

# A childhood reminiscence of bear ceremonialism among the Northern Selkups<sup>1</sup>

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## 1. Introduction

Though the main interest of Eugeny Helimski was in linguistics, primarily in historical linguistics, Uralic languages and Samoyedology, folklore and cultural anthropology were not alien to him at all (just to remember his works on Nenets poetry (e.g. Helimski 1989) and articles in the Encyclopedia of Mythology (Helimski 1982; Petrukhin, Helimski 1982). The evidence on the Selkup bear feast presented in the article comes from the village of Farkovo (Turukhansk district, Krasnoyarsk territory) where Zhenia did his fieldwork in 2003 checking the word forms in the manuscript of F. G. Maltsev dictionary for its future publication.

Like many other Siberian peoples, the Selkups held very special attitudes towards the bear (Alekseenko 1960; Gemuev 1985; 1989; Kreinovich 1969; Prokofieva 1976; Vasilevich 1971). Selkups respected the bear, not only as the strongest beast of the Northern taiga, but as their relative, a belief they have maintained even to this day, perhaps because a skinned bear looks very much like a man (see Prokofieva 1976). The Selkup word *qorqi* designating a 'bear' is known in all the Selkup dialect groups, known, but being a taboo is not much used. Instead, people prefer to call the strong and dangerous animal by any of several euphemisms: *iʎʎʎa* 'grandfather' (or *imiʎʎa* 'grandmother', in case it is a female), *su:riʎ* 'animal', *lo:si* 'devil', or *lo:s-ira* 'devil-man', *p̣̣̣pa* or *p̣̣̣pa-ira* 'bogyman'; sometimes the Russian anthroponyms *Miʎʎa* (for a male) and *Maʎʎa* (for a female) are used<sup>2</sup>. Bear hunting was not forbidden among the Selkups, except for the Selkup group living at the Tym River and belonging to the Bear clan (Gemuev 1985; Prokofieva 1976). Other Selkups could kill bears if they were found to be dangerous for people, but only following

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<sup>2</sup> These two names are also used in Russian as euphemisms to designate a male or a female bear.

special rules. For example, at the Middle Taz and Turukhan elderly people preferred not to use the word *fʃattiqo* ‘to shoot’ talking of a bear hunt, they used the verb *qo:stiqo* ‘to sacrifice’, though in this context it meant ‘to shoot’: *Təp su:rip qo:stisiti* ‘He shot the bear’ (lit.: he sacrificed the bear). The most prominent expert in Selkup anthropology E. D. Prokofieva also reported that “In the old days, according to Sel’kup legend, they used to tame bear cubs, especially for hunting bears. Such a bear was kept in the tents and called *man i:jami*, ‘my son’, or otherwise he became angry and could not be tamed properly. These homebred bears, according to Selkups, were used for hunting wild bear. During the fight between the two bears, the hunter would kill the wild one” (Prokofyeva 1964: 591).

Though E. D. Prokofieva, who could observe traditional Selkup culture in its fullness in the 1920s, supposed that the Selkups might have never had a proper bear ceremony (Prokofieva 1976: 117), some elements specific for bear ceremonies have been described or mentioned in passing by some ethnographers/anthropologists (Gemuev 1985; 1989; Shatilov 1927; Skalon 1931; Uraev 1927). Based on these descriptions together with her own field data, A. A. Kim made a sort of reconstruction of fragments of Selkup bear ceremony (Kim 1996). Still, to my knowledge, no ceremony description coming from a ceremony participant and produced in Selkup has ever been recorded or published.

In 2014 during my fieldwork among the Turukhan Selkups in the village of Farkovo I was privileged to work with the brilliant language consultant Galina Vladimirovna Tamelkina, a speaker of the local dialect of Selkup born in the Turukhan Taiga in 1956, resident of the village of Farkovo. For almost two weeks she helped to transcribe audio recordings of Selkup texts done from elderly people of the village more than a decade before. Meanwhile I kept asking her to tell us something herself, so that we could record her own story. She agreed, and by the end of our stay in the village we recorded from her a story lasting over two hours and giving a vivid picture of her life, as well as of the life of her family and her community from the beginning of the 1960s up to the end of the previous century<sup>3</sup>.

One of the most remarkable fragments of the story is a rather precise description of a bear feast dating back to the childhood of the story-teller. By that time Galina was eight and stayed with her family in the taiga before going to school, so the described ceremony apparently took place in 1964. In the story the bear hunting itself is not described. The storyteller mentions only that her father found a bear den, by chance while chasing a squirrel. He returned to the camp, told the men about his discovery, and the following day several men set out to “fell” the bear. They succeeded and returned to the camp with

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<sup>3</sup> A year later I returned to Farkovo, and Galina Vladimirovna and her friend Liudmila Vasilyevna Tamelkina helped me to transcribe her story. She wanted it to be published to be able to pass it to her children and grandchildren. The work with the text is moving slowly, but I do hope to complete it soon enough and publish the whole text in the nearest future.

the slain animal. Because it was the story-teller's father who shot the bear, the ceremony, which followed and greatly impressed the girl, took place in the tent of her family.

