

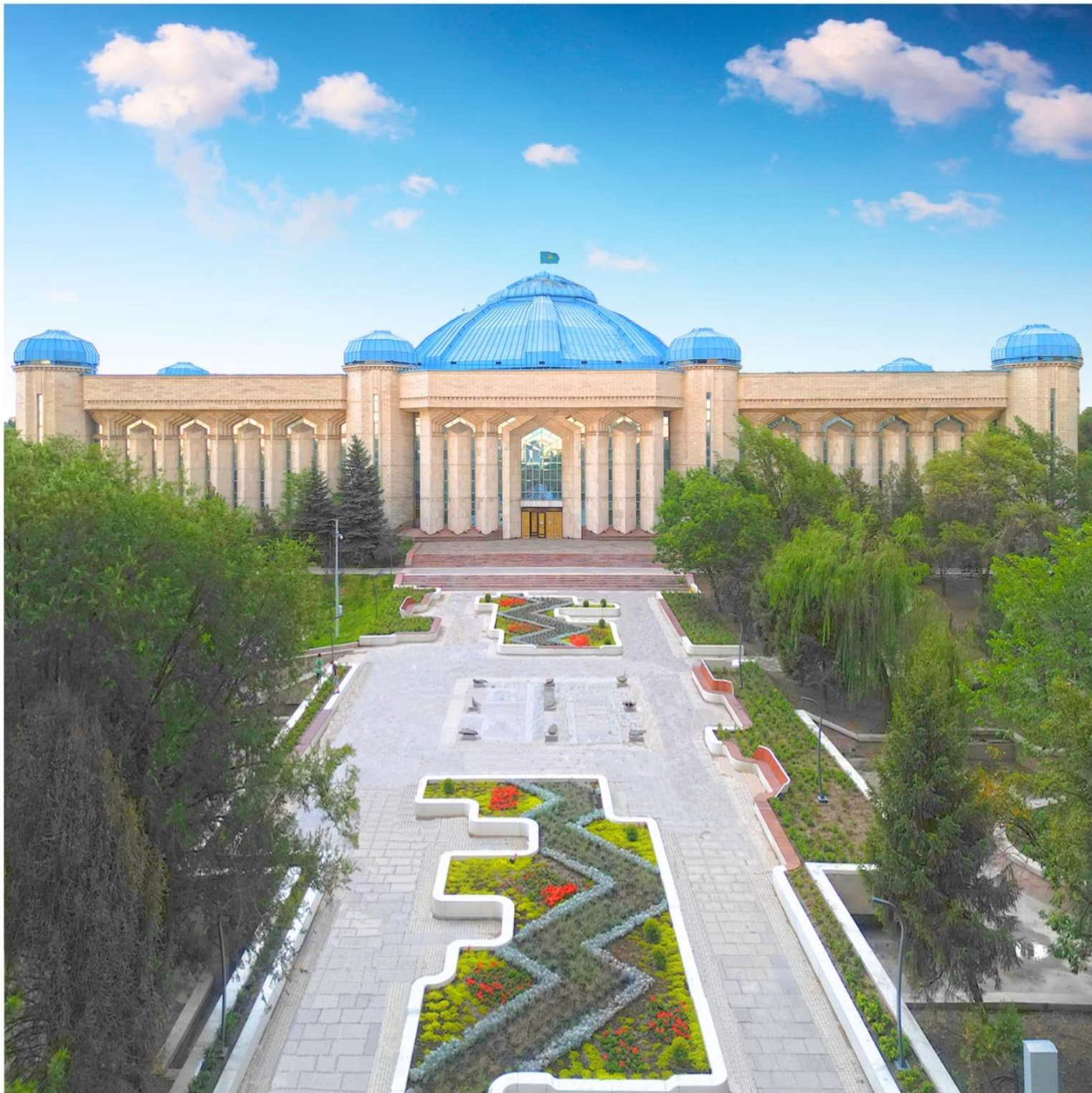
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ETHNOCULTURAL RELATIONS BETWEEN THE KAZAKH AND KYRGYZ PEOPLES

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Abstract. This article examines the cultural and historical commonalities between the Kazakh and Kyrgyz peoples, which developed over centuries of coexistence and ethnocultural interaction. Particular attention is paid to the similarities in traditional rituals, customs, oral folklore, literary traditions, and other elements of the spiritual and material culture of these two closely related peoples. Over a long historical period, favorable conditions for interethnic contacts developed in the Kazakh-Kyrgyz ethnocontact zone, including areas of mixed settlement, which contributed to the development of unique historical and cultural processes and the formation of stable cultural ties.

