedication, responsibility and ability to communicate effectively with people. She easily establishes contacts with both students and colleagues, earning high respect among them. Her active participation in discussions helps her to find value in any challenging task or ambitious project.

Galina's success is based on her own hard work and dedication. She values these qualities in others and is known for her noble and tolerant nature, always showing understanding towards others.

As a former student, colleague and friend, I am delighted to extend my warmest congratulations to Galina Anatolyevna on her anniversary! Throughout the years, you have inspired us with your dedication, wisdom, and unwavering commitment to the preservation and study of Udmurt folklore. Your ability to combine teaching with administrative duties with such grace and professionalism is truly admirable. I wish you boundless energy to continue your important work, creative inspiration that fuels your passion for knowledge, and every success in achieving your loftiest goals and ideas.

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