Here the annotated text of the bear festival description as excerpted from the recorded life story is presented. The extract was transcribed and translated into Russian by the author with the help of Liudmila Vasilyevna Tamelkina, a resident of Farkovo and a friend of the storyteller, and morphologically annotated by the author.

The Selkup text is given in a phonemic transcription supplied with morphological glosses and is followed by an English translation. Practically all Selkup texts recorded within the last two decades feature Selkup-Russian code-switching. In this text, the Russian insertions into the Selkup text and their translations are underlined.

## 2. Bear feast

1. eto pastuh-sæ ili-s-im pastuh pastuh-sæ  
 this herder-INS live-PST-1PL herder herder-INS  
 'Well, we lived with herders'.
2. ma a<sup>ʃ</sup> əmilt-ɛ:-mp-am=tə kuti-ka Lambin ira  
 1SG FOC forget-INT.PFV-PSTN-1SG.OBJ=FOC who-FOC Lambin man  
 'I even forgot who (it was)... the (old) man Lambin',
3. patom na a pastuhi naznat<sup>ʃ</sup>alis' Lambin-ira i  
 then this and herders were.appointed Lambin man and  
 Nikolai Kondratij<sup>ʃ</sup> i:ja-ʎ mə:t<sup>4</sup>  
 Nikolai Kondratij<sup>ʃ</sup> child-ADJ dwelling  
 'then this... and herders were appointed... the (old) man Lambin and Nikolay Kondratyevich, with his family'.
4. oj aj qaj-qo<sup>ʃ</sup> iraqota i imaqota-sæ ili-s-ɔ:t  
 ay also qaj-INDEF old.man and old.woman-INS live-PST-3PL  
 ori<sup>ʃ</sup>-ʃi-ɔ:t tap-læ pɛlæ:-qit taŋi-ʎ mə:t-qit  
 mess-PST-3PL this-FOC side-LOC summer-ADJ dwelling-LOC  
 'Ay, and some old man with (his) old woman lived, messed around on this side in a summer dwelling'.
5. nu ladno qoj-ɛmæ ladno kət-ɛt-am  
 well all.right what-INDEF well say-FUT-1SG.OBJ  
 'Well, all right, all right, I'll tell something'.
6. moqonæ qən-t-im  
 home/back go-IPFV-1PL  
 '(We) were returning home'.

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<sup>4</sup> The story-teller tries to remember with whom her family stayed in the camp her last autumn without school.

7. *konnæ*            *ta:ti-s-im*  
 up.the.river.bank bring-PST-1PL  
 ‘Up to the river bank (we) brought (our things)’.
8. *konnæ-t*            *tinti naverno sæqqi-mp-ɔ:t*  
 up.the.river.bank-LOC here probably spend.night-PSTN-3PL  
*konnæ-t*            *mætto:-qit pastuhi-l mɔ:t-qit*  
 up.the.river.bank-LOC way-LOC herder-ADJ dwelling-LOC  
 ‘Here on the river bank, on the way (we) probably spent the night (slept) in the herder’s tent’.
9. *æ:tæ-t*    *to: mɔ:t-qit illiæ sɔ:r-æ-l-læ ə: tʃe:li-ti uzɛ*  
 reindeer-PL away dwelling-LOC down tie.up-SEM-CVB uh sun-POSS.3SG already  
 ‘Having tied up the reindeer at the distant dwelling: uh, (it is) already light’.
10. *konnæ*<sup>5</sup>            *qənn-ε:-s-im poqqi-læ*  
 up.the.river.bank go-INT.PFV-1PL fish.with.net-CVB  
 ‘We went down (to the river) to check the net’.
11. *moqonæ ty-s-im*    *o: şət-qit kuti-ka æ:tæ-i-tit=tə*            *to:*  
 back            come-PST-1PL oh forest-LOC who-FOC reindeer-PL-POSS.3PL=FOC away  
*to: y:t-ε:-mp-a*  
 away let.free-INT.PFV-PSTN-3SG.SBJ  
 ‘We came back: oh, who let the reindeer free in the forest?’
12. *Maf<sup>ʃ</sup>ka-n əmi qɔ:t*  
 Mashka-GEN mother possibly  
 ‘Masha’s mother possibly’.
13. *a kuti-ka jε:-ti*            *qapɪ qaj-qoʃ<sup>ʃ</sup> imaqota*  
 and who-FOC person\_POSS.3SG it.seems what-INDEF old.woman  
*qa: ma a<sup>ʃ</sup>a əmilt-εi-s-am*  
 why 1SG FOC forget-INT.PFV-PST-1SG.OBJ  
 ‘And who it was, a certain old woman, I even forgot’.
14. *əmilt-εi-mp-am*            *mita*  
 forget-INT.PFV-PSTN-1SG.OBJ it.seems  
 ‘I forgot, it seems’.
15. *na po:-ti*            *su:ri-p qo-mp-at*            *su:ri-p*<sup>6</sup>  
 that year-POSS.3SG beast-ACC find-PSTN-3SG.OBJ beast-ACC  
 ‘That year he found a beast, a beast’<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> Here not *konnæ* ‘up to the bank from the river’ but *karræ* ‘to the river’ is meant, as they went to check the net put in the river near the bank.

