

Part 1

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Across a vast area of sparsely populated Yakutia in Siberia can be found strange metallic structures and evidence of devastating nuclear-type explosions every six or seven centuries.

In northwestern Yakutia in Siberia, in the basin of the Upper Viliuy River, there is a hard-to-reach area that bears the marks of a tremendous cataclysm that took place some 800 years ago, which toppled the entire forest cover and scattered stone fragments over hundreds of square kilometers.

Distributed across this area are mysterious metal objects located deep underground in the permafrost. On the surface, their presence is revealed only by patches of weird vegetation. The ancient name of this area is Uliuiu Cherkechekh, which translates as "the Valley of Death".

For many years the Yakut people have given a very wide berth to this remote area that has played and still plays a special, powerful role in the fate not only of civilization but of the planet as a whole.

After having systematized a large quantity of reports and material of various kinds, we decided to inform you of something that may change perceptions of the world around us and our place in it, if humanity can take heed of what is stated here.

In order to provide the fullest possible picture, we have divided our account into three sections. The first contains the facts and eyewitness reports in the form in which they reached us. The second presents the ancient legends of peoples living in this region and the epic poetry of neighboring peoples who observed strange phenomena. This is important so that you can carry out your own investigation and appreciate for yourselves every detail of the narrative.

Finally, we discuss what lies behind all this [[see Part 2](#)].

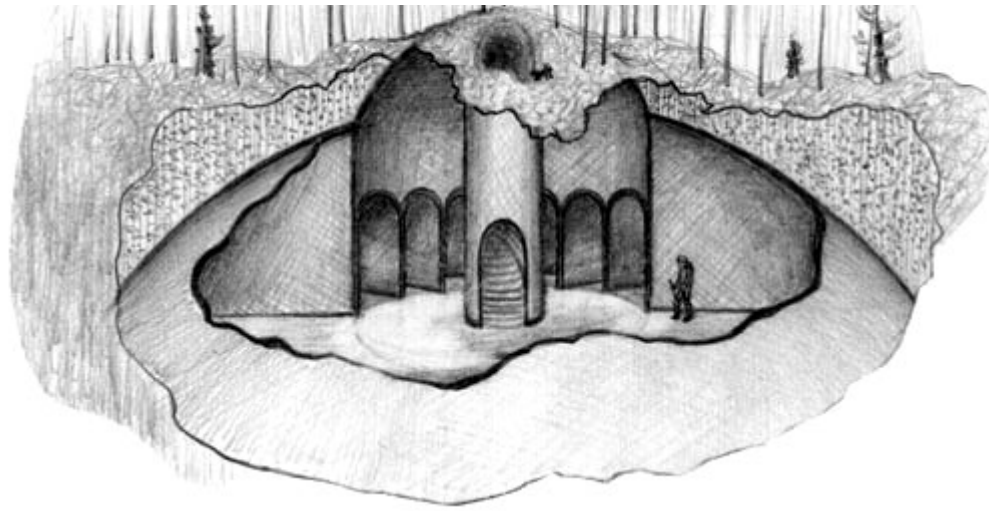
Eyewitness Reports

The area in question can be described as a solid mass of swamps, alternating with near-impassable taiga, covering more than 100,000 square kilometers. Some fairly curious rumors have become attached to the area regarding metal objects of unknown origin located across its expanse.

In order to shed light on whatever it was that, existing barely perceptibly alongside us, gave rise to these rumors, we had to go into the ancient history of this region to discover its beliefs and legends. We managed to recreate certain elements of the local palaeotoponymy and these matched in an astonishing manner the content of the ancient legends.

Everything indicated that the legends and rumors were referring to quite specific things.





In ancient times, the Valley of Death was part of a nomadic route used by the Evenk people, from Bodaibo to Annybar and on to the coast of the Laptev Sea.

Right up until 1936, a merchant named Savvinov traded on the route; when he gave up the business, the inhabitants gradually abandoned those places. Finally, the aged merchant and his granddaughter Zina decided to move to Siuldiukar. Somewhere in the land between two rivers that is known as Kheldyu ("iron house" in the local language), the old man led her to a small, slightly flattened reddish arch where, beyond a spiral passageway, there turned out to be a number of metal chambers in which they then spent the night. Zina's grandfather told her that even in the harshest frosts it was warm as summer in the chambers.

