

»Their dogs are of an alert and intelligent breed« An Ethnocyology of Tyvan Pastoralists in Inner Asia

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Abstract This study presents a brief inquiry into the human-canine relationship among the Tyvan pastoralists in the Altai-Sayan Mountainous region of Inner Asia. Their co-evolution is intimately bound together, and the inter-species relationship includes several aspects and roles. The authors investigate especially the dogs' responsibilities in taiga and steppe habitats and how the language reveals these responsibilities by focusing on distinctions between hunting dogs (*añč'i it*) and camp guarding dogs (*kodanč'i it*). Both names point at the main tasks—hunting and guarding the seasonal campsite territory. The third category is named *xava* dogs; the name traces its origin to Chinese languages. Similarly, the story of a small-sized *xava* dog sheds a light on the Altai-Sayan Mountain region's historical and religious connections with China.¹

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Introduction

When the Norwegian zoologist Ørjan Olsen in 1914 carried out ethnographical fieldwork among reindeer herding Turkic-speaking Soyots (Tožu-Tyva) in the Sayan Mountains, he took a special interest in their dogs. In the small monograph he published in Norwegian, he devoted an entire chapter to them. He regarded their dogs to be an alert and intelligent breed. The dogs he observed among the herders were used primarily for hunting. Good dogs were highly valued. The dog possesses a unique ability to communicate and cooperate with human beings, which can be exemplified by their multiple roles in the Soyot community. They were used to point to game (birds, squirrels) that fled into trees, by barking. According to Olsen's informants, the dogs were said to bark in different ways for different kinds of animals, so that the hunter could immediately tell from the dog's barking what kind of animal it had encountered. For squirrels, for instance, they must bark quickly and energetically, but for bears and sables, *Martes zibellina*, slowly. Each person had their

own dog. They also guarded the camps and yurts (Olsen 1915:79–83).

Olsen provides some data on how the puppies were trained by adult dogs. He also found that the dogs interacted with the reindeer in a gentler way than the Sami dogs in Scandinavia, which not infrequently hunt and bite the reindeer calves (cf. Lindin and Svanberg 2016). Olsen also recorded some calling words for dogs in their language: *kub-kub-kub* (Olsen 1915:81). These dog commands are seldom recorded in the ethnographic and linguistic literature (see Hällzon et al. 2022). However, Russian Turkologist Wilhelm Radloff noted some examples from the Tyvan: “when you drive a dog to another place they say: *kör-kör! mai-mai! soq!*” (Radloff 1893:1330).

Human-canine relationships in Inner Asia

Anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss (1962:105) emphasizes that dogs as domestic animals do not form their own community but are part of human society. Ever since the domestication of the grey wolf *Canis lupus* took place between 14,000 and 30,000



years ago, this has been the case for dogs. Dogs were the first domesticated animal, likely originating from human-associated wolves. However, little is known about dog population history and the extent to which it was linked to humans (Bergström et al. 2020). People and dogs together form a unique intimate community. This close connection between *Canis familiaris* and *Homo sapiens* weaves them together into a common circle. The dog owners' way of living and making a living, as well as the general cognitive and social circumstances that prevail in a specific socio-ecological context, also dictate the conditions for the dogs' existence, for better or for worse (Haraway 2008:33).

This is of course also true among the people in southern Siberia and Inner Asia. Dogs in this part of Eurasia have been bred to fit several purposes for human societies such as guarding, herding, hunting, pulling sledges and carrying loads (Coppinger and Coppinger 1993). Dogs have also provided other economic services, such as fur, skin, medicine, and even protein and fat (Strecker and Svanberg 2014).

In the cultural relationships that prevail between human and dog, a special multifaceted bio-cultural domain is created, which is of interest for ethnobiologists to study. These relationships include symbolic and ritual connections (Hunn 2011:83; Hällzon et al. 2022). Here we will give examples from the Tyvan-speaking herdsmen in the Altai-Sayan Region of Inner Asia.

Ethnocynological Approach and Methods

In recent years, the dog's close relationship with humans has also begun to gain increasing interest among researchers. Canadian scholar Bryan D. Cummins (2006) has coined the term ethnocynology for a research field that studies dogs within past and present human societies. The domestic dog's living conditions has throughout history been shaped within the same sociocultural and ecological framework as the human group it has lived with, whether it is as a watch dog in a peasant village, a herding or livestock guardian dog among nomads, or a sled dog among northern hunters (Strecker and Svanberg 2014). Anthropologist Maria Stanyukovich (2022), for instance, demonstrates cultural differences in relationships with canines and to cynophagy in Asia. Anthropologist Alex Oehler (2018, 2021) investigates relationships with dogs among the post-Soviet Soyot and Tofa people who live in the Eastern Sayan Mountains neighboring the Tožu-Tyva reindeer

herders.