The intensity of cultural and linguistic interactions between the Kazakhs and Kyrgyz was determined by the specific socioeconomic developments, historical conditions of different eras, state national policies, and a number of other factors. At the same time, their shared origins, linguistic similarities, and similar ideological perspectives allowed the two peoples to maintain historical and cultural unity and continue to develop shared traditions in modern times.

The study is based on comparative and typological methods, the analysis of historical and cultural artifacts, and ethnographic fieldwork. Its primary goal is to study, preserve, and promote the cultural heritage of the Kazakh and Kyrgyz peoples. The scientific and practical significance of this work lies in its contribution to expanding humanities knowledge about the history and culture of the two peoples, as well as to updating the values of the shared Turkic cultural heritage. The results obtained contribute to a deeper understanding of intercultural interaction and the preservation of the historical memory of the peoples of Central Asia.

Research materials and methods. The study utilized methods of comparative analysis and interpretation of elements of the historical and cultural heritage of the Kazakh and Kyrgyz peoples. An important source of research was the results of ethnographic field expeditions conducted in the Akmola region, which allowed for the identification of the ethnocultural identity of the Kyrgyz people living in Kazakhstan. Furthermore, an analysis of ethnographic collections and cultural artifacts housed in local museums was conducted.

Particular attention is given to a comparative analytical study of traditional rituals and social practices characteristic of both peoples, including the customs of "süyönshü" ("suyunchi") and "korumdik" (gift for viewing), as well as the study of jewelry, traditional clothing, and musical instruments. These cultural phenomena were examined taking into account both their common Turkic foundations and local characteristics reflecting the specific historical development of each people.

Keywords: Ethnos, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, culture, language, art, historical and cultural relations, heritage, cooperation.

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ҚАЗАҚ ЖӘНЕ ҚЫРҒЫЗ ХАЛЫҚТАРЫНЫҢ АРАСЫНДАҒЫ ЭТНОМӘДЕНИ БАЙЛАНЫСТАР

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Аңдатпа. Мақалада қазақ және қырғыз халықтарының ғасырлар бойы қатар өмір сүруі мен этномәдени өзара ықпалы нәтижесінде қалыптасқан мәдени-тарихи ортақтығының ерекшеліктері қарастырылады. Екі туысқан халықтың дәстүрлі әдет-ғұрыптары мен салт-жораларының, ауыз әдебиеті мен әдеби дәстүрлерінің, сондай-ақ рухани және материалдық мәдениетінің өзге де қырларының ұқсастықтарына ерекше назар аударылады. Ұзақ тарихи кезең бойы қазақ-қырғыз этномәдени байланыс аймағында, соның ішінде аралас қоныстанған өңірлерде, этносаралық қарым-қатынастардың дамуына қолайлы жағдайлар қалыптасып, өзіндік тарихи-мәдени үдерістердің өрістеуіне және тұрақты мәдени байланыстардың орнығуына ықпал етті.