<sup>6</sup> Here we come to that, *su:rip* ‘beast’ is used here for a ‘bear’.

16. kotpas pɔ:ro:-qit kan-i:ja-t tɪ:na kana-t tæpæ-p qa: ʃi:-p  
 hill top-LOC dog-child-PL that dog-PL squirrel-ACC or sable-ACC  
 mnæ-t ni: na pɔ:-t pɔ:ro:-t  
 up-LOC there that tree top-LOC  
 ‘On the top of the hill puppies, that, dogs (found) a squirrel or a sable (high) up there,  
 at the top of a tree’.
17. ʃʰatti-ɔ si:qil-pi-læ a to:nna-mi mɔ:ti-n  
 shoot-INF climb.up-DUR-CVB and that.one.there-NMLZ dwelling-GEN  
 pu:to:-n mnæ ty-læ laŋkir-s-i  
 inside-LOC up come-CVB cry-PST-3SG.SBJ  
 ‘Having climbed up (the hill) to shoot... and the one in his den, coming up, cried’.
18. na su:rip  
 that beast  
 ‘The beast!’
19. tɔp kotpas illæ moqonæ na pakti-mmi-nt-i  
 3SG hill down home there run-PSTN-EVID-3SG.SBJ  
 ‘There he ran down from the top of the hill home’<sup>8</sup>.
20. imaqota ukkirna laŋki-ŋ-ŋ-a ukkirna laŋki-ŋ-ŋ-a  
 old.woman constantly cry-DUR-EP-3SG.SBJ constantly cry-DUR-EP-3SG.SBJ  
 ‘The old woman is constantly crying and crying’.
21. nu ladno  
 well all right  
 ‘Well, all right’.
22. moqonæ ty-læ æt:æ-t ponæ yt-æ-l-p-im  
 home come-CVB reindeer-PL outdoors let.free-PL.OBJ-PSTN-1PL  
 ‘Having come home we let the reindeer free outdoors’.
23. mɔ:t ʃe:r-s-im mɔ:t-ti na to: qaj palatka ʃʰy:  
 dwelling enter-PST-1PL dwelling-ILL that there whether tent inside  
 ‘We entered a dwelling, a tent or an ordinary tent’.
24. tent-ɛ:-læ qont-ɛl-ɛ:-s-im  
 speak-INT.PFV-CVB sleep-INCH-INT.PFV-PST-1PL  
 ‘Talking we fell asleep’.

<sup>7</sup> It was the story-teller’s father who found the bear. It becomes clear with the time.

<sup>8</sup> The majority of the hunting stories recorded among the Northern Selkups describe bear hunting. Quite often they start with an unexpected discovery of a bear den while hunting some smaller animals, sables or squirrels, as a rule. After that a hunter returns to the village or to the camp to tell about the discovery and collect a hunting team for the following day. The team should contain at least two people. Here we have several hunters.