We have drawn on previous research done by co-authors with numerous inquiries into human-canine relationships by Ingvar Svanberg (IS) (e.g., Hällson et al. 2022; Svanberg and Strecker 2014) and fieldwork among Inner Asian pastoralists from 2015 to 2019 by Victoria Soyan Peemot (VP). The field research area included the transboundary region in Tyva and Mongolia, and relied on ethnographic research methodology: participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and audiovisual documentation of multispecies practices (Peemot 2021:23–38).

The Dogs' Close Ties with Humans

Multispecies communities in the Tyva Republic in southern Siberia are comprised of a herding family and domesticated animals. Depending on the ecology – the mountain taiga or the steppe – the species of domesticates vary: reindeer in northeastern Tožu province, yaks *Bos grunniens*, in eastern Tere-Xöl and western Mönğün-Taiga, Övür, Bay-Taiga, and Bariin-Xemčik provinces, camels, *Camelus bactrianus*, in southern Erzín, Tes, and central Ulug-Xem provinces. Other livestock species—sheep, goats, and cows—are common throughout Tyva. The dogs are paramount both in the taiga and steppe habitats. Researchers who work with pastoralists in neighboring regions of southern Siberia and western and northern Mongolia have noticed that their bond with dogs differs from their relationships with other domesticated animals. Two of these key differences are the practices of naming and burying the dogs, which we will briefly discuss. In his research on dogs in Mongolia, Terbish pointed out that dogs “are the only animals that have individual names” and a practice of naming dogs reveals the species' closeness to humans (Terbish 2015:148). The lexical means of the Tyvan language, which are used when referring to dogs, point at their responsibilities as members of the multispecies *aal* communities which are comprised of a herding family, their livestock, and dogs. In the mountain taiga, where pastoralists engage ubiquitously in subsistence hunting, a hunting dog *aŋč'i iŋ* is prioritized (Figure 1). *It* [Tyv. ыт] is a generic term for a dog known in most Turkic languages (Tryjarski 1979). A term defining a hunting dog derives from ‘a hunter’ *aŋč'i* [Tyv. аңчы],² whereas the steppe pastoralists appreciate a guarding dog *kodanč'i iŋ*³ (Figure 2). This definition refers to the landscape term *kodan* – unmarked territory of the seasonal campsite, which hosts a yurt or a house (at a winter site), livestock shelters, a hay store, and a



Figure 1 A nameless one-year-old Tožu hunting dog at the reindeer herders' summer campsite Aaldäg-Ažik, Tožu, Tyva, July 3, 2019 (Photo Victoria S. Peemot).

tethering post for horses. Human and non-human members of the multispecies *aal* are sensitive to the *kodan's* invisible borders. For instance, the dogs chase off other *aal's* livestock from its own *kodan* territory. This hints at the main responsibility of the *kodan'i* dogs—to protect the campsite and its humans and livestock.

Dog Names

There are a few popular names for dogs in Tyva: *Taiga* with its diminutive form *Taigamay*, *Ežir* (*Ežirben*) 'Eagle', *Köstük* (*Köstükpen*) 'Eyeglasses'—a dog with brown spots above the eyes, *Čüreke* (*Čürekepen*) 'Heart'—a dog with a white spot at the chest, *Moinak* 'Neck'—a dog with light-colored neck hair (Tatarintsev 2008:128). Another popular name *Eger* has its etymology in the Old Turkic word **eker* meaning 'a hunting dog, wolfhound' (Sevortyan 1974:243). Some names refer to the dog's story as it was in a case of the male dog named *Čerlikpen* that

belonged with co-author VP's family. The name derives from *čerlik*, which means 'wild' or 'stray' (when talking about dogs). Consider, for instance, the following story about naming a puppy. When visiting her grandparents' winter encampment for maintenance in summer (circa late-1980s), VP found an approximately two-month-old puppy with a red coat, green eyes and pointed ears. Acknowledging its unknown origin, the puppy was named *Čerlikpen* and lived with the family for more than ten years.