Қазақтар мен қырғыздар арасындағы мәдени және тілдік өзара ықпалдастықтың қарқындылығы әлеуметтік-экономикалық дамудың ерекшеліктерімен, әртүрлі тарихи кезеңдердің жағдайларымен, мемлекеттік ұлттық саясатпен және басқа да факторлармен айқындалды. Сонымен қатар шығу тегінің ортақтығы, тілдік жақындық және дүниетанымдық ұқсастықтар екі халықтың тарихи-мәдени бірлігін сақтап, ортақ дәстүрлердің қазіргі заман жағдайында да жалғасын табуына мүмкіндік берді. Зерттеу салыстырмалы-салғастырмалы және типологиялық әдістерді қолдануға, тарихи-мәдени артефактілерді талдауға, сондай-ақ далалық этнографиялық зерттеулер материалдарына негізделген. Оның басты мақсаты – қазақ және қырғыз халықтарының мәдени мұрасын зерттеу, сақтау және насихаттау. Жұмыстың ғылыми-практикалық маңызы екі халықтың тарихы мен мәдениеті туралы гуманитарлық білімді кеңейтуге, сондай-ақ ортақ түркілік мәдени мұра құндылықтарын өзектендіруге қосқан үлесімен айқындалады. Алынған нәтижелер мәдениетаралық өзара әрекеттестік үдерістерін тереңірек түсінуге және Орталық Азия халықтарының тарихи жадын сақтауға ықпал етеді.

Зерттеу материалдары мен әдістері. Зерттеу барысында қазақ және қырғыз халықтарының тарихи-мәдени мұрасының элементтерін салыстырмалы талдау және интерпретациялау әдістері қолданылды. Зерттеудің маңызды дереккөздерінің бірі – Ақмола облысы аумағында жүргізілген далалық этнографиялық экспедициялардың нәтижелері болды. Бұл материалдар Қазақстанда тұратын қырғыздардың этномәдени бірегейлігінің ерекшеліктерін анықтауға мүмкіндік берді. Сонымен қатар отандық музей қорларында сақталған этнографиялық коллекциялар мен мәдени артефактілерге талдау жасалды.

Екі халыққа да тән дәстүрлі рәсімдер мен әлеуметтік тәжірибелерді салыстырмалы-талдамалық тұрғыдан зерттеуге ерекше көңіл бөлінді. Атап айтқанда, «сүйінші» («сүйүнчү»), «көрімдік» («баланы көрүү акысы») сияқты әдет-ғұрыптар, сондай-ақ зергерлік өнер, дәстүрлі киім үлгілері мен музыкалық аспаптар қарастырылды. Бұл мәдени феномендер олардың ортақ түркілік негіздерімен қатар, әр халықтың тарихи дамуының өзіндік ерекшеліктерін бейнелейтін жергілікті сипаттары тұрғысынан талданды.

Тірек сөздер: этнос, казак, қырғыз, мәдениет, тіл, өнер, тарих-мәдени байланыс, мұра, ынтымақтастық.

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ЭТНОКУЛЬТУРНЫЕ ВЗАИМОСВЯЗИ КАЗАХСКОГО И КЫРГЫЗСКОГО НАРОДОВ

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Аннотация. В статье исследуются особенности культурно-исторической общности казахского и кыргызского народов, сформировавшейся в процессе их многовекового сосуществования и этнокультурного взаимодействия. Особое внимание уделяется сходству традиционной обрядности, обычаев, устного народного творчества, литературных традиций и других элементов духовной и материальной культуры двух близкородственных народов. На протяжении длительного исторического периода в казахско-кыргызской этноконтактной зоне, включая территории смешанного расселения, складывались благоприятные условия для межэтнических контактов, что способствовало развитию своеобразных историко-культурных процессов и формированию устойчивых культурных связей.

Интенсивность культурных и языковых взаимодействий между казахами и кыргызами определялась особенностями социально-экономического развития, историческими условиями различных эпох, государственной национальной политикой и рядом других факторов. Вместе с тем общность происхождения, близость языков и сходство мировоззренческих представлений позволили двум народам сохранить историко-культурное единство и продолжить развитие общих традиций в современных условиях.

Исследование основано на применении сравнительно-сопоставительного и типологического методов, анализе историко-культурных артефактов, а также материалах полевых этнографических исследований. Его основная цель заключается в изучении, сохранении и популяризации культурного наследия казахского и кыргызского народов. Научно-практическая значимость работы определяется ее вкладом в расширение гуманитарного знания об истории и культуре двух народов, а также в актуализацию ценностей общего тюркского культурного наследия. Полученные результаты способствуют более глубокому пониманию процессов межкультурного взаимодействия и сохранению исторической памяти народов Центральной Азии.