25. to: mɔ:t-qin aj qumi-t tɛnt-ɔ:t  
away dwelling-LOC also man-PL speak-3PL  
'In the neighboring tent people are also talking'.
26. ni:ni qa sɛqqi-s-im  
then whether spend.night-PST-1PL  
'Then we spent the night'.
27. ʃintæɬ ʃʲe:li na su:rip əsiri-qo qəs-s-ɔ:t  
next day this beast fell-INF go-PST-3PL  
'The following day (they) went to "fell" that bear'.
28. koʃʲʃʲi qum-mit ɛ-pp-a pɛli-i-min nɔ:t na  
many man-POSS.1PL be-PSTN-3SG.SBJ mate-PL-POSS.1PL then there  
'Many our people were, our mates, then there'.
29. ukkir-ʃʲaŋ ɔ:mti-s-it pɛnti  
one-COORD sit-PST-3PL together  
'Side by side they were staying (lit. sitting) together'<sup>9</sup>.
30. no Po:piɬ ira Tɛpan timti ɛ:-s-a Wasilij Iwanowitʃ  
well Popyl man Stepan here be-PST-3SG Vasilij Ivanovich  
ɛj tɪ: iraqota  
and now old.mam  
'Well, the (old) man Popyl, stepan was there, Vasilij Ivanovich and (one more) old man'.
31. nɔ:qir qaj tetti palatka na i ɔ:mn-im  
three whether four tent there and sit-1PL  
'Three or four tents, that's how we were sitting (in the camp)'.
32. ladno  
all.right  
'All right'.
33. ʃintæɬ ʃʲe:li ʃət-ti qəl-læ na najenta  
next day forest-ILL go-CVB there so.it.is  
'Next day having gone to the forest, well, so it is'.
34. na i yri-p su:ri-p əsiri-mp-ɔ:t kut-qoʃʲ i  
there and business-ACC beast-ACC fell-PSTN-3PL where-INDEF and  
'An so they did it, they felled the beast somewhere and...'
35. man əsæ-m na-mi-p ʃʲatti-mp-at mol ʃʲo  
1SG.GEN father-POSS.1SG this-NMLZ-ACC shoot-PSTN-3SG.OBJ they.say what  
'It was my father who shot him, they say that'.

<sup>9</sup> *Were sitting* here means 'were staying' at a reindeer herder's camp, 'were living'.

36. ʃʷ:ji-m yti-qo eto ti: mɔ:t-ti tulti-s-ɔ:t su:ri-p  
tea-ACC drink-INF this here dwelling-ILL bring-PST-3PL beast-ACC  
'Well, they brought the beast into the tent to have tea'<sup>10</sup>.
37. qottæ petʃʷi-t qan-ti qɔ:t ɔ:mti-lti-s-ɔ:t  
backwards stove-GEN near-ILL possibly sit-CAUS-PST-3PL  
'Backwards they placed him, possibly near the stove'.
38. aʃʷa petʃʷi-t qan-ti kunno:t ɛ:læ taplæ pelæ-nti.  
NEG stove-GEN near-ILL far be-CVB this side-ILL  
'No, not near the stove, farther on, to this side'.
39. taplæ pelæ-nti kuttar potʃʷotna qumi-n ɔ:mt-ɔ:tin  
this side-ILL how respectable man-PL sit-3PL  
'To this side, how respectable people are placed'<sup>11</sup>.
40. to: mɔ:tti<sup>12</sup> me:-kin ty-s-an ti:  
away dwelling-POSS.3SG 1PL-DAT come-PST-3SG.SBJ here  
'The neighbours came to us'.
41. ɔ:mti-lti-s-ɔ:t oli-m-ti  
sit-CAUS-PST-3PL head-ACC-POSS.3SG  
'They placed his head'<sup>13</sup>.
42. ni:ni ʃʷ:ji-p yt-æʃʷ me:-sæ!  
then tea-ACC drink-IMP.2SG.SBJ 1PL-INS  
'Then: "Have tea with us!"<sup>14</sup>
43. ʃʷ:ji-p təp-kin pin-p-ɔ:t  
tea-ACC 3SG-DAT put-PSTN-3PL  
'They put (a cup of) tea for him'.
44. ami-r-æʃʷ  
eat-DUR.DETR-IMP.2SG.SBJ  
'"Help yourself!"
45. o: me: aj ami-r-n-im  
oh we also eat-DUR.DETR-1PL  
'Oh, we are also eating'.

<sup>10</sup> The bear should be a guest of the person who had killed him. That was the habit among the Evenks and Kets as well (see Kreinovich 1969; Vasilevich 1971)

<sup>11</sup> The part of the tent behind the fire where a box with sacred spirits might be preserved and where most respected guests are usually placed.

<sup>12</sup> *to: mɔ:tti* is used for 'neighbours'.

<sup>13</sup> The bear was skinned in the forest, all the body, but not the head. They left the skin with the head. People brought the bear's head with his skin into the tent and put it onto the plank at the sacred place.

<sup>14</sup> People start talking to the bear's head as to a welcome guest.