In addition to naming, a dog burial practice can also reveal the dogs' closeness to humans, which is explained by cosmology. Anthropologist Alex Oehler suggested, "[i]deas about dog personhood differ by region, but many share common features rooted in Indo-Iranian, shamanic, and/or Buddhist cosmology. [...] Mongolian Buddhist conceptions of reincarnation resonate also with Soyot and Tofa hunters who provide their deceased canine collaborators a final



Figure 2 The 6-month-old Tyvan guardian dog Ak-Xol, Lake Shara-Nuur, Tes-Xem, Tyva, June 2019 (Photo Victoria S. Peemot).

meal, normally intended only for humans or deities” (Oehler 2021:774). Herdsman Oleg Sambuu has shared a story about death and burial of his dog Kaldar (Audio recorded interview, Övür province, Tyva, March 2017),

When a dog reaches ten years, it becomes heavy and a bit lazy, it does not move much, sleeps more and stays close to the yurt and guards only the encampment. One dog, Kaldar, lived until he was 16 years old. When Kaldar became old, he looked so pitiful; his two eyes could not see anything. He could neither walk nor hear nor eat. He just stood shaking. It was pitiful to see him like that. We strangled Kaldar with a rope, put a piece of fat in his mouth, and took him to a far place.

A Hunting Dog *Ajčī Īt*

In the eastern Tere-Xöl and northeastern Tožu provinces of Tyva, the local hunter-herders rely on subsistence hunting as an important income source. The herders adjust their seasonal transhumance time with the hunting season. They move to their winter place before mid-October when the hunt for fur animals – squirrel and sable – begins. The experienced hunter Ivan Artina (b. 1932), when talking about hunting different animals – bear, red deer, musk deer, and sable – in the mountain taiga of southeastern Tyva, emphasized the importance of hunting dogs (Audio-recorded interview, summer place Čirgalangdi, Tere-Xöl province, Tyva, 29 June 2015):

The sable is hunted with a dog. Without a dog, there is no way to catch it [the sable]. You release a dog at the footprints [of the sable], and it finds the sable quickly and drives it



up a tree or scree. It is impossible to catch the sable without a dog.

The reindeer herder and hunter Daniil Kirgannay (b. 1991) explained that dogs participate in the winter bear hunt when the animal is driven out of its den. Referring to the bear hunt as “*aaldaar*” Daniil explained that the bear “is guest-visited” at its den, and this is a preferable way to hunt this animal because “it is a clean way to kill the animal” (conversation at the Aaldig-Ažik summer site, Tožu, Tyva, July 3, 2019; field notes).⁴ He further elaborated that the hunters start with doing *öönneer* to prevent the risen bear from jumping out the den.⁴ The hunting dogs cooperate with hunters at all stages of this den-hunting process. While staying at Daniil’s summer campsite Aaldig-Ažik in the Tožu province of Tyva in July 2019, VP observed his dogs being tethered for a day close to the tent. They were let roam free at nights. Daniil has explained that they are young dogs, which are being trained for hunting. During the stay at the reindeer herder’s encampment, people ate the same food as the dogs—delicious meat of a 4-year-old moose, *Alces alces*, killed two days before our arrival and preserved by air curing.⁶

The dogs VP encountered at the reindeer herders’ camp had an appearance which is referred in the cynological and ethnographic literature as Laika (Shiroky 2004)—a smallish, dog of aboriginal spitz type between 25 to 35 kg in weight, with pointed ears, and a sharp muzzle.

A Small-Sized Guarding Dog *Xava İt*

This section focuses on relationships with a small-sized dog which is defined as *xava it* in the Tyvan language. We begin with tracing etymology of the word *xava*. Next, we follow a journey of the word *xava* and a small-sized dog from the southern parts of the Qing Empire to its northern borderlands. Thirdly, we draw attention to distinctions in pastoralists’ relationships with the Tyvan breed camp guarding dogs and small-sized *xava* dogs.

