

OCCASIONAL COMMEMORATIVE RITUALS IN UDMURT CULTURE

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ABSTRACT

This article takes as its focus an examination of instances of occasional commemoration of the dead in Udmurt culture. Descriptions of such commemorations are based on sources drawn from published research literature as well as the author's own field materials collected between 2007 and 2022. It should be noted that, to date, no specific research has been conducted on this issue, most probably due to its irregularity and, to some extent, its intimate nature. The material shows that cases of occasional commemoration within Udmurt culture cover a fairly wide range of social, ceremonial and magical aspects of life. Faith in the power and strength of ancestors has built up an entire system of relationships and behavioural strategies that vividly characterise a traditional worldview that is actualised in extraordinary life circumstances. It can be said that today examples of occasional commemorations are quite diverse, and are commonplace in the everyday and ceremonial life of the Udmurt.

KEYWORDS: the Udmurt • occasional commemorations • ancestor cult • world of the dead

In Udmurt culture, the phenomenon of the ancestor cult continues to this day to persist at all levels of ritual, work and everyday life. As Mikhail Atamanov-Egrapi (2017: 313) notes, “the Udmurts seem to have turned more often to their deceased ancestors ... than to their own Creator – God.” Irina Nazmutdinova (2017: 92) also notes the importance of the ancestor cult among the Udmurt,

before any important event, be it a long trip, a wedding, sending a loved one off to the army, people considered it necessary to visit the cemetery, to ask their relatives for well-being, an easy journey, a safe return, happiness and health for their relatives.

Scholarly interest in and attention to the Udmurt ancestor cult began to become apparent from the end of the 18th century, while subsequently, in the period from the end of the 19th century to the early 20th century, researchers cited in their works an increasingly developed descriptive and analytical side to this issue. Among the researchers were both Russians (e.g. Aleksandra Fuks, Mikhail Kharuzin, Grigoriy Vereshchagin, Nikolay Pervukhin, Konstantin Yakovlev, Boris Gavrilov, Vladimir Bekhterev, Pëtr Bogayevskiy, Ivan Smirnov, Arkadiy Yemel'yanov) and Europeans (e.g. Torsten Gustaf Aminoff, Yrjö Wichmann, Maximilian Theodor Buch, Bernát Munkácsi, Uno Holmberg).

Since the end of the 20th and beginning of the 21st centuries, Udmurt veneration of their ancestors has been reflected in various areas of humanitarian science. The growth of academic interest in the topic has expanded aspects of the research, as well as the range of academic disciplines, among them, for example, are ethnography (Vladimir Pimenov, Vladimir Vladykin, Lyudmila Khristolyubova, Vladimir Napol'skikh, Semen Vinogradov, Yelena Trofimova, Lyudmila Volkova, Galina Nikitina, Petr Orlov, Yelena Popova, Ranus Sadikov, Aleksandr Chernykh, Aleksei Peterson, Ágnes Kerezsi et al.), folklore studies (Tat'yana Vladykina, Galina Glukhova, Tat'yana Panina, Tat'yana Minniyakhmetova, Aado Lintrop, Anna-Leena Siikala, Nikolai Anisimov et al.), archaeology (Nadezhda Shutova, Margarita Ivanova et al.), ethnomusicology (Marina Khodyreva, Rimma Churakova, Irina Nuriyeva, Yelena Boikova, Irina Pchelovodova et al.), linguistics (Mikhail Atamanov, Semen Bushmakin, Valei Kelmakov, Lyudmila Karpova, Rif Nasibullin et al.), toponymy (Lyudmila Kirillova, Mira Samarova et al.), and local history (Leonid Krivosheyev, Semen Vakhitov, Tat'yana Khokhryakova et al.).

However, in spite of all this, such folk culture phenomena as commemorations of the deceased for some reason or occasion unconnected to family-related or calendar events have still not been afforded due attention. This fact may be quite understandable, since occasional commemorations are quite often determined by special circumstances, and are not so noticeable when compared with other rituals and customs that entail more expressive communication with the deceased or ancestors. In the academic literature, only a small number of mentions and comments can be found on this issue, and these most often appear merely as addenda to the descriptions of Udmurt calendar and family rituals.

Occasional commemorations are part of a complex system of occasional rituals. Within the scope of this study, and following on from Roman Fedorov (2020: 147), occasional ritual is understood as

a set of ritualised actions that are not directly related to the calendar cycle of nature, nor to the human life cycle. At the same time, an occasional ritual should be considered as a kind of link between a person's spiritual and practical activities and the world that surrounds them. This is due to the fact that many of its residual manifestations, preserved in our time, originate in the most ancient magical practices, which were designed to subjugate the unbridled and sometimes formidable forces of nature to man.

Occasional rituals "are carried out as necessary, on the occasion of an incident, and are aimed at overcoming (or creating) a crisis (both of a natural and social nature)" (Stasevich 2013: 132). It therefore follows that occasional commemorations are ritual-

ised actions performed in special circumstances in cases of contact with the world of the dead, which are aimed at overcoming critical events and are not linked to family-related or calendar cycles.

This article examines various cases of occasional commemoration identified in academic literature, and the author's own field research among local groups of Udmurts (mainly southern and Eastern) in the period from 2007 to 2022. The author's personal observations as a bearer of the culture under study are also included. The published materials cover the period from the end of the 19th to the beginning of the 21st centuries, and enable us to bring character to the materials recorded by scholars.

Occasional commemorations can be either individual, family-related, or collective. The research materials show that situations requiring special behaviour include:

- an encounter with signs from the world of the dead as a communicative signal;
- before a long trip, or after a long absence;
- the arrival of guests;
- the preparation of food;
- loss of livestock or valuables;
- being near a place of death or a cemetery;
- magical rituals for healing from illness or harm;
- severe human illness;
- the 'walking' of a dead man;
- dreams involving the deceased;
- requests to hitch a lift on a passing vehicle;
- drought;
- misfortune in the affairs or life of the family/clan, etc.

These and many other circumstances of occasional commemoration of the deceased or ancestors are given such that traditional examples and those frequently encountered in published literature are cited first, followed by rarer example recorded solely during the author's fieldwork; finally modern phenomena are included.

Since this study is the first experiment to be conducted as a specific examination of the issue, only brief descriptions of the occasional commemorations are provided. It is clear that other examples can be added to these, which will probably be more personal and/or private. Given the impossibility of reviewing the entire variety of manifestations of occasional commemorations in a single paper, this article focuses only on those that are best preserved in the popular memory and which were recorded in written sources. At this stage of the study, it was important to identify the precedent circumstances that arise between the world of the living and the dead in order to characterise the conditions and facets of their coexistence.