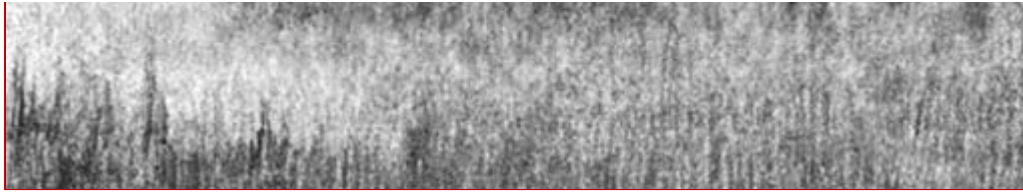
In days gone by, there were bold men among the local hunters who would sleep in these rooms. But then they began to fall seriously ill, and those who had spent several nights in a row there soon died.

The Yakut said that the place was "very bad, marshy, and beasts do not go there". The location of all these constructions was known only to old men who had been hunters in their youth and had often visited these places. They lived a nomadic life and their knowledge of the peculiarities of the area - where one could go, and where one couldn't - was a matter of vital necessity. Their descendants have adopted a settled way of life, so this knowledge from the past has been lost.

At present, the only things that point to the existence of these constructions are ancient place names that have survived in part and all manner of rumors.

But each of those toponyms represents hundreds, if not thousands, of square kilometers.





In 1936, alongside the Olguidakh ("place with a cauldron") River, a geologist directed by elderly natives came upon a smooth metal hemisphere, reddish in color, protruding from the ground with such a sharp edge that it "cut a fingernail".

Its walls were about two centimeters thick and it stuck out of the ground roughly a fifth of its diameter. It stood leaning over so that it was possible to ride under it on a reindeer. The geologist dispatched a description of it to Yakutsk, the regional centre. In 1979, an archaeological expedition from Yakutsk attempted to find the hemisphere he had discovered.

The team members had with them a guide who had seen the structure several times in his youth, but he said that the area was greatly changed and so they failed to find anything. It must be said that in that locality you can pass within 10 paces of something and not notice it, so earlier discoveries have been pure luck.

Back in 1853, R. Maak, a noted explorer of the region, wrote:

"In Suntar [a Yakut settlement] I was told that in the upper reaches of the Viliuy there is a stream called Algy timirbit (which translates as "the large cauldron sank") flowing into the Viliuy. Close to its bank in the forest there is a gigantic cauldron made of copper. Its size is unknown as only the rim is visible above the ground, but several trees grow within it..."

The same thing was recorded by N. D. Arkhipov, a researcher into the ancient cultures of Yakutia:

"Among the population of the Viliuy basin there is a legend from ancient times about the existence in the upper reaches of that river of bronze cauldrons or olguis. This legend deserves attention as the areas that are the supposed location of the mythical cauldrons contain several streams with the name Olguidakh - 'Cauldron Stream'."



And here is a passage from a letter penned in 1996 by another person who visited the Valley of Death. Mikhail Koretsky from Vladivostok wrote:

"I was there three times. The first time was in 1933, when I was ten - I travelled with my father when he went there to earn some money - then in 1937, without my father. And the last time was in 1947 as part of a group of youngsters.

"The 'Valley of Death' extends along a right-hand tributary of the Viliuy River. In point of fact it is a whole chain of valleys along its flood lands. All three times I was there with a guide, a Yakut. We didn't go there because life was good, but because there, in the back of beyond, you could pan for

gold without the threat that at the end of the season you'd be robbed or get a bullet in the back of your head.

"As for mysterious objects, there are probably a lot of them there, as in three seasons I saw seven of those 'cauldrons'. They all struck me as totally perplexing: for one thing, there was their size - between six and nine meters in diameter.

"Secondly, they were made of some strange metal. Everyone has written that they were made of copper, but I'm sure it isn't copper. The thing is that even a sharpened cold chisel will not mark the 'cauldrons' (we tried more than once). The metal doesn't break off and can't be hammered. On copper, a hammer would definitely have left noticeable dents. But this 'copper' is covered over with a layer of some unknown material resembling emery. Yet it's not an oxidation layer and not scale - it can't be chipped or scratched, either.

"We didn't come across shafts going down into the ground with chambers. But I did note that the vegetation around the 'cauldrons' is anomalous - totally different from what's growing around. It's more opulent: large-leaved burdock; very long withes; strange grass, one and a half or two times the height of a man. In one of the 'cauldrons', the whole group of us (six people) spent the night. We didn't sense anything bad, and we calmly left without any sort of unpleasant occurrences. Nobody fell seriously ill afterwards. Except that three months later, one of my friends lost all his hair. And on the left side of my head (the side I slept on), three small sore spots the size of match-heads appeared. I've tried to get rid of them all my life, but they're still with me today.

