

The Moon in Baltic-Finnic Mythology



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Various philosophical theories of cultural life such as myth, religion, language, history, and sciences are analyzed in the works of such philosophers as Collingwood, Cassirer, Whitehead, Ortega y Gasset, Lincoln, etc.

Tuan Yi wrote in his famous book: "Oriented mythical space differs greatly in detail from one culture to another, but it has certain general characteristics. One is anthropocentrism. It puts man clearly at the center of the universe.

Like the modern cosmology.

Moon Spots

There are some explanations for the spots on the Moon. People believe the spots form a face with a nose, eyes and a mouth. In full moon a woman or a girl carrying water buckets with yokes can be seen. It is narrated that the Moon took an orphan girl, which asked his help. Sometimes it has been said that the Moon punished a proud girl and took her to himself. It is also believed that in the Moon we can see the legendary Lithuanian wizard Tvardauskas, whom the devil took to hell but lost on the Moon, also one may see the scene of the first fratricide on the moon: Cain holding his slain brother Abel on a pitchfork.

(Balys 1951: 9-11).

Moon Spots

Figures on the Moon is seen as a boy, man, woman, girl or two men, young man and maiden.

1. Most popular motives orphan on the Moon - Moon feels sorry for her.

The most popular myth tells of an orphan or woman exhausted from the hard life and work, carrying water from the spring or brook, asks the Moon to take her up to him.

Moon, dearest,
Take me to be your back-whisker
And head-washer
H, Wiedemann 3, 134



Moon Spots

The Moon take pity on the girl or woman and takes her up to the sky where we can see her on moonlit nights. An early printed version of the story (1843) was spread through school textbooks and tells of an innocent maiden from Vaskjala who gets to the Moon.

water-carrier on the Moon

Western limits in Europe coincide approximately with the border between Balts and Slavs is the "girl with pails in the Moon". Lithuanians (Kerbelite, Laurinkene, Vaiškūnas), Letts (Pogodin), Estonians (Kuperjanov), and Votians (Ariste 1974, Ernits, Ernits).

Moon Spots

Saami - the Sun takes the girl to give her in marriage to his son and throws her into the Moon with her pails (Charnoluski).

Other eastern parallels: Komi-Zyrians, Komi-Permiaks, Udmurts, Chuvash, Mari , Bashkirs, Volga Tatars, samoyeds, Selkups., Khanti.

Russian, Ukrainian, etc - after Alexander Gura - only some versions from Archangelsk, etc close to ethnic groups of Finnic Ugric Peoples.

After Y. Berezkin : Kazakh, Kirgiz, Kets in North, Khakas, Evenki, Nanai, Lamut, Nikhv, Buryat, Mongolia. Japanese, Ainu, China. Paeoasiatic Peoples: Chukchi, Koryak, Kamchadal (pails and bush). Most of American tribes strating from Tlingit,etc.

Moon Spots

2. Moon tarer. To hide the crime, punishment.

The crime is either theft,

wife-killing (South Estonia),

act of love (West and North Estonia),

offending the Moon

affronting or accusing the Moon for not coming to help
(connected with the II version of water carrier on moon)

Moon Spots

2. Moon tarer

One man had killed his wife. The moon was watching and laughing – I see you!

The man got angry, took a pot of tar and a brush. He climbed up on to the Moon and started to tar it. His hand was shaking. In some places there was a lot of tar, in others very little.

That's why the Moon is spotted.

ERA II 115, 644 (3) < Urvaste

Moon Spots

3. Being in the sauna late on Saturday evening or generally late.

4. The spots could be result of a quarrel or argument between two brothers – also Cain and Abel.

5. A human face

6. The wolf and the bull.

The latter story is probably influenced by myths about Ursa Major.

7. A man on the moon cutting trees and carrying water.

Moon Charms

Early records - 17th century, 100+ texts.
Some charms used even today.

The moon is addressed in short charms warding against disease and disease is transferred to the moon.

The great majority of moon charms are short formulae.
The accompanying rites are not complicated either.

Moon Charms

Kuu teretamine - Greeting the Moon.

The incantation had to be chanted when you saw the new moon in the sky and the purpose was to guarantee

youthfulness,

health and recuperation,

asking for money

food.

Moon Charms

*Tsiale uni,
lambale laiskus,
saksale tõbi,
a mulle tävvest tervisest.*

Sleep to the swine,
Laziness to the sheep,
Illness to the rich [Germans]
But to me good health.

KKI, WS < Setu

Moon Charms

*Tere, tere, kuukene!
Sina rauaraskune,
ja mina kullakergune.*

Hello, hello, dear moon!
You heavy as iron,
And me light as gold.

RKM II 368, 417 (10) < Maarja-Magdaleena

Moon Charms

Sinu silm tõntsiks-minu silm selgeks

“Your eye to grow dim, my eye to be clear”

Mulle tervis, sulle tõbi

“Health to me, disease to you.”

Moon Charms

Healing words & healing with Moonlight

Small growths could be reattributed to the moon - warts, boils, bone deformities – as well as skin ailments.

Such incantations are common in Scandinavian (Norway, Denmark, Sweden), the British Isles (Irish, Scottish, English), central European tradition (German, Austrian, French, Hungarian), among Western and Southern Slavs (Bulgaria, Macedonia, Serbia, Slovakia, Czech, Poland), eastern Slavs (Russia, Ukraine, Belorussia).

Moon Charms

Näe mis minul on ja sinul ei ole. Võta endale!
See what I have and you don't have. Take it!

If you see someone riding in moonlight, you have to say:
And the wart makes three!

Moon Charms

To make an illness recede, the old or full moon was addressed. The final formula *Kao kui vanakuu taevast!* “Go like the old moon disappears from the sky!” is found in many healing words.

To perform magic symbolic rites washing off the disease.

To whisk the disease off in moonlight.

Moon Charms

Bugs and parasites could be transferred to the moon.

If there were roaches in the house, one person had to go out on the new moon Thursday and say: *Noorkuu, võta mu saksad endale!* “New moon, take my bosses [bloodsuckers?] for yourself!”

The phase of the moon is a very common time anchor in incantations.

Influence of confessions

Moon Charms

*Jaunas Mėnuli,
Dangaus karaliau,
Apšieti žemę apvalai,
Apvalyk ir mano griešną kūną.
(Masalskienė 1990)*

Young Moon,
King of the sky,
You light the Earth and clean it,
Clean my sinful body too.



Thanks!