AN UNFORTUNATE MISHAP, UNFORESEEN CIRCUMSTANCES AHEAD

At the end of the 19th century, priest Mikhail Yelabuzhskiy (1895: 804) noted that if any misfortune happened on the road, for example, a horse got sick or a wheel broke, this trouble was attributed to the dead – “the old man caught him” – after which an

improvised wake was immediately arranged. According to the latest field research and observations by the author, it can be argued that even now in such situations, it is possible to appeal to deceased ancestors and say a prayer to God. In another publication, Yelabuzhskiy (1903: 109) writes that if an Udmurt suddenly becomes ill on a journey, he believes that “the old man caught him”, and then facing to the north he begins to crumble bread in commemoration of the deceased.

BEING NEAR SACRED AND DANGEROUS PLACES

A *kuyas'kon* ‘commemoration’ ritual was also performed when passing near sacred places: cemeteries, places of offering or disposal (*kuyas'kon in(')ty*), places of disposal of the possessions of the deceased, as well as places where it was believed that they were “catching” (*kute*). Shutova (2004: 50) notes with regard to such places:

In the vicinity of such places, a person could come to harm even if they did not desecrate the place, commit anything illegal, but simply pass by. It is no coincidence that when visiting cemeteries and other sacred topos of a lower rank, and indeed even when in the vicinity of such places, it was necessary to make some kind of symbolic sacrificial offering: throw a coin, piece of cloth, or piece of thread.

Such places could include secret burial places for infants: in the village of Bol'shoy Venizh in the Yukamensky district of Udmurtia, at twilight in such places it was necessary to throw a doll, some grain, bread or other food (Shutova 2018: 118). According to the account of a local source of Karpova (2005: 336), in the village of Churashur in Udmurtia's Yukamensky district, after he was “grabbed” or “dragged by the dead” and he froze on the spot, his mother buried bread in the ground beside the river. The source concludes that he fell under the influence of a small child buried secretly at this place (*ibid.*).

Places where people had been killed can also be included. For example, in the tradition of the northern Udmurt, if someone in the village got sick, they would say “We must make an offering to [the murdered Tatar] Atabay” (Turi village, Krasnogorsk district of Udmurtia), “We must make an offering to the log [where] Ares [was killed]” (Stary Kachkashur village, Krasnogorsk district of Udmurtia) (Shutova 2018: 139).

In places where people had died suddenly, especially where the blood of the deceased was spilled after a certain period of time, a preventive commemoration had to be held. In the tradition of the Udmurts of the village of Karamas-Pel'ga in Udmurtia's Kiyasovo district, salt and cereal grains are poured onto the ground at the scene of a car accident, with a request not to harm the living: “Do not send diseases and injuries unto us” (*En kyzhty-myzhty milemyz!*) (FM 2016: Ol'ga Solov'ëva). According to respondents from the village of Dubrovskiy in the same district, in such ill-fated places it is customary to sacrifice a cockerel in order to prevent subsequent misfortune (Anisimov 2016: 45).

According to research material from Panina (2019: 422),

kuyas'kon is conducted if it is believed that the disease was ‘sent’ when people were present in places of death or burial, which can be conditionally divided into the following groups: 1) suicides, 2) people who died a sudden, unfortunate, or violent

death (for example, drowning, lightning strike, deaths of the homeless), 3) miscarriages (both spontaneous and through abortion), stillborn babies, children who did not live long enough to be given a name.

To this day, Udmurt culture has the following custom:

before leaving their village, the Udmurt will stop (usually near the cemetery) and make a small *kuyas'kon* 'tribute', referring by name to their deceased relatives, or indeed to all their deceased ancestors, with requests for a good journey and a safe return (Anisimov 2017: 41).

According to some local sources, when this custom is neglected, unforeseen misfortune happens to travellers: the vehicle stops abruptly or breaks down, the horse refuses to move further, and so on. In the words of my interlocutor from the village of Urazgil'dy in the Tatyshly district of Bashkiria, when walking or passing near the cemetery at night, she will bite her index finger until she has passed this dangerous place. This is done so that the dead do not scare her or send disease – “so that the dead do not capture/catch us” (FM 2020: Zoya Riyanova). In tradition, it is also customary to bite the index finger when you accidentally point your finger at sacred places, including the cemetery. Finnish ethnologist Holmberg recorded the following information at the beginning of the 20th century in the village of Kaymashabash in the modern Yanaul district of Bashkiria: “When they pass by the cemetery, they always throw a few coins, pieces of bread, threads, etc.” (Sadikov and Hafeez 2010: 57).

ILLNESS, ASSORTED AILMENTS AND ANXIETIES

In Udmurt culture, memorial sacrifices are also performed in cases of illness. Nikitina (2004: 87) notes that the dissatisfaction of “the old people” with the living can lead to illness if the latter stop communicating, consulting, remembering and commemorating, visiting, and giving food to their dead kin. Moreover, according to materials dating to the late 19th century, “if the consequence of the forgetting of the dead by their relatives is revenge on the part of the former, then this is considered well deserved and legitimate” (Bogayevskiy 1890: 45). The nature of the disease was determined with the help of a fortune teller, after which they began to eliminate the cause of the disease. They held a wake, either at home or in the cemetery: “one of the relatives came to the graves with special treats (fish pie, eggs, etc.) and performed a memorial ceremony ... the food brought to the graves was a sacrifice placating the ancestors” (Nikitina 2004: 87). According to Vladykina (2018: 211–212), the occasional memorial rites of *ullane / vu ullane vös'an-* ‘prayer directed downstream’ or *s'örlo vös'an-* ‘prayer outside/prayer on the other side’ could be performed during epidemics or in the case of family members falling ill:

In this case, the sacrifice was made according to the definition of a *tuno*, a “wise man, fortune-teller, shaman”, with a small gathering of people, most often one owner of the house and “knowledgeable” elderly people observing strict rules (on the way there and back, do not make contact with people you meet, perform the ceremony at dusk or midnight, cast the victim “towards the setting sun” or to the north).