"None of our efforts to break off even a small piece from the strange 'cauldrons' was successful. The only thing I did manage to bring away was a stone. Not an ordinary one, though: half of a perfect sphere, six centimeters in diameter. It was black in colour and bore no visible signs of having been worked, yet was very smooth as if polished. I picked it up from the ground inside one of those cauldrons.

"I took my souvenir of Yakutia with me to the village of Samarka, Chuguyevka district, Primorsky region (the Soviet Far East), where my parents were living in 1933. I was laid up with nothing to do until my grandmother decided to build a house. We needed to put glass in the windows and there wasn't a glass-cutter in the entire village. I tried scoring it with the edge of that half of a stone sphere, and it turned out to cut with amazing ease. After that, my find was often used like a diamond by all our relatives and friends. In 1937 I gave the stone to my grandfather, but that autumn he was arrested and taken to Magadan where he lived on without trial until 1968 and then died. Now no-one knows where my stone got to..."

In his letter, Koretsky stresses that in 1933 his Yakut guide told him that:

"...five or ten years before, he had discovered several spherical cauldrons (they were absolutely round) that protruded high (higher than a man) out of the ground. They looked brand new. Later the hunter had seen them again, now broken and scattered."

Koretsky also noted that when he visited one "cauldron" a second time, in the intervening few years it had sunk appreciably into the ground.

A. Gutenev and Yu. Mikhailovsky, two researchers who lived in the town of Mirny in Yakutia, reported that in 1971 an old hunter belonging to the Evenk people had said that in the area between two rivers known as Niugun Bootur ("fiery champion") and Atadarak ("place with a three-sided harpoon"), there is poking out of the ground the very thing that gave the place its name - a "very big" three-faceted iron harpoon - while in the area between two rivers known as Kheliugur ("iron people"), there is an iron burrow in which lie "thin, black, one-eyed people in clothes of iron".

He said that he could take people there, that it was not far away, but no-one believed him. In the meantime, he died.

One more of these objects was, to all appearances, covered after the building of a dam on the Viliuy, slightly below the Erbiie. According to the account of one of the builders of the Viliuy hydro-electric project, when they constructed a diversion canal and drained the main channel they discovered in it a convex metal "spot". Deadlines were pressing and after a cursory inspection of the find the project managers gave orders for work to continue.

There is a host of tales from people who came across similar constructions by accident, but without precise directions it is extremely difficult to find these again in the depressingly monotonous terrain.

Once some old men said that flowing in the place called Tong Duurai is a stream called Ottoamokh ("holes in the

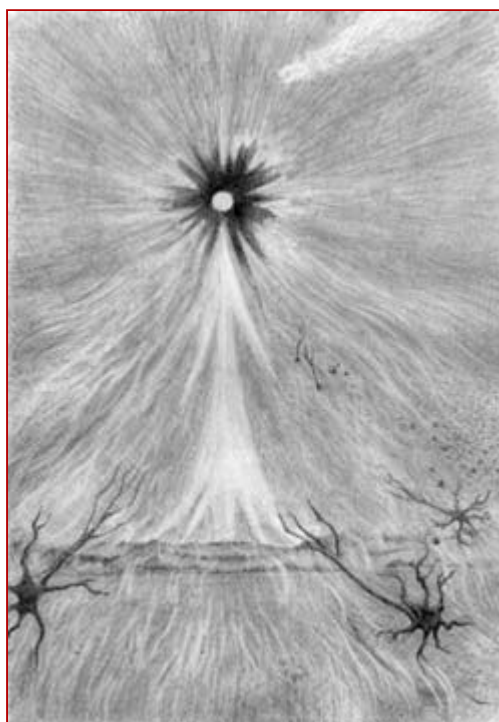
ground") and that around it there are incredibly deep openings known as "the laughing chasms". That same name also crops up in legends that state that this is the dwelling of a fiery giant who destroys everything around.

Roughly every six or seven centuries, a monstrous "fireball" bursts out from there and it either flies off somewhere into the distance and (judging by the chronicles and legends of other peoples) explodes there, or it explodes directly above its exit point - as a result of which, the area for hundreds of kilometers around has been reduced to a scorched desert with shattered rocks.

Yakut legends contain many references to explosions, fiery whirlwinds and blazing spheres rising into the air. And all those phenomena are somehow or other associated with the mysterious metal constructions found in the Valley of Death. Some of them are large, round, "iron houses" standing on numerous lateral supports. They have neither windows nor doors, only a "spacious manhole" at the top of the dome.