In the dictionaries, the word corresponds with the specific breed—the Pekingese. Consider, for instance, the following definitions: *хабазы* 哈巴子 *habazı* = ‘Pekinese (dog)’ (Khabdabageva 2009:161; Salmi 2018:304; *kabari* = 1. ‘a Pekingese dog’; 2. ‘a growth on the noses of horses and donkeys’ (Norman 2013:224). The Tyvan-Spanish-English dictionary documents a transition from a narrowly specified meaning of *xava* as ‘the Pekingese dog’ to a more

general definition which considers a small sized dog, its mixed origin and suggests a translation as ‘pug, lap-dog, hairy mongrel’ (Dariin 2013:276). Professor Emeritus Juha Janhunen, University of Helsinki, has suggested that *khaba* might have a descriptive or onomatopoeic origin, similarly, for instance, with the Finnish word *hauwa* “a good dog” which originates in *haukkuu* ‘to bark.’ In the Tyvan language, intense barking (especially of a small dog) is defined by a verb, *khakkylyaar* whereas a dog’s barking in general is referred as *eerer*.

Thus, the Tyvan word *xava* traces its origin to Inner Asian languages where the word corresponds with the Pekingese breed, which historically had a high status in China (Cheang 2006:359–387). The shared past of Tyva and Mongolia as part of the Manchu Empire in the eighteenth to the beginning of the twentieth century allows for a suggestion that the word denoting the Pekingese (and later any small-sized dog) has journeyed from the imperial centre to its northern borderlands. The word is almost identical in two languages—*xav noboi* in Mongolian and *xava it* in Tyva—except for the second part with the meaning “dog” which is *noboi* in Mongolian and *it* in Tyvan. The Tyvan word *it* has a Turkic origin and appears with phonetic variations as *it*, *it*, *et* in a number of Turkic languages (Tryjarski 1979; Sevortyan 1974:385). Tyvan is the only Turkic language where *xava* is present. In Eastern Turkestan the Pekingese dog was known as *xor-xor* or *kuku* (Hällzon et al. 2022:251). Ethnographic sources reveal the presence of the Pekingese breed in Mongolia in the early twentieth century (Haslund-Christensen 1935:37; Päläsi 1949 [1911]:111). Caroline Humphrey (1976:14–15) noticed that Mongolian herders keep a small dog in the yurt and appreciate it for its loving character,

The *hav noboi* is kept in the yurt, unlike other dogs, and is a much loved pet . . . In appearance they were like Pekinese, small, with turned-up noses, and long hair. In colour they were black and white. They were thought to be very loving dogs who would miss their owners very much, and even die, if they went away. It is said that if you keep a *hav* it will wake three times during the night to see that you are still alive.

Humphrey’s observations on a *xav noboi* in Mongolia correspond with the emic experience of this



paper's co-author VP. Her grandparents have kept small-sized dogs in addition to the guarding dogs. *Xava* dogs were believed to have acute hearing abilities, which helped them to sense danger fast and alert people to it by loud barking. They are trusted with "taking care" of little children when they are left alone in a yurt. VP's grandmother used to say that it is good to keep a *xava* and a cat in a yurt because these animals can ward off snakes, which are common "guests" in yurts in the steppes of southern Tyva. The *xava* are allowed to live inside the family's dwelling—in a house or a yurt. On the contrary, the "large" guarding dogs are not accepted in the intimate space of a human dwelling (Terbish 2015:148). Moreover, pastoralists in the field considered a guarding dog's attempts to enter a dwelling as an undesirable trait in its behavior. Although there can be exceptions. One informant has recalled their family's dog from the late 1970s. It was "a large black dog" who was a good guarding dog with a strong protective instinct. Sometimes the dog would scratch a door and, when allowed inside, he would lie on the floor carpet for a little while, and then leave (personal communication with Soyán Saysuu Ivanovna, field notes, Samagaltay village, Tyva, 15 June 2019).

The relationship of Inner Asian pastoralists with the *xava* dogs requires more thorough historical and ethnographic research than a scope of this work allows.

A Tyvan Breed *Kodanči İt*

VP has conducted field research primarily in the steppes of southern Tyva, which is her home region. She has collaborated on her doctoral dissertation project with horsemen from her patrilineal Soyán kinship group (Peemot 2021:44–52). VP observes that research with pastoralists is inherently multispecies work, and a researcher engages with various nonhuman animals and, perhaps, most actively with dogs. VP has encountered the Tyvan breed guarding dog *kodanči it* at the pastoralists' encampments in provinces along the border with Mongolia. They were significantly larger than the reindeer herders' hunting dogs. The Tyvan breed male guarding dog's weight is between 55 to 60 kg and the female's weight is between 45 to 50 kg. Similarly, as with their relationships with other local breed animals, the relationship of Tyvan pastoralists with the guarding dog *kodanči it* (which are common in the steppe ecologies) suffered under unfavorable state policies during the Soviet regime. The Russian geneticist Ylya