Among the northern Udmurt, the rite is called *viro s'oton* 'the offering of blood' or *viro karon* 'blood sacrifice', and the sacrifice might be a goose. The sacrifice would be performed in the family circle, and the commemorative offerings would then be taken to the forest (Shutova 2018: 133). Based on material from the early 20th century recorded by Mikhail Il'in (1914: 320), Udmurts from the village of Kupcheneyevo in Bashkiria's Belebeeyevo district (today's Ermekeyevo district) believed that a sudden illness could be brought about by a disrespectful attitude towards deceased ancestors. A disease which occurred in this way was called *kulem kuton myzh* 'a disease received from the deceased' (ibid.) or *kulem murt myzh* 'a disease of the deceased' (Yemel'yanov 1921: 30). According to Vladykina (1992: 145), if a person withers away quickly, it was believed that the soul *urt* fell under the influence of the dead – *kulem'yës kyzhtillyam*. To avert the disease, poultry – a cockerel or a drake – were sacrificed to the deceased: "I bring you a blood sacrifice, do not catch me, let me go (rid me of the disease), don't be angry, come all of you and diligently eat what we have slaughtered for you." (Ibid.) A memorial dish was prepared from the meat of the animal, and the *kuyas'kon* 'offering' ceremony was performed in front of the oven. The names of the deceased relatives were listed in the address, and at the end, part of the dish intended for the deceased was poured out for the dogs (Il'in 1914: 320). According to materials from the early 20th century cited by Yemel'yanov (1921: 30), a memorial sacrifice is made either at home or in a special *kurkuyan* locus 'a [place] for throwing away the bast' or *ly kuyan* 'a [place] for throwing away the bones of [a sacrificial animal/bird]' intended for the disposal of the posthumous belongings of the deceased and offering memorial gifts. Holmberg also records the sacrifice to and commemoration of the dead in cases of illness and other misfortune in a special place for the dead, "the place where the bast is thrown", i.e. *kurkuyan* (Sadikov and Hafeez 2010: 84). Sadikov (2019: 213) notes that commemoration of those who died of illness is also practised in the modern tradition of the Eastern Udmurt. Next to the village of Starye Kaksi in Udmurtia's Mozhga district there is a place that locals call *kushpum* ('the end of the field'). According to locals' stories, the people who find themselves near this place at the wrong time can get lost and wander around unable to leave. It is believed that these unexplained phenomena are connected to the fact that this place is included in the sacred topography, since rituals of making offerings to the spirits of another world – *kuyas'kon inty* – are performed here. Indeed, Yevdokiya Shirshina (FM 2014) told of how one villager, after her son's illness, sacrificed a ram at this place: "I give you blood [sacrifice]! Let things be good for [my son], let my son recover!" However, as the narrator concluded, the son did not recover, and he later died.

Recent studies have also documented the following memorial practices carried out with the aim of healing disease. A person who is sick

must find the grave of someone else with their own name and, taking a handful of earth from the grave, wipe their hands with it and whisper the magic formula: "Both you [name of the deceased], and I [name of the living person]. Pull it out, take away my illness. Just as you do not feel disease, so will I not feel it anymore." (Anisimov 2017: 50)

Someone who was seriously ill would be required to visit the cemetery at noon or midnight to perform a healing ritual:

If you are very ill, the healers say: "At twelve o'clock midnight, go to the cemetery and find a grave with such and such a name. Take a chicken's egg there and rub it on this grave." A fresh, just laid egg. [The egg] must be fresh.... Rub them on the grave like this: "Let all my illness go away!"... And this is how it was with my older brother's wife. She had asthma. At night, they said, I did not dare to go. She takes her son, our Vova, and in the afternoon, at twelve o'clock [she goes]... Find a grave with the name Anna, they say, said [the healer]. And off she went. She and Vova found this grave, with the name Anna. And she rubbed this chicken's egg [over this grave]. She returned home, they say... And it must be broken. When you return home, they say, you must break this egg. So she broke it, they say, hair, and whatever else, they say, is in the egg.... She burned it, threw it in the stove she said, I think. Hair, wool, whatever else, they say, was in this fresh chicken's egg.... [Her] asthma indeed disappeared.... Either in the day, at twelve o'clock, or at night, at twelve o'clock [we must go]. Only twelve. (Ibid.: 83–84)

In the tradition of the Udmurt of Igra district, Udmurtia, there is the idea that the souls of either infants or children without roots or names are capable of harming living children, disturbing them or sending them various ailments because of their envy. To prevent such negative effects, the Udmurt of the village of Sep, which is located in this district, would perform a special commemoration. A hunk of bread and butter was wrapped in a triangular cloth, after which they twisted it anticlockwise around the child's head and addressed the perpetrators of the anxiety aloud: "We commemorate those without first names, those without family names, let the crying [of the child] go away! ... Let the evil eye go away, don't torment this [child]... I give them this bread." Then they go to the intersection of three roads where they throw this bundle over their left shoulder and return home silently, without turning around. At home, they pray to the supreme god Inmar and ask for His intercession on behalf of the child. (Ibid.: 158)

According to Khristolyubova (2004: 111),

whenever they saw a bruise on the body (most often on the arm) that had come from no one knew where, they would say: "*kulem kutem / chepyl'tem*", that is, the deceased gave a pinch, as a reminder of himself,¹ and therefore during a meal it is necessary to remember deceased relatives.

DREAMS INVOLVING THE DECEASED

Particular attention has always been afforded to dreams involving the deceased. According to Yemel'yanov (1921: 20), as recorded at the beginning of the 20th century in Sarapul district, following a bad dream involving a deceased person, it is necessary to perform the ceremony of *tyron*, 'the offering or payment [to the deceased]' on the same day:

They [the person who had the dream] take a chicken's egg and carry it to the roof of the storehouse or some other elevated place, and promises to hold a wake in honour of the deceased, i.e. to prepare a treat for them. Then they cook porridge or some other meat stew. Some of these dishes they eat themselves, and some are placed on the roof or in the front corner of the hut. During the commemoration,

the head of the family addresses the deceased with the same words as they would during a funeral service.

