

SYMBOLS RELATED TO NATURAL PHENOMENA IN FOLK PROVERBS

Jo‘rayeva Bibish Muhsinovna

Professor, Bukhara State University,

Doctor of Philological Sciences

Fattoyeva Ruxsora Bahodir kizi

Basic Doctoral Student, Bukhara State University

Abstract: This article analyzes natural phenomena in paremias, particularly objects that serve as emblems for the seasons. The participation of ornithonyms such as stork, goose, crane, and swallow as symbols of seasons in folk proverbs and their significance are emphasized.

Keywords: symbol, emblem, image, proverb, summer, winter, spring, autumn.

In society, individuals employ specific images to convey their thoughts, thereby enhancing communicative effectiveness. Within the system of social interaction, people cannot exist without utilizing symbols accepted in a given society, group, or social environment. The aspiration toward symbolization is among the social needs of humanity. Symbols also play a crucial role in intercultural communication processes. Through them, the national identity and culture of the language bearer are expressed.

A symbol constitutes the reflection of the external world in the inner world, consciousness, cognition, and spirit of representatives from diverse cultures. A symbol functions as a sign, utilized in the form of its primary meaning to convey another signification [7]. Yu. M. Lotman has identified symbols as one of the most stable elements within a cultural complex [9]. Thus, symbols are considered stable units within a given linguocultural space. They consolidate observations that have evolved into established norms of daily life.

Symbols can be material (objects, items), conceptual, verbal, visual, and auditory. In the system of social communication, specific objects—such as items, actions, phenomena, texts, images, animals, plants, colors, shapes, numbers, music, and others—serve as symbols.

Folk proverbs are also rich in symbols that embody the centuries-old traditions of our nation. Below, we analyze the symbols in proverbs involving natural phenomena.

The stork knows the arrival of summer, the pied crow—the arrival of winter. The stork does not come—summer does not arrive, The swallow does not come—autumn does not arrive.

In Uzbek folk songs, there exists the line “The stork has come—summer has arrived” [3:90]. In Uzbekistan, storks appear as the weather warms and fly away to warmer countries with the onset of cold days. The renowned folklorist O. Safarov explains the Bukharans' belief regarding the first sighting of the “bibihoji” stork as follows: “In Bukhara, some elders consider seeing the stork for the first time from the front side a sign of prosperity and goodness throughout the year, while seeing it from the back side is deemed inauspicious” [1, 91]. The stork has managed to become a symbol of summer for Uzbeks. In Chinese culture, it embodies longevity, happy and serene old age [7]. In Chinese and Egyptian traditions, the stork is an emblem of a son who respects his parents and cares for them in their old age. In Greek

mythology, it is a life-giving nurturing woman; in Christianity, it symbolizes purity, innocence, and respect [13].

This proverb mentions the arrival of the swallow in the autumn season. The *Explanatory Dictionary of the Uzbek Language* states that the swallow marks the beginning of the autumn season [8]. There are several other paremic units associated with this phenomenon:

In the swallow season, even the fruit in the sheath ripens. Variant: In the forty-swallow season, even the fruit in the sheath ripens.

The proverb emphasizes that at the beginning of the autumn season, no plant remains unripe, and even the fruits and vegetables that have lingered in their sheaths—that is, in their pods or hidden indoors—ripen and mature.

The swallow phenomenon is also depicted in the poetry of G‘afur G‘ulom: *The swallow rain passed with a whisper. The shepherd casts a glance at the rams* [11].

In proverbs, the lexeme *qirqkuyak* is also cited as an alternative to the lexeme *qirg‘iyak*: *The forty-swallow has come—autumn has come. In the forty-swallow, let it drip a thousand drops; from the scales, just one drop.*

Linguocultural Space	Stork
Uzbek	1. Summer 2. Spring
Chinese	1. Old age 2. Caring son
Egyptian	Caring son
Greek	Life-giving woman
Christianity	Purity, innocence

In addition to the aforementioned proverb, the following proverbs also particularly emphasize that the crow serves as a symbol of the winter season. In folk proverbs, we can encounter numerous instances of the aforementioned emblems. For example:

Even if the crow caws a thousand times, summer does not emerge; if the goose caws once—summer arrives. If the crow caws, it summons winter; if the goose honks, it summons summer. Winter does not arrive with a single crow. The crow does not depart—the snow does not melt; the crane does not arrive—the ice does not thaw. If the pied crow lands on the treetop, summer will come early. Winter passes, leaving the blackness to the crow.

As is well known to all of us, the crow roams our region during the winter months. It is rarely seen in summertime. Therefore, we can designate it as a symbol of winter. Beyond that, for Uzbeks, the crow is regarded as a harbinger of bad news. In China and Japan, it is considered an emblem of familial love and affection. In the emblem of the Shu Dynasty in China, a three-toed crow is depicted. In the mythologies of ancient Greeks, Iranians, and Chinese, it appears as the messenger of sun gods (Apollo, Mithra). In the traditions of Asian, African, and American peoples, it serves as a sign of the Sun. In ancient Rome, the crow symbolized hope; in the Middle Ages, among European peoples, the black crow metaphorically represented the most malevolent bird, as a harbinger of calamity, sorrow, war, and death [11].