46. ni:ni æmæ-m      ʃʃaʃka-p to: i:-mp-ati      lɛmi-m mes<sup>15</sup>  
 then mother-POSS.1SG cup-ACC away take-PSTN-3SG.OBJ table-ACC all  
 ‘Then my mother took the cup away, (and) all the table<sup>16</sup>.’
47. no tat ʃʃɔ:ji-m      yti-s-al  
 well 2SG westea-ACC drink-PST-2SG.OBJ  
 ‘“Well, you have drunk tea”.’
48. tr: dawaj me:-kin nækæ-tti-li-nti      kipi-ka-lɔ:  
 now com.on 1PL-DAT smoke-DETR-OPT-2SG.SBJ little-AUG-DIM  
 ‘“Now come on, smoke with us a little!”’
49. tɔpi-t-kin      ɛj tap etot etot papiroska papiros  
 1SG-GEN-DAT and this this this cigarette cigarette  
 aʃʃa papiros kansam mi-mp-ɔ:tin ni:  
 NEG cigarette pipe give-PSTN-3PL there  
 ‘And they gave him that, that, a cigarette, cigarette, not a cigarette, a pipe’.
50. niʌʃʃi su:rip etot təm me:-kin ty-mp-a  
 such beast this 3SG 1PL-DAT come-PSTN-3SG  
 ‘Such a beast, this one, he came to us’.
51. mɔ:t-ti      ty-mp-a  
 dwelling-ILL come-PSTN-3SG  
 ‘To (our) dwelling he came’.
52. me: mɔ:t-ti      ʃe:r-p-a      niʌʃʃi-k  
 1PL.GEN dwelling-ILL enter-PSTN-3SG such-ADVZ  
 ‘He entered our house in such a way’.
53. ʃʃɔ:ji-m yti-s-a      me:-sæ  
 tea-ACC drink-PST-3SG 1PL-INS  
 ‘He drank tea with us’.
54. ni:ni ʃintæʌ ʃʃe:li Po:pi ira  
 then next day Popy man  
 ‘Then the following day the (old) man Popy...’
55. aʃʃa tət̩ti nɔ:qir  
 NEG four three  
 ‘No, not four, three (days)<sup>17</sup>...’
56. ʃintæʌ ʃʃe:li Po:pi-ʌ ira mɔ:t-ti      ʃe:r-s-i      iraqota tenti-læ  
 next day Popy-ADJ man dwelling-ILL enter-PST-3SG.SBJ old.man speak-CVB  
 ‘The following day the (old) man Popy entered the dwelling, old man, saying:’

<sup>15</sup> A borrowing from the Russian *wes* ‘all’.

<sup>16</sup> A small table used in the tent is meant.

<sup>17</sup> Here the story-teller tries to recollect how many days the ceremony lasted.



57. o: me: ʃ<sup>ʷ</sup>oji-m yti-s-im  
oh 1PL tea-ACC drink-PST-1PL  
“Oh, we have drunk tea!”
58. tr: davaj mat tat olo-l unti-p pe:-ri-læ-m<sup>18</sup>.  
now come.on 1SG 2SG.GEN head louse-ACC search-TR-OPT-1SG.OBJ  
“Now let me search your head for lice”.
59. tami-t qapi ε:-ŋ-a unti  
2SG-GEN it.seems be-EP-3SG.SBJ louse  
‘You might have lice’.
60. olo:-qanti tə:ʃ<sup>ʷ</sup>a-ŋ-nent-am taʃ<sup>ʷ</sup>inti  
head-LOC.POSS.2SG clean-VBLZ-FUT-1SG.OBJ 2SG.ACC  
“I’ll clean your head (lit.: I’ll clean you in your head)”<sup>19</sup>.
61. fs’o ubrali najenti mes to: i:-mp-ɔ:t  
everything take.away so.it.is all away take-PSTN-3PL  
‘(They) took everything away, so it is, they took everything away’.
62. ni:ni iʃ<sup>ʷ</sup>a-t<sup>20</sup> oli-m-ti to: kiræ-nt-iti  
then grandfather-GEN head-ACC-POSS.3SG away skin-IPFV-3SG.OBJ  
‘Then he was skinning the grandpa’s (the bear’s) head’.
63. kiræ-mp-at ukkir-na ti:ni tent-a təp-sæ  
skin-PSTN-3SG.OBJ one-ADVZ from.here speak-3SG.SBJ 3SG.INS  
‘He was skinning and all the time speaking with him.’
64. “ʃ<sup>ʷ</sup>æ: tat namanti unti-sæ ε:-ŋ-anti”  
no 2SG to.this.extent louse-INS be-EP-2SG.SBJ  
“Hey, you’ve got so many lice!”
65. na qaji-ʌ nɪʌci qup  
this what-ADJ such man  
“What’s that, such a man!”
66. fs’o oli-m ni:ni ukkirna tenti-læ tentil-æ təp-sæ  
all head-ACC then constantly speak-CVB speak-CVB 3SG-INS  
‘All (the time) the head ... then constantly speaking, speaking with him’,
67. na olim-ti su:ri-n oli-sæ nɪʌ tom-n-it fs’o  
this head-POSS.3SG beast-GEN head-INS so say-EP-3SG.OBJ all  
‘this (his) head, with the beast’s head, so he said: “That’s all”’.

<sup>18</sup> The expression *untyp pe:rygo* or just the verb *untyp<sup>ʷ</sup>go* ‘to search for lice’, means ‘to skin’ when used in the context of bear hunting or bear ceremonialism.