The Votyaks of the Sarapul district believe that if they do not commemorate the deceased who appeared to them in a dream, then the deceased can send a disease to the family.²

Yemel'yanov defines such commemorations as private commemorations with indefinite time constraints (ibid.). In the Igra district of Udmurtia people considered that "if in a dream you see a dead person in a beautiful headscarf, then you must give a beautiful headscarf to the elderly, and if they are in a dress, then you must give a dress" (Shutova 2018: 181). The dead can appear to the living in dreams with certain requests, demands, and even complaints. For example, if a person dreams that he or she is cold, the living can give clothes to the needy, the elderly, and the poor. Sometimes gifts can be given during a funeral for a fellow villager: the items to be sent are placed in the coffin with a request to pass them along with greetings to the addressee. Udmurt Christians take such gifts to the church, where they are distributed to those in need. They also learn about the receipt of a parcel through dreams. Among the Eastern Udmurt, if they have a bad dream involving the deceased, they commemorate them in order to ward them off: they take a piece of bread, circle it around the waist anticlockwise and throw it to the dog (which is on a leash) with the words "Don't come to me in a dream anymore"; "I had a bad dream. May it not be [bad] for me. May [everything] be well" (Anisimov 2017: 262; Sadikov 2019: 210). In the village of Izmaylovo in Tatarstan's Bavly district, after a bad dream involving a deceased person, the relatives hold a *kis'ton* (commemoration) wake involving the sacrifice of poultry (a hen or a cockerel) or livestock (a ewe or ram). At the same time, they ask the deceased not to disturb the living anymore: "Do not go scaring [lit. surprising] people anymore". Another respondent from the same settlement had a dream about an elder brother asking her for a smoke, after which she went to the cemetery with the older family members and stuck a cigarette into the grave of her dead brother with the request not to disturb the living anymore. It was also noted that a cigarette could be given to an outsider so that they can smoke it and give remembrance. Similar phenomena of anxiety brought upon the living by the dead are known in this tradition as *kulem kutem* 'caught/grabbed by the deceased' (FM 2019: Flyura Mindiyarova). According to other information, if the deceased constantly appears in dreams, then a blood sacrifice of poultry or livestock is made, and all the deceased relatives are commemorated by name. Memorial gifts with the limbs and head of the sacrificed animal are taken beyond the grounds of the property, and the deceased are addressed thus: "Go away, don't come to us anymore. Don't come to us in our dreams. Bring only good things." (FM 2014: Nina Gil'manova) In the tradition of the southern Udmurt, a memorial ritual is also held in such cases, known as *s'örlan'berlan' kuyas'kon* 'the throwing beyond/back'. In order to do this, standing either in the cemetery itself, or with their backs to the west or to the cemetery, they throw pieces of food over their left shoulder while loudly and reproachfully addressing the deceased person who is causing the annoyance: "If you're dead, lie down! ... Find a friend there! I still have a lot to do in this world!" (Anisimov 2017: 172–173). If, on the other hand, you see the deceased in a dream during an illness, then it is customary to take out food for them into the garden, accompanying these actions with spells: "Do not bring suffering, make my life easier, save me from disease, protect me from enemies, protect the poultry and

livestock. Here we make a sacrifice to you, share it among yourselves, help yourself to everything.” (Vladykina 1992: 145)

During occasional commemorations, communication with the other world is carried out either by the individual themselves, or by a representative of the older generation in their capacity as a guardian of religious tradition, or by a specialist in magic.

DECEASED ‘VISITATIONS’ TO THE LIVING

A special commemoration of the deceased would be necessitated by their unexpected visitations to the living, which could occur for a number of different reasons, including intense longing for the deceased, the machinations of sorcerers or witches, the initiative of the deceased themselves, and so on (for more details, see Anisimov 2017: 274–277). The deceased could appear in dreams or in the form of audio or visual apparitions. Respondents would note that they could literally feel the deceased physically (FM 2008–2022: Vasilisa Kamasheva; Luker’ya Sovinova; Ol’ga Solov’ëva; El’sa Kutergina; Yuriy Kutergin; Margarita Gavrilova; Tatiana Samsonova; Anna Baidullina; Flyura Mindiyarova; Zoya Riyanova; Yevdokiya Shirshina; Nina Gil’manova). The most dangerous are considered to be the visitations of a deceased spouse, in whose image, according to some sources, evil spirits come. In such cases, commemorations by word, action or object are preventative in nature, and aimed at ending subsequent unwanted contact with the dead.

A special commemoration is conducted with the *s’örlan’berlan’ kuyas’kon*, known as ‘the throwing beyond/back’ (see above in the text). Three-year-old poppy or millet seeds are scattered on the grave. The house is delineated with a scythe, shovel, or other iron tool, similar to the tradition observed on Maundy Thursday eve, *kulon poton uy*, meaning ‘the night when the dead emerge’. Udmurt Christians pray for the soul’s repose in the church or request a special observance where consecrated soil is dispersed on the grave in the form of a cross. In the village of Staraya Sal’ya in the Kiyasovo district of Udmurtia, a contemporary method of warding off unwanted spirits has been documented. The phrase “come yesterday” must be inscribed on paper and placed on all windows and doors of the house (Anisimov 2017: 275–276). Additionally, people venture into the forest to perform specific rituals with offerings (Shutova 2018: 200).

The ‘errant souls’ of dead warlocks or witches merited particular attention, as they caused anxiety not only among the living, but also to the entire community of the dead in the cemetery. To prevent the ‘wandering’ of this category of dead, the following methods were known to the Udmurt. According to Shutova (ibid.), a rod crafted from aspen or rowan, or a nail without a head, must be inserted into the opening of the grave. Scatter three-year-old poppy or millet seeds onto the burial site. Excavate the grave, then insert a stake made of aspen or rowan, or a red-hot headless nail into the region of the heart or eyes, placing a split frying pan on the chest. Alternatively, some sources suggest flipping the corpse to lie face down (Anisimov 2017: 277).

NATURAL DISASTERS

In traditional Udmurt culture, rain-summoning rituals during periods of drought were also included in the context of occasional commemorative practices. These rituals came about as a result of the idea that the dead were able to influence the forces of nature. In the tradition of the Udmurt beyond the Kama River, such rites are called *saptas'kon* 'soiling/dirtying'; *saptas'kon vös* 'praying where people get dirty/get muddy'; *vue kuyas'kon* 'throwing/throwing out into the water' or *vu ullyan* 'prodding the water'. The participants in the ceremony would go to the cemetery, where they poured water on the graves while asking the dead for rain (Sadikov 2019: 235).

In the village of Upper Tykhtem in the Kaltasy district of Bashkiria, during this ceremony the villagers would go to the graves of the Mari people Atnash and Natalia, who had lived on the site of the village before the Udmurt arrived there. (Ibid.)

According to Minniyakhmetova (2000: 48), while symbolically pouring water on the graves from a ladle, they address the dead and the missing with the words "forty buckets we pour". After that, they go down to the river and push each other into the water. The Udmurt of the Tatyshly district of Bashkiria, when they are at the river, ask for the water to be 'shaken up' (*vuez bultany*). Finally, a black ram is thrown into the river, from which a sacrificial porridge is later prepared. After that, they bathe and return home. (Ibid.) Among the Udmurt of the Kuyeda district in the Perm region, "in a dry summer, in order to bring rain, it was also necessary to pour water on the graves of people who had drowned" (Chernykh 2002: 54).