Some of them have sunk almost completely into the permafrost, with only a barely noticeable arch-like protuberance remaining on the surface. Witnesses who are strangers to each other describe this "resounding metal house" in the same way. Other objects scattered across the area are the metallic hemispherical lids that cover something unknown.

Yakut legends say that the mysterious blazing spheres are produced by "an orifice belching smoke and fire" with a "banging steel lid".



This is also the source for the fiery whirlwinds that from the descriptions sound very similar to the effects of present-day atomic explosions.

Roughly a century before each explosion or series of explosions, a fast-flying fiery sphere emerged from the "iron orifice" and, without causing great damage, soared upwards in the form of a thin column of fire. At the top of this, a very large fireball appeared. Accompanied by four claps of thunder in succession, it soared to an even greater height and flew off, leaving behind a long "trail of smoke and fire". Then a cannonade of its explosions sounded in the distance...

In the 1950s, the Soviet military cast an eye over this area, evidently due to the exceptionally sparse population on its northern fringes, and conducted a series of atomic tests there. One of the explosions produced a great puzzle, and foreign specialists are still speculating about it.

As the German radio station Deutsche Welle reported in September 1991 that, when a 10-kilogram nuclear device was being tested in 1954, for unknown reasons the size of the explosion exceeded the calculations by a factor of 2,000 to 3,000, reaching 20–30 megatons, as was registered by seismic laboratories around the world.

The cause of such a significant discrepancy in the power of the explosion remained unclear. The news agency TASS put out an announcement that a compact hydrogen bomb had been tested in airburst conditions, but it later emerged that this was incorrect.

After the tests, restricted zones were established in the area and secret work was carried out for some years.

Myths and Legends

Let us try to look into the distant past as it is reflected in epic poetry.

As the legends passed on by word of mouth testify, in the remote period when everything began, the area was inhabited by a small number of Tungus nomads.

Once upon a time, their distant neighbours saw that their land was suddenly wrapped in impenetrable darkness and the surroundings were shaken by a deafening roar. A hurricane of unseen force arose and the land was riven by mighty blows. Lightning crossed the sky in all directions.

When everything calmed down and the darkness dispersed, an unprecedented sight met the nomads' eyes. In the midst of the scorched land, glowing in the sun stood a tall vertical structure that was visible at a distance of many days' journey.

For a long time, the structure gave out unpleasant, ear-splitting noises and gradually diminished in height until it disappeared under the ground altogether. In place of the tall structure there was an immense, yawning, vertical "orifice". In the strange words of the legends, it consisted of three tiers of "laughing chasms". Its depths supposedly contained an underground country with its own sun that was, however, "waning".

A choking stench rose from the orifice, and so no-one settled near it. From a distance, people could sometimes see a "rotating island" appear above the opening, and this then proved to be its "banging lid". Those who were tempted by curiosity to take a closer look never returned.

Centuries went by. Life went on as before. Nobody anticipated anything extraordinary, but one day a small earthquake occurred and the sky was pierced by a thin "fiery whirlwind". At the top of it, a dazzling fireball appeared.

Accompanied by "a succession of four thunderclaps" and leaving behind a trail of fire, this sphere shot off along a shallow downward trajectory and, after vanishing beyond the horizon, exploded.

The nomads were perturbed but did not abandon the lands that were home to them, since the "demon" had not caused them any harm but had exploded over the lands of the hostile neighboring tribe.

A few decades later, events repeated themselves: the fireball flew off in the same direction and again destroyed only their neighbors. Evidently this "demon" was in some way their protector and they began to create legends about it, calling it Niurgun Bootur, "the fiery champion".



But some time later, events occurred that horrified those in even the most distant surroundings. A gigantic fireball emerged from the opening with a deafening, thunderous roar and exploded - right overhead!



A tremendous earthquake ensued. Some hills were cut across by a crack more than 100 meters deep.

Following the explosion, a "fire-raging sea" continued to swash about with a disc-like "rotating island" above it. The effects of the explosion extended over a radius of more than a thousand kilometers.

The nomadic tribes which survived on the edges of the area fled in different directions, seeking to distance themselves from the fatal spot, but that did save them from death.

They all succumbed to some kind of strange illness that was passed on only by inheritance.

Yet they left behind them precise accounts of what had taken place, on the basis of which Yakut storytellers began to compose beautiful, exceptionally tragic legends.

A little over 600 years passed. Many generations of nomads had come and gone. The precepts of the remote ancestors had been forgotten and people again settled the area.