Linguocultural Space	Crow
Uzbek	1. Winter 2. Evil, harbinger of bad news
Chinese	1. Familial love and affection 2. Emblem of the Shu Dynasty 3. Messenger of the sun deity
Japanese	Familial love and affection
Ancient Iranian	Messenger of Mithra
Ancient Greek	Messenger of Apollo
Asian, African, American	Sun
Ancient Roman	Hope
Medieval European	Evil, war, death

As evident from the foregoing, in contrast to representatives of other cultures, in Uzbek traditions, the stork is regarded as a symbol of summer, while the crow symbolizes winter. In Uzbek folklore, not only the stork but also the goose serves as an emblem of summer.

If the goose arrives, summer arrives; If the crow arrives, winter arrives. The arrival of the goose is the arrival of summer.

The goose heralds the onset of summer. Furthermore, it embodies masculinity, marriage, and success. Among the Turks, the goose was a symbol of fortune and lordship. Consequently, Turkish lords also employed “goose” as a proper name. For instance, Alp Er Tunga—that is, the daughter of Afrasiyab—was named Qaz [12]. In Celtic epics, the goose is considered a symbol of battle and an attribute of war deities. In China, the wild goose is a divine bird, embodying courage, light, speed, as well as marital bliss. In Japanese art, it evokes associations with the autumn moon. In Egypt, the goose represents the world-creator—the “Great Honker.” Among the Hindus, the wild goose serves as the vehicle of Brahman. Concurrently, it expresses spirituality, fidelity, knowledge, and eloquence.

Linguocultural Space	Goose
Uzbek	1. Summer 2. Masculinity, success
Turkic	Fortune-blessing, lordship
Ancient Celtic	Battle
Chinese	1. Courage, light 2. Marital bliss
Japanese	Autumn moon
Egyptian	God—the Great Honker
Hindu	Movement of Brahman

In addition to the stork and goose, the crane also serves as a symbol of summer among Uzbeks. *The stork arrives—bright summer; the crane arrives—clear summer.*

The stork signifies warm weather and bright days. Therefore, people have regarded the arrival of the stork as an indicator that “the bright season of summer has begun.” *If the crane arrives—clear summer*; the crane typically migrates near the end of summer, when the air begins to clear

and cool. The word “tunuk” in folk dialects denotes an open sky, clear air, and coolness. The arrival of the crane coincides with the final phase of summer, which is the most pleasant period with fresh air.

Furthermore, in paremias, the crane is also emphasized as a harbinger of spring:

If the crane arrives early, Spring arrives early. The crow does not depart—winter does not end; the crane does not arrive—the ice does not melt.

This is because cranes also fly away to warmer lands toward the end of autumn and return in spring.

Corresponding to the ornithonym *turna* (crane), the swallow likewise embodies spring and summer.

With the arrival of one swallow, spring does not come. With one swallow, summer does not arrive; With one cloud, autumn does not arrive.

This proverb expresses the folk wisdom of predicting seasonal changes based on the migration of birds.

In Uzbek national culture, ornithonyms such as stork, goose, crane, and swallow are regarded as symbols of the summer season; the crow as a symbol of the winter season; and the swallow and crane as symbols of the spring season.

Summer	Stork
Summer	Goose
Summer, Spring	Crane
Summer, Spring	Swallow
Winter	Crow

In conclusion, folk proverbs hold significant importance as a rich source of national thinking, values, and worldview. This article analyzes symbols related to natural phenomena, particularly ornithonyms that serve as emblems of the seasons—namely, the stork, goose, crane, swallow, and crow—and their functional significance in paremiological units. Based on the examined data, it can be asserted that in Uzbek folk oral creativity, birds possess profound semantic connotations as symbols representing changes in nature across the seasons. In proverbs, the stork, goose, crane, and swallow are associated with positive phenomena such as the onset of summer and spring, warmth, and fertility, whereas the crow is interpreted as a symbol of winter, cold, hardship, and occasionally negative omens. Furthermore, these symbols' emblematic meanings in the cultures of other peoples were compared, revealing distinctive features inherent to the Uzbek linguocultural space.

These analyses demonstrate that the bird images employed in folk proverbs merit attention not only as meteorological indicators but also as cultural symbols that express spiritual-enlightening and ethical values. Through them, the people's harmonious way of life

with nature, wise observations related to seasonal transitions, and symbolic values shaped in relation to the environment become evident. The linguoculturological study of natural phenomena and annual seasons serves as an important resource for a deeper understanding of the people's symbolic thinking.

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