In years of drought, in some villages a small prayer ritual is organised even today, with the preparation of sacrificial food, and the dousing of fellow villagers with water. It is held as a belief that one of the reasons for the drought is the fact that somewhere there is an unburied or missing person. (Popova and Chernykh 2003: 285)

According to Chernykh (2002: 54), "the black colour of the sacrificial animal personified the dark, black colour of the rain cloud". According to Khristolyubova's research materials (1995: 154), in the village of Bol'shekachakovo in Bashkiria's Kaltasy district, apart from a black ram, a black chicken may also be sacrificed.

In rain-summoning rituals, there are also instances of preventative commemoration. For example, in the village of Nikolashkino in the Bavly district of Tatarstan, sources recalled the following instance. There was a time in their village when, after the funeral of a woman who was considered to be a witch, it became dry and hot in the summer, and almost all the grass burned away. The elders decided that this had happened because of the dead witch, because she "took all the rain from the sky", "devoured it", and "pulled it". The village elders, along with the older villagers, went to her grave, where they noticed a small hole through which the witch's soul allegedly passed. Water was poured into this hole, and an oak wedge was driven in, after which water was once again poured over the grave. According to the source, it began to rain two days later, which once again convinced the locals that the late witch was to blame for the drought (FM 2019: Margarita Gavrilova, Tatiana Samsonova).

In the village of Karamas-Pel'ga in the Kiyasovo district of Udmurtia, it is customary during periods of drought to sacrifice chickens in the lower reaches of the cemetery, known as the *shay ullan'yn*. This place also has other names, such as *lulpu arama* 'the alderberry', or *kuyas'kon inty* 'the place of offering'. This locus in the village's sacred topography is used as a place to leave memorial offerings and sacrifices as part of the *yvr-pyd s'eton* rite 'the offering of the head and legs [of an animal]'. Accordingly, in 2016 the village elders sacrificed six chickens to the deceased, having previously turned the birds' heads towards the lower reaches of the river (i.e. downstream). The sacrifice is accompanied by a verbal appeal to various categories of deceased (ancestors, those who died without living next of kin, fellow villagers buried in a foreign land, those who died prematurely, murder victims, suicides, etc.) with a request for rain: "Send down rains, let the good rain come. Let there be no hurricane, let there be no fire." Porridge and soup are prepared from the meat of the sacrificial birds, which are then used to offer *kuyas'kon* to the deceased, and a memorial feast where the locals who want to can gather. It is not customary to visit the cemetery during this ceremony. (FM 2016: Vasilisa Kamasheva; Luker'ya Sovinova; Ol'ga Solov'ëva)



Photo 1. Preparation of ritual dishes during the occasional *shay ullan'yn kuyas'kon* 'commemoration at the lower reaches of the cemetery' ritual. Karamas-Pel'ga village, Kiyasovo district, Udmurtia, 2021. Author's photo.



Photo 2. Making food offerings to deceased ancestors during the occasional *shay ullan'yn kuyas'kon* 'commemoration at the lower reaches of the cemetery' ritual. Karamas-Pel'ga village, Kiyasovo district, Udmurtia, 2021. Author's photo.

Holmberg notes that the Udmurt also commemorate their dead kin in cases of crop failure, since they believe that these hardships serve as punishment from the dead (Sadikov and Hafeez 2010: 84). In such instances, they endeavour to make peace between the deceased and the victims of the crop failure in a special place not far from the village called the *kurkuyan* '[the place] of throwing the bast', into which the posthumous belongings of the deceased are thrown. Holmberg writes that there are small wooden monuments here, a few inches high, in front of which there are usually a number of small one-legged tables. Sacrificial food is placed on these tables, and the dead are commemorated. Holmberg believes that "this piece of wood is the habitat of the deceased themselves, meaning that it makes up some form of their image." (Ibid.)

DETERIORATING CONDITION AND DEATH OF LIVESTOCK

If livestock, poultry, or bees either die or deteriorate on the farm, it is customary to make a blood sacrifice to the deceased ancestors or a deceased individual, called *viro s'ëtono*, 'a blood [sacrifice] must be offered'. The Udmurt believe that, through the deaths of these animals, the deceased are letting the living know that some actions of their living

relatives have caused dissatisfaction among the deceased, or that they need to make a sacrifice. For example, according to the account of one respondent in the village of Kar-sashur in the Sharkansky district of Udmurtia, following frequent deaths among livestock a family decided to perform a *viro s'ëtono* memorial ceremony for their late grandmother. On the appointed day, a sheep was slaughtered, a memorial dish was prepared from the meat, and the bones, along with coins, were taken and left behind the garden. The offering of gifts was accompanied by an appeal to the deceased relative: "May the livestock live well and healthy, from now on, don't be offended anymore" (FM 2015: Yuriy Kutergin). The Udmurt of the Tatyshly district of Bashkortostan, in instances of increased death rates among the livestock, arrange the memorial sacrifice *viro karon* 'the evocation of blood' (FM 2020: Flyura Mindiyarova). According to research material from the 19th century (Vereshchagin 1995: 71), this sacrifice was based on the belief that the dead can send diseases to cattle, so the sacrifice is offered by the owner in a new stable. During the ceremony, they address their ancestors thus: "Elders (deceased)! Take your sacrifice with your hands and feet, do not crush the horses, do not torment the cattle." (Ibid.) Among the Udmurt of the Malaya Purga district of Udmurtia, this rite is called *atas viro* 'the blood cockerel [sacrifice]' or *yzh viro* 'the blood sheep [sacrifice]', although a calf or cow can also be sacrificed (Vladykina and Glukhova 2011: 182–184). The reasons to hold these occasional commemorative rituals can vary greatly: "when things are bad at home, the cattle don't breed, if you are not happy with the children" (ibid.: 183). If the troubles are connected with the living and their livestock, then the victim is sacrificed underground, and their blood is let in the same place; in the case of cattle, this is carried out in a stable (ibid.).