Материалы и методы исследования. В ходе работы использовались методы сравнительного анализа и интерпретации элементов историко-культурного наследия казахского и кыргызского народов. Важным источником исследования стали результаты полевых этнографических экспедиций, проведенных на территории Акмолинской области, позволившие выявить особенности этнокультурной идентичности кыргызов, проживающих в Казахстане. Кроме того, был осуществлен анализ этнографических коллекций и культурных артефактов, представленных в фондах отечественных музеев.

Особое внимание уделено сравнительно-аналитическому изучению традиционных обрядов и социальных практик, характерных для обоих народов, включая обычаи «сүйінші», «көрімдік» (подарок за смотрины), а также исследованию ювелирного искусства, традиционной одежды и музыкальных инструментов. Рассмотрение данных культурных феноменов осуществлялось с учетом, как их общих тюркских оснований, так и локальных особенностей, отражающих специфику исторического развития каждого народа.

Ключевые слова: этнос, казах, кыргыз, культура, язык, искусство, историко-культурные взаимосвязи, наследие, сотрудничество.

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Introduction. The cultural, economic, and economic relations between the Kazakh and Kyrgyz peoples have been bringing the two nations closer together in terms of ethnic and cultural relations for centuries. The similarities in their language and cultural traditions have influenced their mutual cooperation and cultural ties [Yener, Yavuz, 2020].

Today, there are many similar attributes in the national clothing styles, folk art, patterns and ornaments, and methods of economic management common to both peoples. Such spiritual heritages of the Kazakh and Kyrgyz peoples as the Nauryz holiday, jewelry art, kokpar, jamby atu, kyz kuu, and others hold special significance.

The historical-territorial, social, political, and other aspects of the lifestyle of the Kazakh or Kyrgyz ethnic groups have allowed them to preserve certain national characteristics in their cultural components. In particular, the nomadic Kazakh people's habitation in mountainous and mostly vast steppe areas, and the formation of the Kyrgyz ethnic group in mountainous regions, have comprehensively influenced the living conditions of both peoples.

Nevertheless, today it is possible to comparatively observe the patterns of development of various conditions for the development of the culture of the two peoples, and to consider their traditional and modern, including oral and written culture, as part of the general problems of the history and culture of Turkic peoples.

Among the Turkic peoples of common origin, the number of researchers studying the spiritual heritage of the Kazakh and Kyrgyz peoples is clearly not decreasing, but increasing day by day. This is primarily closely related to the written literature of the two countries. Many scientific studies have been conducted on this topic. Among them, the topic of Kyrgyz-Kazakh literary relations was covered in the scientific works of Khalil Bapaev (1975), Kyrgyz-Kazakh folklore by Batma Kebekova (1982), Kyrgyz-Kazakh poetic creativity by Abdildan Akmatyaliyev (1985), Chingiz Aitmatov and Kyrgyz-Kazakh literary relations by academician Abdildazhan Akmatyaliyev (1981), the diversity of Kazakh-Kyrgyz literary relations, Mukhtar Auezov and the great Kyrgyz writers by Bolot Akmatov (2000–2005), the literature of the difficult period of Kazakh-Kyrgyz poets from the point of view of Baurzhan Omaruly (2005), and others.

Description of the Material. The ethnocultural relations between the Kazakh and Kyrgyz peoples and the development of spiritual heritage common to both countries in various periods were studied. For the study of the topic, 14 heritage items from Kazakhstan and 6 from Kyrgyzstan included in UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity were considered. The monograph «Shoqan and Manas» by Alkey Margulan published in 1971, Tursyn Zhurtbai's article «Mukhtar Auezov and the Discussion of the Manas Epic», as well as the research works of scholars such as S. Abramzon, O. Yener, E. Yavuz, S. Akiner, N. Robert, Y. Ozen, R. Temirgaliyeva, S. Alimkulova, and others were used as the basis.

Discussion. Spiritual Cultural Heritage of the Kazakh and Kyrgyz Peoples

The prominent Kazakh scholar and educator Shoqan Ualikhanov was the first in the mid-19th century to record samples of the «Manas» epic from the mouths of Kyrgyz manaschi (narrators) and introduce them to the world.

