

KARAKALPAK EPIC TRADITION AS A SOURCE FOR STUDYING BIRTH RITES

The Karakalpaks, like other peoples, are distinguished by their rich culture, traditions, and rites. Childbirth rites are particularly important among them, reflecting the significance of the arrival of a new family member and their future role in society. Studying these rituals is an important task for scholars. Folklore works, particularly Karakalpak heroic epics, are used as key sources, as they are not only poetic works of art but also valuable historical and ethnographic heritage. This article explores childbirth-related customs through the analysis of the epics «Alpamysh», «Koblan», and «Kyrk Kyz». Childbirth-related topics they cover include the birth of a long-awaited child, cutting the umbilical cord, announcing the joyful news (suyinshi), the forty-day postpartum protection period (chille), and the naming ceremony. The study applies structural-semantic and comparative-historical approaches. By comparing similar traditions among the Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Karachay, and other Turkic peoples, the article identifies shared cultural roots and parallels.

Keywords: *epic, rituals, suyinshi, cord cutting ceremony, naming ceremony, chille, sunnet*

Author Info: Zholdasbayeva, Gulnara Azat kyzy — Doctoral Student, the Karakalpak Research Institute of Humanities of the Karakalpak Branch of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan (Nukus, Uzbekistan). E-mail: joldasbaevanara@gmail.com ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0001-5381-7490>

For citation: Zholdasbayeva, G. A. 2026. Karakalpak Epic Tradition as a Source For Studying Birth Rites. *Herald of Anthropology (Vestnik Antropologii)* 2: 322–331.

References

- Abzhet, B. S., and Zh. L. Zhumanova. 2017. Traditsii i obychai kazakhskogo naroda po sluchaiu rozhdeniia rebenka [Traditions and Customs of the Kazakh People on the Occasion of a Child's Birth]. *Vestnik. Seriya filosofii. Seriya kulturologiia. Seriya antropologiia* 4(62): 96–108.
- Bolurova, A. 2014. Obriady i pover'ia karachaevtsev, sviazannye s rozhdeniem detei (konets XIX — nachalo XX v.) [Rites and Beliefs of the Karachays Related to Childbirth (Late 19th — Early 20th Centuries)]. *Istoricheskie, filosofskie, politicheskie i yuridicheskie nauki, kulturologiia i iskusstvovedenie. Voprosy teorii i praktiki* 12(50): 37–40.
- Vagizieva, N. A. 2020. Traditsionnyi fol'klor v detskom tsikle semeinoi obriadnosti kadorskogo [Traditional Folklore in the Child Cycle of Family Rituals of the Kadar Ethnos]. *Nauchnye issledovaniia* 1: 83–92.
- Esbergenov, Kh., and T. Atamuratov. 1975. *Traditsii i ikh preobrazovanie v gorodskom bytu karakalpakov* [Traditions and Their Transformation in the Urban Life of the Karakalpaks]. Nukus: Karakalpakstan. 211 p.
- Zhainakova, A. 1982. «Semetey» éposunyn tarykhy-geneologiiialyk negizi [Historical and Genealogical Basis of the «Semetey» Epic]. Frunze: Ilim. 176 p.
- Zhainakova, A., and A. Akmatalliev. 2010. *Baatyrdyk épos: Sayakbay Karalaevdin varianty boiun-*

-
- cha* [Heroic Epic: Based on Sayakbay Karalaev's Version]. Bishkek. 1006 p.
- Murzakmetov, A. K. 2005. *Kyrgyz yrym-zhyrymdary* [Kyrgyz Folk Signs and Rituals]. Osh. 108 p.
- Musaeva, M. K., and L. T. Solov'eva. 2022. Obriad obrezaniia v traditsiakh narodov Kavkaza [The Circumcision Rite in the Traditions of the Peoples of the Caucasus]. *Istoriia, arkheologii i etnografiia Kavkaza* 18(2): 497–518.
- Sadykova, R., and K. Saifudinov. 2008. Obriady, sviazannye s rozhdeniem rebenka [Childbirth-Related Rituals. Echo of Centuries]. *Gasyrlar avozy — Ekho vekov* 2: 303–310.
- Troitskaia, A. L. 1927. Pervye sorok dnei rebenka (chil'lia) sredi osedlogo naseleniia Tashkenta i Chimkentskogo uezda [The First Forty Days of a Child (Chillya) Among the Sedentary Population of Tashkent and Chimkent Uyezd]. In *Sbornik V. V. Bartol'du: Turkestan — druž'ia, ucheniki i chitateli* [Collection by V. V. Bartold: Turkestan Friends, Students, and Readers], ed. by A. E. Shmidt and E. K. Berger. Tashkent: Tipolitografiya No. 2. 349–361.