MISSING PROPERTY

Cases of occasional commemoration have also been recorded in instances where property has been lost. One of these cases was recorded in the village of Nikolashkino in the Bavly district of Tatarstan. In the year of a man's death, his son gave his wife gold earrings and a chain. Later, the chain disappeared without trace. The wife of the deceased, the mother-in-law of the woman who had lost the chain, had a dream that her late husband was involved. Afterwards, the widow baked pancakes, took several pieces and, together with her son and daughter-in-law, went to the grave of her late husband. There she made a small memorial with pancakes, and began to scold him for the chain going missing:

Kolya, you loved your daughter-in-law [after all]. Don't you go acting like that! You bring her thing back! You're probably just angry [because] we're getting ready to celebrate. Thirty years, what can you do now. The guests will come, Kolya. Let it go already, let it go! Give her back her [chain], give it back now!

Later on, while she was cleaning the house, the daughter-in-law found the lost chain in the rubbish, contained in a matchbox. When the widow found out that the lost item had been found, she immediately thanked her dead husband: "Oh, Kolya, thank you, thank you!" (FM 2019: Tatiana Samsonova)

We may also include here cases of missing cattle. For instance, in the village of Minderovo in Udmurtia's Malaya Purga district, the loss of a calf was associated for the Yakovlev family with the fact that the deceased were demanding a *viro kuro* blood sacrifice. According to popular belief, the dead are able to hide livestock from the eyes of the living, as was the case here. According to Anis'ya Yakovleva, if one of the livestock has gone missing, you must go in search of it only once, with flour, bread, or crackers in your pockets. Heeding this advice, the family members went in search of the calf, which they found at noon in a small forest near the ravine, where they had already searched more than once. In the evening of the same day, they decided to make a *vir potton* 'releasing blood' memorial sacrifice of a sheep with placatory appeals to the deceased: "Here, we slaughter [the sheep]. Do not cause any more pain, we slaughter the meat [in your honour]." After cooking the meat, the family held a memorial feast. (FM 2015: Anis'ya Yakovleva) In the village of Dubrovskiy of Kiyasovo district in Udmurtia, whenever cattle went missing, a *s'örlan' kuyas kon* 'throwing/offering outside/back' ritual was held with this entreaty to the deceased: "Bring back my cattle! Bring back my sheep!" (FM 2013: Maria Nikonova). The Udmurt of Tatyshly district in Bashkiria also associate this problem with the influence of the dead, believing that the dead hide and keep cattle from their owners (*kulem kutem* 'the deceased caught', *kulem'yës kuto* 'the dead are hunting'),³ thus sending them punishment (*üsti karem* '[the deceased] have punished us') in response to violations of taboos, rules of conduct, or disrespectful treatment of the deceased or ancestors. To eliminate the problem, it is recommended to put bread and butter on the gate with a request to return the animal, while according to another version, seeds are apparently placed on the fence for crows with the words: "Bring back my cattle. Let them return [home]." (FM 2020: Anna Baidullina; Flyura Mindiyarova)

According to materials dating back to the early 20th century published by Yemel'yanov (1921), the loss of livestock was almost always associated with the machinations of ancestors or a specific dead person. At the same time, those who are lucky enough to find a missing animal will never tell anyone about it, for fear of invoking the wrath of the dead. If a horse was lost, some dead male would be considered the culprit for its loss, whereas if a cow went missing then it would be a dead woman. The loss signified that the deceased was in need of livestock, so the animal when found should be promised as a sacrifice to the dead, and a memorial wake should be held. Yemel'yanov (*ibid.*: 30–31) notes that "in one way or another, the dead can have a disastrous effect on the household: they can destroy, for example, crops, they can inflict caterpillars, mice, etc." According to other information from the beginning of the 20th century cited by Yelabuzhskiy (1903: 109), in such cases they would say "the old people hid it": "If an outsider sees it, he will not tell the owner, otherwise the old people will be angry at him for interfering inappropriately".

LIFE CRISES

The help of the ancestors is also sought during unforeseen life situations involving critical circumstances for a person, family, or community. For example, prayers are addressed to the dead during difficult childbirth, or should a baby show no signs of life. According to materials collated by Yemel'yanov (1921: 33),

in the Glazov district, during a difficult childbirth, if a prayer addressed to all the gods in turn does not deliver the desired results, the midwife usually begins to pray to the deceased relatives of the woman in labour and her husband, promising to make a sacrifice to them.

In cases where a baby was born with no signs of life, they would also call for the help of their ancestors: "Deceased, elders, give him/her a soul!", "Bring us a soul!", "Why did you take this soul, give this soul back, this son is not for dying", "Elders! Grandfathers! Give him his soul." (For more information, see Yemel'yanov 1921: 33; Vereshchagin 1995: 87; Gerd 1997: 231; Minniyakhmetova 2003: 31). The Udmurt scholar and educator Kuzebay Gerd (1997: 231–232) notes that the Udmurt addressed their ancestors with requests for the revival of a stillborn on an equal basis with the gods, since the lives of living people, along with their happiness and misfortune, depended on the ancestors, who had passed into the other world. Bogayevskiy (1890: 47) connects the appeal to the dead in such cases with the beliefs of the Udmurt: "the soul is given to the new-born by the ancestors".

APPEALS FOR PATRONAGE AND SUCCESS IN BUSINESS DEALINGS

Faith in the power of the ancestors encourages Udmurt to turn to them in various life situations that require patronage, assistance and success in business dealings. In this regard, Yemel'yanov (1921: 31, 33) gives interesting examples from the beginning of the 20th century:

When they set traps for animals, the Votyaks of Vyatka province, where forestry continues to play an important role in the life of the peasantry, also call for the help of the dead, along with forest spirits, offering sacrifices to them.

The Votyaks appeal to the dead for their blessing before they set off on a journey. When leaving to visit family or friends, they remember their deceased relatives, and upon their return, they remember the relatives of those whom they visited. The Votyaks of Sarapul district, when going to a wedding, throw several pieces of bread at the field gate for the deceased so that they do not send a disease on them on the way. In the event that some misfortune happens on the road, for example the traveller or his horse gets sick, or even if a wheel just breaks, and there are some grounds to consider the deceased as the culprit of the disaster, a sacrifice from the food supplies for the journey is offered immediately at the scene of the incident.