The great Kazakh writer Mukhtar Auezov made a great contribution to the transmission of the «Manas» epic to the present generation. In Tursyn Zhurtbai's article «Mukhtar Auezov and the Discussion of the Manas Epic», it is widely described how the Kazakh writer contributed to deciding the fate of the «Manas» epic. In the 20th century, M. Auezov fulfilled the proud request of Kanykei in the epic, who said to her brother-in-law Er Agysh: «Bring back the honor and dignity of the small Kyrgyz people» [Zhurtbai, 2012].

One of the scholars who paid close attention and conducted in-depth analyses of the «Manas» epic is Alkey Khakanuly Margulan. The great Kazakh scholar found in the archives a fragment of the «Manas» epic recorded by Shoqan, which Russian and Kyrgyz scholars had been

searching for for many years. He translated it into Kazakh under the title «The Tale of Koketay,” published it, and released the Arabic facsimile of the original recorded version as a book.

In his 1971 monograph «Shoqan and Manas», Alkey Khakanuly conducted a comparative study of various versions of the Kyrgyz epic «Manas» and, in his scientific analysis of the hero’s paternal genealogy, noted that Manas is described in the epic as «sometimes Tobey, sometimes Nogai (Sagyndai), sometimes Kipchak (Mahmud), sometimes a Sart from Samarkand».

The People’s Writer of Kazakhstan, Hero of Labor of Kazakhstan, statesman and public figure Abish Kekilbayuly, in his book «At the Turn of Centuries», dedicated an article titled «The Ancient Epic Passed Down from Ancestors» to the millennium of the «Manas Batyr» epic. In it, he expressed heartfelt words of gratitude that such a wonderful wise epic exists in the world, that there is a generous people who memorize and sing it everywhere, and that there is a new generation that will honor and cherish it [Kekilbayuly, 2012].

Folklorist and ethnographer Akselu Seidimbek wrote: «Why, to this day, do more than forty Turkic-speaking peoples from the Yellow River (Huang He) in the east to the Mediterranean Sea in the west understand each other without translators? It is well known that after the Turkic Khaganate (6th–8th centuries) and the time of Genghis Khan, these forty or so peoples did not unite politically. Why are common Turkic heroes the main characters in the famous «Manas» epic? And how can we explain to the current generation why such kui (instrumental pieces) as «Korkyt», «Aksak Kulan», «El Ayrylgan», etc. are performed among Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, Karakalpaks, Turkmens, and others?» [Seidimbek, 2010:8].

Today, the contribution of the Kazakh manaschi Bayangali Alimzhanov to the revival and popularization of the «Manas» epic – which has become the treasure not only of the Kyrgyz people but of all Turkic countries and humanity as a whole – is significant. Bayangali, the only manaschi from a non-Kyrgyz nation, prepared the «Manas. Semetey. Seytek» epic in the Kazakh version, narrated the trilogy about Manas, his son Semetey, and grandson Seytek in prose, translated it into Kazakh, and published it as a book.

In addition, we can rightly say that the material values that spiritually bring the Kazakh and Kyrgyz peoples closer together are also important.

One of them is the yurt (in Kyrgyz – boz uy). In 2015, by the decision of the Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage at UNESCO headquarters in Paris, it was approved as a «Symbol of Family and Hospitality», confirming that it is an integral part of the unique identity of both peoples.

Another unique intangible cultural heritage common to the Kazakh and Kyrgyz peoples is the art of aytys (improvisational poetry contest). The roots of Kazakh-Kyrgyz aytys art go deep. Looking at its history, famous akyns of the Zhetysu region such as Suyinbay, Sarybas, Maikot, Bakytbay, Kulmambet, Maylykozha, Zhambyl, Kenen, and others were honored guests at feasts and gatherings in Kyrgyz land and participated in aytys. This is evidenced by the aytys of improvisational poets whose names are written in golden letters in the history of oral literature of both countries: Suyinbay and Katagan, Kantarbay and Arystanbek, Zhambyl and Balyk, Zhambyl and Molda Bagysh, etc. Today, the aytys between Suyinbay and Katagan, performed by the Honored Worker of Kazakhstan, zhyrau Akan Abdualiev, is widely spread among the people.