Then history repeated itself... The fireball of Niurgun Bootur appeared above a fiery whirlwind and again flew off to explode beyond the horizon. A few decades later, a second fireball rent the air (now it was called Kiun Erbiie - "the gleaming aerial herald" or "messenger").

Then came another devastating explosion that the legends again anthropomorphized.

It was given the name Uot Usumu Tong Duurai, which can be roughly translated as "the criminal stranger who pierced the earth and hid in the depths, destroying all around with a fiery whirlwind".



It is important to note that on the eve of the flight of the negative hero Tong Duurai, there appeared in the sky the messenger of the heavenly Dyesgei - the champion Kiun Erbiie who crossed the firmament as a "falling star" or "dashing lightning" so as to warn Niurgun Bootur of the coming battle.

The most significant event in the legends was Tong Duurai bursting forth from the underground depths and doing battle with Niurgun Bootur. This took place roughly as follows:

firstly, a snake-like, branching, fiery whirlwind burst forth from the "orifice", on the top of which there

again appeared a fireball of gigantic size which, after several peals of thunder, shot high into the air. He was accompanied in flight by his retinue - "a swarm of fatally bloody whirlwinds" that wrought havoc in the vicinity.

But there were occasions when Tong Duurai encountered Niurgun Bootur above the place where he took off; and following these, the area remained lifeless for a long time.

The picture painted of these events varies quite considerably: several "fiery champions" might emerge from the opening at once, fly some distance and explode in one place. This happened with the flight of Tong Duurai. A study of the soil layers indicates that the interval between explosions does not exceed 600–700 years.

The legends vividly reflect these events, but the absence of a written tradition means that they have not been registered in documentary form.

It seems, though, that this lacuna is compensated for by the historical chronicles of other peoples.

The Chronicles of Other Peoples

Altogether, at approximate intervals of 600–700 years, several explosions or, rather, a whole complex of events including the precursors, took place.

All these occurrences were painstakingly recorded in epic poetry, traditions and legends. It is a curious fact that similar legends arose in the equatorial zone of the planet, where explosions or "giant fireballs" that suddenly appeared in the sky destroyed several centers of ancient civilizations.

Judging by the results of archaeological investigations carried out in the Upper Viliuy region by S. A. Fedoseyeva, the intermittent, wave-like settlement of this territory can be traced back roughly to the fourth millennium BC.

In the first millennium AD, the line of historical development is interrupted - and this does not contradict the possible date for the last historical explosion as September 1380. The cloud it raised blotted out the Sun over Europe for several hours. In several geo-active zones, powerful earthquakes took place.

This event is recorded in written sources. In Russian chronicles, it coincided with the Battle of Kulikovo Field:

"...the gloom dispersed only in the second half of the day. A wind of such strength blew, that an arrow shot from a bow could not fly against it..."

This factor made a positive contribution to the Russian victory.

However, the explosions are described in Tungus legends far more vividly than in other sources. Judging by the accounts, they were many times worse than modern nuclear weapons.

If we take 1380 as our starting date and go back into the past, we can trace such moments. In 830, for example, the culture of the Mayans who inhabited the Yucatán Peninsula in Mexico was destroyed. Many of their cities were reduced to ruins by an explosion of monstrous force.

Some passages in the Bible are akin to the Yakut legends, e.g., the description of the plagues of Egypt and the demise of Sodom and Gomorrah. In one of the oases of the Arabian Peninsula, an ancient town was destroyed and literally reduced to ashes. According to legend, this took place when a huge fireball that appeared in the sky exploded.

At [Mohenjo-daro](#) on the Indian subcontinent, archaeologists discovered a devastated city.

The marks of the catastrophe - melted stone walls - clearly pointed to an explosion comparable with a nuclear bomb. Similar events are also described in Chinese chronicles from the 14th century. They say that, far to the north, a black cloud rose above the horizon and covered half the sky, scattering large fragments of stone.

Stones also dropped from the sky in Scandinavia and Germany, where fire broke out in several towns. Scholars established that they were quite ordinary stones, and conjectured that a volcano had erupted somewhere.

Perhaps the cause of these misfortunes was really Tong Duurai who has been bursting out from under the ground for many centuries? While Niurgun Bootur blotted out half of the sky at his appearance, Tong Duurai considerably

exceeded him in size and, ascending into the heavens, completely disappeared from view.

We note that in the Valley of Death, a rise in the background radiation is observed at certain intervals of time - a phenomenon that specialists can't explain.

- See also the [interview with Valery Uvarov](#) by Graham Birdsall

**Return to Mysteries of Siberia's 'Valley of
Death'**