When setting off on a visit, Udmurt commemorate their dead by throwing a piece of bread on the left hand side of the road: "Give us a good road for drinking and eating, may we not quarrel with people, and may we eat and drink kindly and with kissing" (Bogayevskiy 1890: 45). Vereshchagin also mentions the custom of a memorial offering near the field gate, which was performed by the southern Udmurt on their way to visit friends and family, or to a wedding: "they take pieces of bread with them, and throw them at the gate or at the spinning wheels (or fences), with the words: "*Oste, kulem"ës! En cherte, en myzhte*" ['Our lords, the dead! Do not send us diseases']" (Vereshchagin

1889: 104). According to Vereshchagin (ibid.), gifts were brought to the souls of the dead living near hedges by the road and next to field gates in order to placate them and avert their harmful influence. According to the author's field materials, when embarking on a long journey, the southern Udmurt appeal to the dead for a happy journey and a safe return, after which they throw a piece of bread or other pastries to the dog: "Give us a good road, ancestors" (Anisimov 2017: 40–41), "Ancestors, give us a good road, and after a good trip, let us return well" (FM 2019: Galina Anisimova). A respondent from the village of Urazgil'dy in the Tatyshly district of Bashkiria reported that, when setting off on a trip, she verbally asks for patronage and a happy journey from her late mother: "After a good trip, let me return safely [home]" (FM 2020: Anna Baidullina).

The dead would also be commemorated in cases where the fermentation of the Udmurt traditional drink *kumyshka* failed. In such instances, a black hen was sacrificed to the dead (Yemel'yanov 1921: 34). Bogayevskiy (1890: 44) gives an example of a prayer addressed to deceased relatives on the occasion of the unsuccessful fermentation of *kumyshka*:

Elders, do not do us wrong. Let us have bread and drink. Why are you unhappy with us? Do you need a goose, or a duck? Make your demands: we refuse you nothing, we don't argue with you. We don't know what you need. Who knows what you're asking? May our bread and our drink be preserved now [at the sacrifice].

Commemorations on this occasion had to be held with the participation of the entire patrilineal family of *bölyak*: "Everyone present should remember their dead, because maybe one of the dead among the *bölyak* is preventing the fermentation" (ibid.: 48). Information from recent field studies also records an appeal to the ancestors in the process of making *kumyshka*:

if, during the making of the moonshine, the ferment runs out and pours over the edge of the pans, then this is regarded as a bad sign – "not to the good" (*ishanly*)... When endeavouring to prevent such misfortune, special words should be said, an offering should be made, the deceased ancestors should be commemorated and a *kuyas'kon* ceremony should be performed by breaking off and throwing pieces of food through the vessel containing the ferment. (Anisimov 2019: 207–208)

To this day there are also beliefs about the magical ability of the belongings of the deceased to help in difficult life situations. For example, the soap left behind after washing the body of the deceased may be used in court litigation, or to prevent a spouse becoming violent. The Udmurt also believed that an item of clothing in which a family member died can provide help in difficult times (Anisimov 2017: 196), for example, in passing an exam (FM 2020: Anna Baidullina). The possession of objects providing contact with a deceased person gives the living a sense of the valuable and necessary patronage of supernatural forces. In turn, the addressee, in gratitude for the help, makes food offerings to their deceased relative.

Information has been recorded up to the present day of the deceased being commemorated with a request for patronage and help prior to onerous and important events in life (FM 2020: Galina Anisimova; Raisa Petukhova; Anna Baidullina; Flyura Mindiyarova; Zoya Riyanova). In order to do this, a shot glass of spirits and/or a piece of bread or some other dish is placed on the edge of a table or on a windowsill. In some

cases, if the task is successfully completed, a blood sacrifice is also promised. Ancestors, or a recently deceased relative, might for example be contacted before taking exams, or before a job interview, a large purchase or sale of property, and so on.

BAKED DISHES

The Udmurt considered, and still consider, it compulsory to allot the first portion of any baked dish to the deceased, this portion being placed on the edge of the table or windowsill accompanied by verbal appeals. In some local groups (the Eastern Udmurt, for instance) this action is performed only if a frying pan has been used: *taba zyn pottyky* 'when you release the smell of the frying pan', for example, during the preparation of *taban*⁴ (FM 2020: Flyura Mindiyarova; Zoya Riyanova). This is probably due to the memorial tradition and the special importance of the frying pan in communicating with the dead, which is reflected in the well-established expressions that still exist to this day: *taba zyn pottyny* 'to release the smell of the [red-hot] frying pan', *taba dzh'yrdatyny* 'to heat the frying-pan', *vöy zyn pottyny* 'to release the smell of the oil', *vöy surym pottyny* 'to release the oil fumes'. Hence, the smell of a hot frying pan and oil probably serves for the dead as a self-evident signal of commemoration, and as such the first portion of the dish is always dedicated to the ancestors. Memorial speeches were also assigned an important role. Bogayevskiy (1890: 45) gives the following example of an address to the dead: "Father, mother, do not forget us: we do not forget you, we ply you with *tabans*". Currently, for example, in the tradition of the southern Udmurt, they may address their ancestors thus (FM 2020: Maria Nikonova): "Ancestors [lit. grandmothers and grandfathers], eat and drink with us, don't be envious [lit. let it fall in front of you], let it go in your favour." (*Persyanos-persyatos, tani milemyn tshosh siye-yue, en vozh'yas'ke. Azyady med usöz, inaz med mynoz.*) In some instances, they list their deceased relatives by name.

MISFORTUNE IN LIFE

For the Slobodsk and Kosinsk Udmurt, "for example, if something goes wrong in life, or everything gets out of hand, then a person will think that they need to visit the cemetery" (Shutova 2018: 71). In the summer of 2022, in the village of Staraya Mon'ya in Udmurtia's Malaya Purga district, a memorial sacrifice ceremony was held with an appeal to the gods and the ancestors, where representatives of the same family gathered. According to the respondent, the need for this ceremony was to request the patronage of the ancestors and the gods for the family, because "for some reason the young people are not getting married, things are not going very well, people are falling sick" (FM 2022: anonymous).

LOOKING FOR A PASSING VEHICLE TO HITCH A LIFT

According to the author's field research, the ancestors are also asked for help when it comes to transport. A source from the village of Gurez'-Pudga in the Vavozh district

of Udmurtia told me that when you are out on the road and want to find transport quickly, you need to turn to your family's deceased ancestors. In order to do this, you need to put some food on the east side of the road and, addressing the deceased by name, ask them for help: "[Name of the deceased]. I went out on the road, yes ... on foot. Let me find some kind of transport, my elders/ancestors. In the spirit of kindness, help me, [name of the deceased]." (Anisimov 2017: 111)

REMEMBERING THE DECEASED

If a deceased person is remembered in conversation, they can be remembered both with words and with food offerings. They can also be remembered with a performance of a favourite song of theirs, or their tune, which in Udmurt ethnomusicology has been given the term personal or nominal song (see Pchelovodova 2010; 2012), or a song performed before the death of a person and bequeathed by them to their living relatives (Pchelovodova 2013: 54; Anisimov 2017: 223; 258–259). "So that you are remembered, so that you are always remembered [commemorated] ... so that you don't forget my song, you sing it." (Pchelovodova 2013: 54). In such cases, any action taking the form of a dish falling from the table, or a drink spilling, occurring at the moment of remembrance or afterwards is perceived as a sign that the deceased is present. As a rule, the deceased is subsequently addressed, some of the food and drink from the table is allocated to them, and they are asked to join the meal and not be angry with the living.