<sup>19</sup> Searching for lice was a friendly sign of respect.

<sup>20</sup> The bear is meant.

68. *ɛj na to: tɪ:ti-s-it oli-m-ti.*  
and there away peel-PST-3SG.OBJ head-ACC-POSS.3SG  
'And here he has skinned his head'.
69. *tə:ʃa-x tə:ta-x tə:ta-x tə:ti-r-ʃi-s-it tə:ti-ri-s-it*  
clean-SLIP pat-SLIP pat-SLIP pat-DUR-SLIP-PST-3SG.OBJ pat-TR-PST-3SG.OBJ  
'He cleaned, patted, patted, patted, patted'.
70. *tɛnti-læ nɪʎʃi-k təpi-p su:ri-p oli-l-laka ʃkuru*  
speak-CVB such-ADVZ 3SG-ACC beast-ACC head-GEN-SING hide  
*to: tɪ:ti-s-iti*  
away peel-PST-3SG.OBJ  
'Talking like that, he skinned him, the beast, the head, the hide he skinned'.
71. *oli-m-ti po:-nti pis-s-ɔ:tin qæntik-qoʃi*  
head-ACC-POSS.3SG tree-ILL put-PST-3PL how-INDEF  
'They put his head onto a pole somehow'.
72. *na tɪ: imaqota*  
this now old.woman  
'Now the old woman (said):'
73. *tat ami-r-læ tat tɪ: me:-ti!*<sup>21</sup>  
2SG eat-DUR.DETR-CVB 2SG now do-IMP.2SG.OBJ  
'"You have eaten, do it now!"'
74. *po:-nti nɪʎ tom-n-it*  
tree-ILL so say-EP-3SG.OBJ  
'Addressing the pole she said this:'
75. *tat qæntik me:-t-al nɪj me:-ti!*  
2SG how do-IPFV-2SG.OBJ so do-IMP. 2SG.OBJ  
'"As you do, so do (it)!"'
76. *qaj Wasilij ira me:-t-it qa tap me:-t-al*  
what Vasily man do-IPFV-3SG.OBJ what 2SG do-IPFV-2SG.OBJ  
'"Either the (old) man Vasily does, or you do!"'
77. *məʃʃi-ti na i mnæ po:ri-nti qumi-n ponæ pis-s-ɔ:tin.*  
meat-POSS.3SG there and up platform-ILL man-PL outdoors put-PST-3PL  
'And there, people put his meat outdoors up onto a platform'.

<sup>21</sup> Here are three formulas (in 73, 75 and 76) pronounced by a woman addressing the bear head, though it is not clear by which woman, probably by the hostess of the tent where the bear came as a guest. The bear is reminded that he was fed so he is to continue doing as he did, coming to people, allowing them kill himself. The bear is also reminded that the old man Vasily who "was searching the bear's head for lice" had done everything properly for him and that the bear, in turn, should act properly towards the old man Vasily and the other participants of the festival.

78. ponæ qən-t-it qəs-s-ɔ:tin fʲitti taqqil-læ tək-ε:qo  
 outdoors go-TR-3SG.OBJ go-PST-3PL in.all.sides collect-CVB dry-INT.PFV-INF  
 ‘Outdoors they brought (the bear’s skin), they went stretching (lit. collecting ) (it) in all sides to dry’.
79. yr-ti mes to: i:-mp-ɔ:t i:-mp-pɔ:tin fʲtop soma-k tək-i-qo  
 fat-POSS.3SG all away take-PSTN-3PL take-PSTN-3PL so.that good-ADVZ dry-INF  
 ‘They took all the fat away, so that it would dry well’.
80. mnæ-t ni: eto su:ri-t qopi tək-i-mp-a me:kin  
 up-LOC there this beast-GEN skin dry-DUR-3SG.SBJ 1PL-DAT  
 ‘Up there (on the platform), well, the bear skin is drying for us’.
81. qoji-m me:-mp-ɔ:tin ukkirna təp-sæ tent-ɔ:t  
 what-ACC do-DUR-3PL constantly 3SG-INS speak-3SG  
 ‘Whatever they do (to him), they constantly talk with him’.
82. po:nt imnæ pin-p-ɔ:t qa po:-nti qa to:ti-nti mnæ  
 tree-ILL up put-PSTN-3PL whether tree-ILL whether crossbar-ILL up  
 ‘They put it up onto a pole, either up onto a pole or onto a crossbar’.
83. fʲitti natqil-p-ɔ:t  
 in.all.sides scrape-PSTN-3PL  
 ‘They scraped (it) in all sides’.
84. pu:n aj næqqil-p-ɔ:tin kipi-ʎa po:-l:pi-sæ narqi-ʎ po:-sæ sitti  
 then also stretch-PSTN-3PL little-DIM tree-DIM.PEJ-INS willow-ADJ tree-INS in.all.sides  
 ‘Then they also stretched (it) out with little sticks, with willow sticks’.
85. fʲtop nænti iki fʲuqqir-mɔ:n-n-i  
 so.that together NEG shrivel-SEM.DETR-EP-3SG.SBJ  
 a tək-k-ε:j-a na qa najenta su:ri-t qopi-sæ  
 and dry-INT.PFV-EP-3SG.SBJ this what so.it.is beast-GEN skin-INS  
 ‘so that it would not shrivel, but dry as a bearskin’.
86. ni:ni qa nɔ:r fʲe:li iti-s-a qa qæntik  
 then what three day hang-PST-3SG.SBJ what how  
 ‘Then it hung either three days or how (long)’.
87. tepan ira tepan ira təp eto ætæ-p kut-qini i-ti  
 Stepan man Stepan man 3SG this reindeer-ACC where-ELA take-3SG.OBJ  
 ‘The (old) man Stepan, the (old) man Stepan, he, well, took somewhere a reindeer<sup>22</sup>’.
88. qa tepan ira qa po:piʎ ira ætæ-p qəs-s-ɔ:t  
 what stepan man what Popyl man reindeer-ACC kill-PST-3PL  
 ‘Either the (old) man Stepan or the (old) man Popyl killed the reindeer’.