The Nauryz holiday, which is common to the peoples of Central Asia, including the Kyrgyz and Kazakhs, is celebrated with special respect in both countries.

The national dish «zhuka nan» (thin bread) and the intellectual game togyzqumalaq (in Kyrgyz – togyzkorgool) are also common assets of both nations.

From September 8 to 13, 2024, the World Nomadic Games were held in our capital, Astana, aimed at developing the ethnosport and ethnocultural movement as part of the heritage of human civilization.

The international event on ethnic sports, first conceived and implemented in the Kyrgyz Republic, was hosted by Kyrgyzstan three times in a row and elevated to the world level. Turkey then continued it, and after 10 years, the right to host the Nomadic Games was transferred to Kazakhstan.

In 2014, 583 athletes from 19 countries participated in 10 sports at the competition held in Cholpon-Ata. In Astana, under the slogan «The Great Steppe's Thunder», 2,430 athletes from 89 countries competed in 21 sports for a total of 97 medal sets (581 medals). In the «Nomads' Village» ethno-village spread over 10 hectares near the capital, the native culture and traditions of the Kazakh people and other participating countries were presented to the general public.

The spiritual heritage common to the two countries mentioned above demonstrates our closeness and is included in UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. Currently, there are 14 heritage items from Kazakhstan and 6 from Kyrgyzstan in UNESCO's Representative List.

In the territories of both states, measures to preserve the intangible cultural heritage elements belonging to each are regulated by relevant normative legal acts.

Ethnocultural relations between the Kazakh and Kyrgyz peoples have risen to a new level, further bringing the two countries closer together.

Friendly and partnership relations have been established between the Assemblies of the two states, and constant support is provided to the Kazakh and Kyrgyz ethnic groups living in the territories of the countries. Within the framework of the Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan, the «Association of Kyrgyz People of Kazakhstan» (chairman — Sh. Ismailov), which has republican status, and its regional branches in 11 regions of the country (Astana, Almaty, Shymkent, Zhambyl, Akmola, Kostanay, Mangystau, Kyzylorda, North Kazakhstan, Pavlodar, Karagandy) are operating successfully. In addition, two Sunday schools are operating, and the necessary educational materials for them are provided from the state budget.

According to official data from the demographic statistics published on April 22, 2024, by the Bureau of National Statistics of the Agency for Strategic Planning and Reforms of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 38,596 people of Kyrgyz ethnicity live in our country.

Also, according to the results of the national census conducted in 2022 by the National Statistics Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic, 36,854 representatives of the Kazakh ethnic group live in the country.

In the course of preparing this research article, we met with Maral Kazhykenkyzy Zhakypova, a representative of the Kyrgyz ethnic group living in our country, a language advocate, and a cultural figure. She previously served as director of the Akmola Regional Kazakh Music Drama Theater named after Shakhmet Khusainov, head of the Akmola Region Language Development Department, and head of the Secretariat of the Akmola Regional Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan. We conducted an interview with her about the ethnocultural characteristics of the Kyrgyz in Kazakhstan.

In general, there are many similarities between the Kazakh and Kyrgyz peoples; the appearance and facial features of the two nations are also very similar. The striking similarities in the everyday life of the two peoples are a separate topic. According to Maral Kazhykenkyzy, in the territory of Kazakhstan there live Old Kyrgyz, New Kyrgyz, Rich Kyrgyz, Saru Kyrgyz, and Kuschi Kyrgyz.

Maral Kazhykenkyzy said that she is a descendant of the Saru Kyrgyz. Her ancestors, who were the first to migrate to Kazakh land, were tall, fair-skinned with blue eyes, and had a sharp tongue like a needle. Later, due to mixing with the local population and language, they began to be called Saru Kyrgyz (Fig.1).