PROLONGED ABSENCE AND/OR INITIATIVE OF THE LIVING

The grave of a deceased relative could also be visited after the lengthy absence of a living relative to the native village, settlement or town where their ancestors are buried. In such instances, the initiative may either be spontaneous or negotiated in advance between the living relatives. In some extraordinary cases, relatives who have left for other places visit their deceased. Such a visit by the living is usually known among the southern Udmurt as *kulem murten adzh'is'kon* 'meeting with the deceased', or *kulem murten adzh'is'kyny vetlon* 'visiting/walking [for the purpose of] meeting with the deceased'. At the cemetery, a small feast is arranged with food offerings at the grave of the relative, plans, news and worries are shared with the deceased, requests are made, various stories related to the deceased are recounted, and sometimes their favourite songs are performed. It is worth noting that these visits are not particularly welcomed by the older generation, as once there were only certain time periods for the living to visit the cemetery. It is believed that trips to visit the deceased, when unregulated by tradition, disturb their peace. A female respondent from the village of Staraya Sal'ya in the Kiyasovo district of Udmurtia recounted how one year she could not go to the cemetery on the day of public commemorations, and she decided to go another day. On the Friday, she prepared various dishes for the wake, so that she could go to the cemetery the following day. That night, she dreamt that she was in the cemetery, and there was one of her deceased relatives leaning on the fence around the grave, and she seemed sleepy and was looking at her with displeasure. The narrator seemed to say to the deceased

“Don’t miss us for long, we’ll come again!”, to which the deceased replied “Don’t come here all the time! Come with other people!” (FM 2014: Raisa Petukhova)



Image 3. Visiting a relative’s grave on the initiative of the living. Staraya Sal’ya village, Kiyasovo district, Udmurtia, 2015. Author’s photo.

CONCLUSIONS

The research materials have shown the vital role played by, and the importance of, the ancestor cult among the Udmurt. Along with calendar-based and family rituals, the active existence of occasional commemorations that take place in certain extraordinary circumstances has emerged. In assorted inauspicious and/or critical situations and circumstances, we have seen the participation of a specific deceased relative, or indeed ancestors in general. According to popular beliefs, the dead, depending on the attitude of the living, could both harm a person, a family, or even a community, and also lend patronage and contribute in every way possible to success in business dealings. In this regard, in a number of the examples presented above, we can see various strategies of relationships and behavioural habits. As a rule, most of them are associated with sacrifice, redemption and placation, while other instances concern the neutralisation of and protection from dangerous categories of the dead (for example, sorcerers, witches, the ‘walking’ dead). By performing the necessary actions and rituals as prescribed by tradition, balance and the desired result would be restored between the parties. The only exceptions are the aforementioned examples involving the dangerous ‘marginal’ dead.

Examples from the research literature have shown, on the one hand, the diversity of these appeals to the dead, and on the other, the disappearance or decline of a number of occasional commemorations in the present day. The information gathered in the field has revealed new phenomena along with traditional ones, including, for example,

visiting a cemetery after a long absence, appealing to a deceased family member during exams, remembering the dead before an important purchase, remembering and then commemorating the deceased by singing a song, and so on.

In summary, we can say that in Udmurt culture the feeling of connection with roots and family remains strong in religious, social and even psychological terms: the ancestor cult acts as a powerful binding factor at all levels of life. Therefore, despite many factors, including official and tacit prohibitions on traditional commemoration by the Orthodox Church, the ancestor cult continues to exist, and occasional commemorations serve as an example of this.

NOTES

1 For further details about this phenomenon, see Anisimov 2017: 174.

2 Similar findings have been reported by Bogayevskiy (1890: 48–49).

3 According to another version, the cattle are hidden or detained by sorcerers or witches – *vedon''ës kuto* ‘the sorcerers/witches are detaining them’ (FM 2020: Flyura Mindiyarova).

4 *Taban'*, a type of flat pastry made from sour leavened dough, baked in a frying pan.

SOURCES

FM = Author's fieldwork materials from 2007–2022. Materials are kept in the author's personal collection. The conversation partners were informed about the research objectives and agreed to have their names disclosed.

Anis'ya Yakovleva, b. 1927, d. 2019. Minderovo village, Malaya Purga district, Udmurtia

Anna Baidullina, b. 1971. Urazgil'dy village, Tatyshly district, Bashkiria

El'sa Kutergina, b. 1953. Karsashur village, Sharkan district, Udmurtia

Flyura Mindiyarova, b. 1951, d. 2023. Urazgil'dy village, Tatyshly district, Bashkiria

Galina Anisimova, b. 1970. Dubrovskiy village, Kiyasovo district, Udmurtia

Luker'ya Sovinova, b. 1935, d. 2021. Karamas-Pel'ga village, Kiyasovo district, Udmurtia

Margarita Gavrilova, b. 1960. Nikolashkino village, Bavly district, Tatarstan

Maria Nikonova, b. 1926. Dubrovskiy village, Kiyasovo district, Udmurtia

Nina Gil'manova, b. 1956. Yagul village, Zavyalovo district, Udmurtia

Ol'ga Solov'ëva, b. 1932, d. 2018. Karamas-Pel'ga village, Kiyasovo district, Udmurtia

Raisa Petukhova, b. 1956. Staraya Sal'ya village, Kiyasovo district, Udmurtia

Tatiana Samsonova, b. 1958. Nikolashkino village, Bavly district, Tatarstan

Vasilisa Kamasheva, b. 1936. Karamas-Pel'ga village, Kiyasovo district, Udmurtia

Yevdokiya Shirshina, b. 1931. Starye Kaksi village, Mozhga district, Udmurtia

Yuriy Kutergin, b. 1957. Karsashur village, Sharkan district, Udmurtia

Zoya Riyanova, b. 1964. Urazgil'dy village, Tatyshly district, Bashkiria

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