<sup>22</sup> Here starts the final episode of the festival – a blood victim addressed to the bear. A reindeer is slaughtered and its blood is drunk by everyone in the community including children.

89. æ:tæ-p sɔ:ri-mpi-s-ɔ:tin po:-t tɔ:pi-qin  
 reindeer-ACC tie-DUR-PST-3PL tree-GEN  
 ‘They tied the reindeer at the tree’.
90. ni:ni tɔp so:ʎ-ti to: matt-ɛ:-s-iti.  
 then 3SG throat-POSS.3SG away cut-INT.PFV-PST-3SG.OBJ  
 ‘Then he cut his throat’.
91. tətto-nti pinn-ɛl-ɛ:-s-it tɔpi-t i so:ʎ-tʃi  
 ground-ILL put-PLOBJ-PFV.PST-3SG.OBJ 3SG-PL and throat-POSS.3SG  
 æ:tæ-l-laka-min innæ-ni illæ ipqill-ɛi-mp-ɔ:tin  
 reindeer-GEN-SING-POSS.1PL upwards-ELA down press-INT.PFV-PSTN-3PL  
 ‘They put our reindeer on the ground and pressed his throat from upwards down’.
92. ipqill-ɛi-s-ɔ:t ej so:ʎ-tʃi kəm-ti pɔ:næ tant-a  
 press-INT.PFV-PST-3PL and throat-POSS.3SG blood-POSS.3SG outdoors come.out-3SG.SBJ  
 ‘They pressed and its throat blood came out’.
93. Tepan ira tʃarrɪ mənni-mp-at  
 stepan man in.the.face look-DUR-3SG.OBJ  
 ‘The (old) man Stepan is looking straight ahead’.
94. Tepan ira krufka illæ qamt-ɛ:-læ tɔ:ti-ŋ na kəmi-p yti-s-it  
 stepan man cup down pour-INT.PFV-CVB full-ADVZ blood-ACC drink-PST-3SG.OBJ  
 ‘The (old) man Stepan taking a cup, pouring, fully drank the blood’.
95. ɲæ:nti kəpi-ti Wasilij ira yti-mp-at sæʎ-ʎæ  
 together body-POSS.3SG Vasiliy man drink-PSTN-3SG.OBJ salt-CVB  
 ‘In the same way, the (old) man Vasiliy drank, (first) having salted (the blood)’.
96. tɔp sæʎ-ʎæ yti-s-it kipi-ka-k  
 3SG salt-CVB drink-PST-3SG.OBJ little-AUG-ADVZ  
 ‘He drank having salted (it) a little’.
97. orsæ kotʃʃi-k aʃʎa yt-ent-it mita  
 strongly much-ADVZ NEG drink-FUT-3SG.OBJ it.seems  
 ‘He would not drink very much, it seems’.
98. Som-ɛj  
 good-VBLZ  
 ‘It’s good!’
99. yt-qiʎ tʃʃæræ tʃʃo  
 water-ADJ like what  
 ‘Just like water, why (not)’.
100. mækkæ ej mi-s-ɔ:t sanjar-ɔo  
 1SG.DAT and give-PST-3PL try-INF  
 ‘(They) gave me also (some) to taste’.