Zakharov (Zakharov and Kashtanova 2009:233–234.) noticed that a significant part of the local breed dog population in Tyva had been exterminated in the early Soviet period. He wrote,

In 1944 Tyva, which earlier kept a nominal independence, became a part of USSR. In the 1950s, the Tyvan pastoralists were forced to move to the villages. In these circumstances, dogs from several camping sites gathered in large groups in a limited territory, and they were killed despite unique characteristics of particular animals and without any determined selection. The rural municipalities had even a plan for shooting the dogs. In the mid-1950s, the local authorities issued a pointless regulation: the dogs must be chained; all dogs must have [identification] numbers attached. The dogs that ran loose and without [identification] numbers were killed. By the beginning of the 1960s, most dogs were exterminated. (Translation from Russian by VP.)

The informants in Tyva have also shared their memories about the unfavorable conditions for dogs during socialism. Consider, for instance testimony of Oleg Sambuu, "There were numerous Tyvan dogs; not anymore. Many dogs were killed because of rabies, they were shot. That is why now we have many mongrels" (audio-recorded interview, Övür province, Tyva, March 2017). One of the informants, Saysuu Soyán from the Tes-Xem province of Tyva, recalled how in April and May of 1979 numerous dogs in the province were killed because of an unconfirmed suspicion of a possible rabies infection. The veterinarians who worked in the local municipalities and collective farms were tasked with killing the dogs (personal conversation, Samagaltay village, Tyva, June 2019).⁷ Saysuu Ivanovna remembered, "Before the negative test results (for rabies) came from the central laboratory, all dogs in Čoduraa and many dogs in Ak-Erik and Samagaltay were killed. One could hear gunshots and whining of dogs in the early mornings. Some dogs ran away to the mountains. Later they returned back to their homes" (ibid.).

Currently the situation with the Tyvan breed



kodanči dogs has improved. In VPs home region in southern Tyva, many dogs originate from one breeding place, which is named “The Tyvan Wolfhound—The Steppe Horde” and owned by Vladimir Orus-ool. VP recalled her field experience (Fieldnotes, Lake Šara-Nuur, Tyva, 22 June 2019),

In June 2019, I followed my clansman and the owner of the horse-herd in Tyva Vladimir Orus-ool when he went to check up on a part of his herd, which was grazing at the summer pastures in Lake Šara-Nuur area, our clan ground near the Mongolian border. We started the job at 4 am, and by 6.30 am, we completed a “count” of eight stallion bands. Counting actually consisted of photographing the stallion bands; the owner would analyze the data later, in his city office. After that, we paid a visit to the young horseman Temir “Samba” Laḡaa who was looking after the herd. Two large Tyvan breed dogs-siblings Ak-Xol and Eger greeted us in a friendly manner despite their formidable appearance. The dogs seem to recognize my companion, Vladimir Orus-ool, who had brought them as little puppies to the herder’s encampment.

Vladimir Orus-ool started his work on breeding the *kodanči* dogs in 1996. He explained that at the time it was a necessity. Since the beginning of the 1990s, he was investing in raising his livestock, and the dogs were important in providing safety from livestock thieves and predators. In personal communication with VP, Vladimir Soyanovič recalled that he was inspired to revive the Tyvan breed by own childhood interactions with dogs at the pastoralists’ camping site (An email from 23 March 2022. Translation from Tyva by VP):

I remember my grandmother’s dog Taiga from my childhood, from the mid-1960s. What I remember the most is Taiga’s strength. She had a shaggy, thick coat; mats of hair hung from her ears and legs. She had a large head, muscular and strong body, thick legs, shaggy black coat with red spots, large round red

“eyeglasses” above her eyes, large and hanging ears. She had staid manners and thick voice. Little kids liked to play with her, grabbing and pulling her tail and ears. She has never shown a drop of anger towards kids. I used to play with that dog too; sometimes I even rode on her back. When Taiga got tired of children who were climbing all over her, she went to her spacious and deep den, which she dug herself to shelter from the scorching steppe sun.

When I had a goal to find good dogs in the 1990s, of course, I pictured my grandmother’s dog Taigamay in my mind. By that time, such dogs had become rare, and they almost disappeared in some parts of Tyva. Perhaps, because our kinship group has lived in the remote border area, we have not lost our Tyvan dogs.

