

## Short Report

**THE CALENDAR VOCABULARY AS A STUDY  
SOURCE OF ANCIENT CULTURAL -  
LINGUISTIC CONTACTS OF SIBERIAN  
INDIGENOUS PEOPLES (TO THE PROBLEM  
OF THE ORIGIN OF THE WORDS “SPRING”,  
“WINTER” IN THE SELKUP AND THE KET  
LANGUAGES)**

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Different ethnic groups had been living, moving, assimilating on the territory of Western Siberia for a long time. Economic and cultural contacts between representatives of these groups had been arising during many years. The relations and the two-way influence of two peoples – the Samoyeds and Yenisseys (ancestors of modern Selkups and Kets) - is one example of such contacts. Samoyed-yenissey lexical equivalents demonstrated by some researchers may be given as the results of their relationship [1]. The correspondence between some words there is in languages of the modern Selkups and Kets too. The words “spring”, “winter” belong to such words. There are some different opinions about the origin of these words in the Selkup and Ket languages. Therefore it is reasonable to analyse peculiarities of the forming of the names for conceptions “spring”, “winter” in these languages.

1) Spring

The Selkup people used the word *Ytid* (*ödeD* and other phonetic variants), the Ket people used the word *yed'* for the conception “spring”. The famous Hungarian researcher Haidu P. supposed, that the selkup word has been borrowed from the Yenissey languages: nen. *djotti*, selk. *ödeD* < ket. *Yed* (spring) [2].

The prominent researcher of the Yenissey languages Joki A. expressed the same opinion, that the samoyed words with the meaning “spring” has been borrowed from the Yenissey languages, there are the following correspondence at that: selk. *ödäD* - ket - *yed'*, *yedi* - tib. - *dpyid* [2].

The well known researcher K. Bouda has the opposite view on the borrowing direction, namely: yen. *yed(i)*; kott. *iji* - spring < sam. *ytid* [3].

2) Winter

The words with the meaning “winter” were fixed in the Samoyed and the Yenissey languages. There is the supposition, that the selkup *kä*, *ke*, *kam*, *khä* had been borrowed from Yenissey. From the E. Levi's point of view there are the equivalents: ket. *kete*, kott. *kēti*, tib. *dgun* [2]. Some researchers express the contrary idea: the yenissey root had been borrowed from the Samoyed language [4, 5].

Thus, contradictory linguistic data concerning the borrowing processes of words “spring”, “winter” in the Samoyed and the Yenissey languages have been demonstrated above. Concerning some opinions about relations of the Samoyeds and Yenisseys it may be

supposed the following peculiarities of the origin of the names for conceptions “spring”, “winter” in the Samoyed (Selkup) and the Yenissey (Ket) languages:

1) The words “winter”, “spring” had been borrowed by native speakers from each other during the period of the existence of Samoyed and Yenissey linguistic communities.

2) The words “winter”, “spring” had been borrowed by native speakers from each other after the disintegration of indicated linguistic communities (or one of them).

3) The words “winter”, “spring” have been borrowed by native speakers not from each other, but from another source.

It is known that there are many words in Selkup and Ket borrowed from other, unrelated languages. For example, words from Russian and Turkic have been fixed in the Selkup language. A whole number of common words of Ket and Chinese have been revealed as well [3]. The hypothesis about the connection of the Yenissey and the Tibetan-Chinese languages, based on the study of similar words, has been supported by many authors [6]. The famous researcher of aboriginal Siberian languages A.P. Dulzon has noted the correspondence between the words of the Ket and the Hun languages in addition [7].

The observed lexical equivalence and correspondences are the basis for the supposition about the available contacts between native speakers of above stated languages. There is the opinion about the connection between the Kets and the Chinese, the Kets and the Huns, (in addition between the Kets and American Indians too), etc. [7]

From the other side there is the supposition that the Samoyed and the Yenissey had the common ancient ancestral home situated in the south Siberia [8]. There is the idea about the single ancient cultural-linguistic community of Selkups and Kets [6].

It is possible to think about possible ancient contacts not only between the Yenissey (Kets) and Tibetans, Chinese, Huns, but between the Samoyeds and these three peoples. Therefore the words “winter”, “spring” in Samoyed (and in Yenissey) could be borrowed from languages of Tibetans, Chinese, Huns.

4) The above mentioned words “winter”, “spring” are unrelated.

There is the assumption that the Samoyed word roots with the meaning “winter” (selk. *kə*, *kamas*. *khä*) have nothing to do with the yenissey root \**gäte* – “winter” [4].

So, the research of the calendar names with the meaning “winter”, “spring” in Samoyed (Selkup) and Yenissey (Ket) are connected with some different and sometimes conflicting conclusions.

Thus, it is impossible to identify the true origin of calendar names in above mentioned pre-literate languages on the basis of only linguistic data. The

forming of words with the meaning “winter”, “spring” can be found out by means of the integrated approach. This approach consists in the synthesis of many different techniques and data, concerning: linguistic, ethnographical, historical, philosophical etc. This approach covers both the Samoyed (Selkup) and the Yenisey (Ket) (and other peoples). It means the detailed study of the vocabulary, semantic, phonetic, borrowing and other processes in languages of these peoples, the comparative research of their social and economical structure, of the material culture traits, of the thinking type, of the territorial and climate life peculiarities, the investigation of the ancient relations between the pre-literate Siberian peoples and the analysis of many other facts. This method will permit to understand the true origin of indicated words. So, the research of calendar names in the Selkup and the Ket languages causes the general study of many-sided ancient cultural - linguistic contacts of many Siberian indigenous peoples.

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#### Abbreviations

yen. – Yenisey  
kam. – Kamass  
kot. – Kot  
nen. – Nenets  
sam. – Samoyed  
selk. – Selkup  
tib. – Tibetan