101. kipi-ka-lə:qi yti-s-aj na qəntik əpə: qaj  
 little-AUG-DIM drink-PST-1SG there how phew what  
 ‘I drank a little: how (could they), phew why!’
102. qəntik təm yti-k-ɔ:t?  
 how 3SG drink-HAB-3PL  
 ‘How do (they) drink it?’
103. na kuti-ka-λ qupi-n æ:tæ-l-laka ε:-s-a  
 there who-FOC-ADJ man-GEN reindeer-GEN-SING be-PST-3SG.SBJ  
 ‘What man’s was the reindeer?’
104. nimti qo:ri-p [tə=Δi me:ʃ tə:ʃa-k-sə:tiλ æ:tæ  
 there bull-ACC probably all get.skinny-VBLZ-PART.DEB reindeer  
 Petra Δi ælpæ mat-ελə:l-læ nλʃi-k me:-λʃi-s-ɔ:tin  
 Pete whether away cut-PLOBJ-CVB such-ADVZ do-INT.PFV-PST-3PL  
 ‘There the most skinny reindeer bull probably was to be slaughtered, maybe the Pe-  
 ter’s (one), (and) so they have done (it)’.
105. puto-λ yr-ti to: i:-s-ɔ:t  
 inside-ADJ fat-POSS.3SG away take-PST-3PL  
 ‘Visceral fat was taken out’.
106. me:s pati-ti mi:ti-ti me:s somak to: eta ze fs’o  
 all gal-POSS.3SG liver-POSS.3SG all stomach away this indeed all  
 somak kənpilæ me:-λʃi-k-ɔ:t aʃa mi-λ pæqqi  
 stomach quickly do-INT.PFV-HAB-3PL NEG something-ADJ moose  
 ‘All the gall, liver, all the stomach, they (take) away, all that indeed, they always do  
 all that quickly, not like with a moose’.

### 3. Conclusion

There is no doubt concerning the historical existence of the bear festival among the Selkups. The tradition was preserved as recently as a half a century ago. What we observe today are just remnants of this tradition. Still, these remnants are deeply rooted and do not seem to be soon forgotten, especially that part concerning the hunting process. In 1996 in the village of Ratta (Krasnoselkup district, Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Area) I recorded a bear hunting story containing practically all the most important bear hunting restrictions, and some ways to break these restrictions without being punished. The story-teller was Andrei Gavrilovich Boyakin, about 60 by that time, a son of a strong Evenk shaman Gavriila Boyakin<sup>23</sup>, belonging to the Evenki group assimilated by the Upper-Taz Selkups. The story-teller once found a den, returned to the village and called his relative to hunt

<sup>23</sup> By the way, Zhenya Helinski knew him and worked with him in 1972 when we were sent from Krasnoselkup to Ratta by Ariadna Ivanovna Kuznetsova to collect data from the Upper Tas local dialect.

the bear. They hunted with dogs. The bear managed to escape from the blocked den, and the hunters were chasing him for rather a long time following their dogs. It was the storyteller who finally managed to shoot the bear. Then he explained the bear that it was not he, a Selkup hunter, but the gun produced by the Russian, which killed him. When his companion came up and saw the dead bear he first prayed for some time; only then did the hunters start skinning the bear ("searching for lice" in his fur). Then they began to cut meat. They knew very well that the bear's carcass should be divided into pieces without breaking bones, which took much time. Meanwhile, it was getting dark and the hunters were in a hurry to return to the village before night, so they decided to break the rule, as they were experienced enough and knew how to avoid bad consequences of the rule breaking. They took axes and began to hack the bear's bones, telling a story about a bear who goes around the burnt wood and steps onto the fallen trunks and branches all the while producing cracking sounds, as if all the cracks of the bones under their axes were the cracking sounds produced by the wandering bear. This story also describes the cries of ravens, which should be imitated by people eating the bear's meat.

Thus, even if not all the bear hunting rules are observed today, nor the bear festival preserved, Selkup hunters are still mindful of the bear's unique significance and they take care to give it special treatment.

### Abbreviations

ACC	accusative	INCH	inchoative
ADJ	adjectivizer	INDEF	indefinite
ADV	adverbilizer	INF	infinitive
AUG	augmentative	INS	instrumental
CAUS	causative	INT	intensive
COORD	coordinative	IPFV	imperfective
CVB	converb	LOC	locative
DAT	dative	OBJ	objective conjugation type
DETR	ditransitive	OPT	optative
DIM	diminutive	PART.DEB	participle debitive
DUR	durative	PFV	perfective
ELA	elative	PL	plural
EP	insersion	PLOBJ	plural object
EVID	evidential	POSS	possessive
GEN	genitive	PST	past
FOC	focusing particle or morpheme	PSTN	past narrative
FUT	future	SBJ	subjective conjugation type
HAB	habitual	SG	singular
ILL	illative	SING	singulative
IMP	imperative	TR	transitivizer
		VBLZ	verbalizer

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