Vladimir Soyanovič acknowledged that his Tyvan dog-breeding project began with two puppies whose mother was a daughter of another bitch named Taiga who belonged to his paternal aunt. This Taiga died at the winter campsite Ak-Ödek in Mountain Agar in 1994 from injuries, which she got when she held her ground against three wolves (ibid.). This trait—being fearless when encountering wolves—is considered one of the important requirements for the *kodanči* dogs. The wolves are the main predators that pose a danger for livestock in steppe ecology. They attack in the pasture and, during night, at the encampment territory. Thus, the dogs are paramount in protection against predators. During socialism, the collective farms’ administration organized wolf hunts in early May when pups were in the den. Currently the herders complain that the numbers of wolves has increased but they are still reluctant to hunt predators down. It is because hunting wolves is regulated within customary human-nonhuman relationships, which take into consideration a wolf’s high symbolic value among Turkic and Mongolian-speaking pastoralists (consider, e.g., Charlier 2015).

The herders say that it might be difficult for one *kodanči* dog to win against a wolf; therefore, a herding family usually keeps two or more dogs. Vladimir Orus-ool prefers to give two puppies (siblings) to one family so they could support each other and stand

against wolves together. There are five Tyvan breed bitches in the “The Steppe Horde” currently; they give birth once per year, and their litters vary from six to ten puppies. Vladimir Orus-ool admitted that in the past ten years he has given puppies to people from all over Tyva and the Altay Republic. Considering their pedigree and expenses for keeping the breeding facility, the puppies’ price must be expensive. However, Vladimir Orus-ool emphasized that he does not sell the puppies because “most people cannot pay the puppies’ fair price.” He explained to me his motivation to raise and give puppies to herders in the following words, “The *kodančī* dogs belong with the Tyvan herding life. It is important that the Tyvan breed dogs guard yurts and livestock in our homeland” (An email from 23 March 2022. Translation from Tyva by VP).

Conclusion

Dogs and humans have co-evolved with each other since time immemorial. Although now rarely cited, Norwegian ethnographer Ørjan Olsen (1915) showed how intertwined the life of dogs and Tyvan-speaking herders were in the Altai-Sayan region. In this brief overview, we discuss some aspects of the close bonds between humans and dogs among the contemporary Tyvan, ties that do not differ significantly from conditions a hundred years ago. We have highlighted some aspects. Further research and fieldwork are needed to analyse the human-dog relationship in Inner Asia, especially among hunter-gatherers and pastoralists. The relationships between the species are multifaceted and the bonds forged since prehistoric times are unique.

Notes

¹Specific letters of the Tyvan Cyrillic alphabet are transliterated as follows: *ø* – *ö*, *ү* – *ü*, *ң* – *ŋ*, *ы* – *ï*, *й* – *y*, *ч* – *č*, *ш* – *š*, *ж* – *ž*, and *х* – *x*. Vowels are short, long, or pharyngealized. Pharyngealization is marked by the symbol ‘ as in *aʻ* [aʻɫ]. However, the vowel *ы* is transcribed as *y* in words derived from the ethnonym Tyva [Тыва], following the established transcription system. I write the ethnonym as Tyva: for example, the Tyva, the Tyva people, or the Tyva Republic. Toponyms follow conventional transliteration.

²*Aŋ* [Tyv. аң] is a ‘wild animal’ in the Tyvan language.

³It is also referred as a herding dog *kadarčī* *it*. However, most informants preferred to use the former term, *kodančī* *it*.

⁴In the Tyvan language, *aaldaar* is ‘to guest’; the verb is used to refer to different guesting practices.

⁵The verb *öönneer* defines an action of building a barrier with wooden sticks at the den’s entrance. The sticks are fixed in the tree roots or the earth hill in front of the den.

⁶Daniil and his older kin Anton Kol have referred to a 4-year-old moose as *toč*. The local Tožu-Tyva dialect has rich vocabulary concerning reindeer and wild animals.

⁷Saysuu Ivanovna Soyan (b.1948) has worked as the veterinarian in the province’s center at the time. After graduation from the Moscow Timiryazev Veterinary Academy (1975), she has worked as a vet in the Tes-Xem province’s collective farms and in the Tyva Republic’s central veterinary laboratory in Kyzyl.

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Ethics Declarations

We followed the ethical guidelines prescribed by the International Society of Ethnobiology (ISE 2006). Field materials have been gathered and published with the written consent of the interlocutors.

Declarations

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