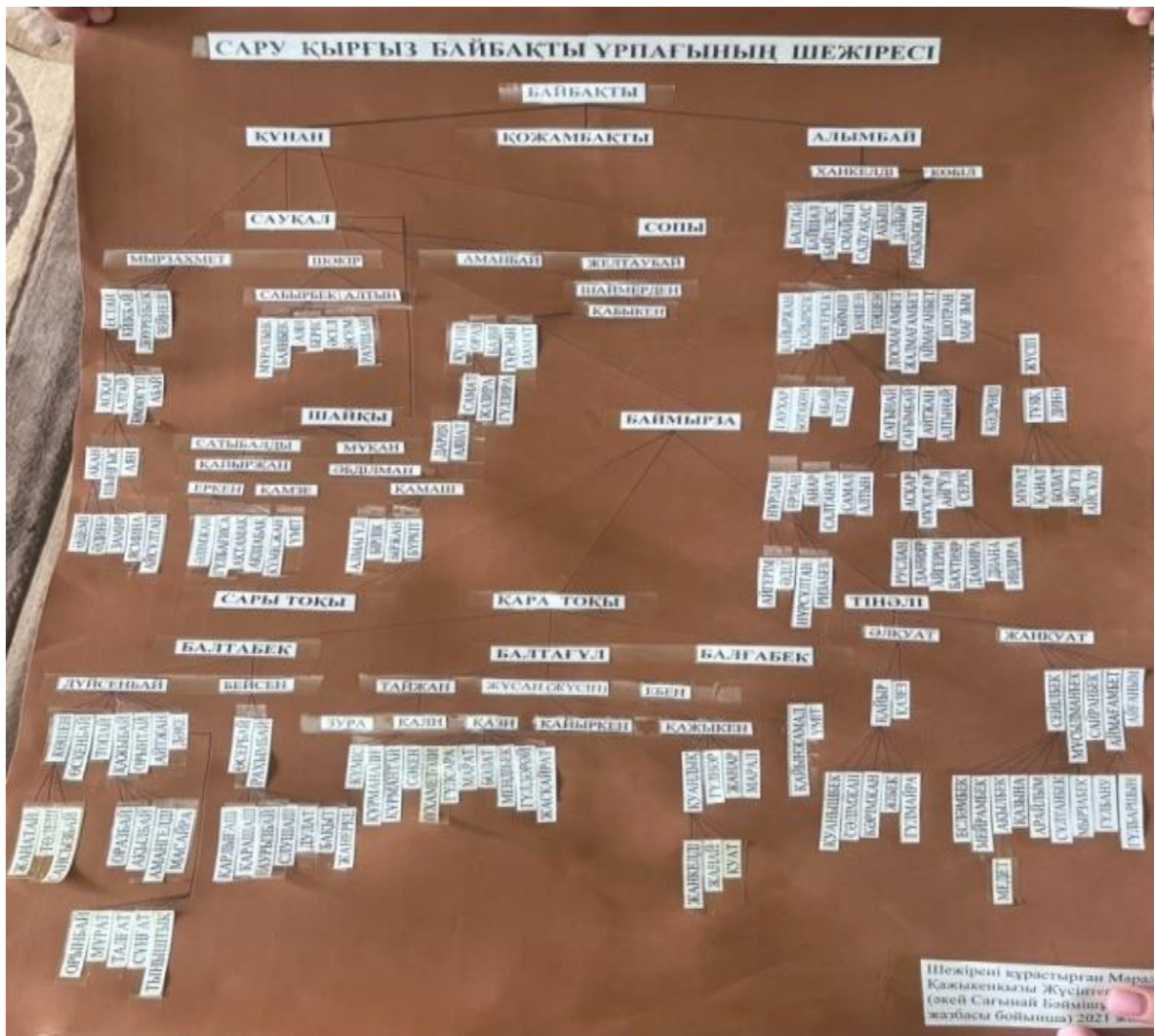


Fig 1. The genealogy of Saru Kyrgyz Baybakhty (compiled by Zhakypova M.K. according to the notes of the ancestor Sagyndai Boymyshuly)

As part of a peace agreement, a Kyrgyz manap transferred a Kyrgyz village to Abylai Khan. On his return journey from Alatau to Arka, Abylai Khan left three to four Kyrgyz families in Kazakh villages along the way as ‘amanats’ ((hostages)). Later, these Kyrgyz came to be known as ‘tolenghits’ and also faithfully served the cause of unifying the three Kazakh juzes (hordes).

Old Kyrgyz are the Kyrgyz who have lived in this land since the time of their ancestors.

The term «Bai Kyrgyz» refers to the young men of one Kyrgyz lineage who, after clashing and arguing with their relatives over land, had to migrate to Kazakh territory. They came from the Alatau region with all their wealth and livestock, and were therefore called «Bai Kyrgyz».

Thus, if you look around today, you will meet descendants of the Kyrgyz ethnic group in every region of our country. They all speak fluent Kazakh, are registered as Kazakhs in their identity documents, but in their deep origin they do not belong to the Kazakh lineage and do not know their roots.

We also recorded from the words of Maral Kazhykenkyzy, who carries the spiritual heritage that has passed from generation to generation without losing the peculiarities of the culture and spirituality of the two nations, various information about «karym kaktay» and «karynga sary may salyp» (putting yellow butter on the stomach), boiling «ezhigey kurt», making «kospa» from red irimshik (cottage cheese), the national headdress of Kyrgyz men «aibyr kalpak» and women’s clothing, as well as the «attergeu» tradition and «bata beru» (giving blessings).

Features of the Kazakh-Kyrgyz Spiritual Cultural Heritage

Scientific literature contains many sources covering various aspects of the history, life, economy, and culture of the Kyrgyz people, as well as their relationship with the Kazakh people. Among them: «The ethnic history of the Kyrgyz in Central Asia, South Siberia, and Central Asia, in the steppe space of present-day Kazakhstan, was formed in various connections with the ethnic processes taking place there, and it cannot be considered without these relations» [Abramzon, 1990].

There are many similarities in the history of the two peoples, since they «belong to the same ethnogenetic and ethnolinguistic family, to the same Islamic confessional community, and share common spiritual values. For many centuries they lived in direct contact with each other» (Community of Cultural Values of Turkic Peoples).

Indeed, as mentioned above, the manifestations of the linguistic tradition and folklore life of the Kyrgyz serve as the basis for bringing the poetic creativity of the two peoples closer together. In turn, as representatives of related Turkic peoples, although the folklore traditions of Kazakhs and Kyrgyz are closely connected, each country also has its own unique features. Despite going through various historical periods, both peoples have preserved their oral folk art, which includes fairy tales, songs, legends, and rich traditions passed down from generation to generation.

Today, the oral literature (epics, aytys), folklore, and traditions formed in the conditions of nomadic life of the two Turkic-speaking peoples demonstrate their historical and cultural closeness.

In addition, the hospitality culture of the two peoples, which also includes a number of customs – generosity, respect, and goodwill towards guests – is an important historical heritage that has survived to this day. Traditional national games such as baiga (horse racing), wrestling, kokpar, and others also have common origins.

Kazakhs and Kyrgyz have not lost their cultural values and uniqueness; they have managed to preserve and maintain the continuity between the past and the present. Therefore, today the traditions and culture of the two nations “form the framework of national cultural values manifested in values» [Ozen, 2013: 1-14].

In the traditional economy, lifestyle, daily life, culture, and art of the Kyrgyz, there are similarities with the folk life of the Kazakhs in certain areas. A number of our customs, in particular those related to the tradition of «placing the baby in the cradle» (in Kyrgyz «beshik»), have common origins (Fig. 2, 3). The «cradle» («beshik») played a major role in the traditions of nomads related to the human life cycle. The «beshik» was not only a dwelling for a newborn («social and cultural space»), but also served as a talisman of the Turkic peoples’ female deity Umay Ana (in Kyrgyz «ene»).

The commonality of the traditions of the two peoples regarding a newborn can be seen in the rituals and customs that are still in use today. «Placing the baby in the cradle» includes a number of joyful rituals dedicated to the child’s birth. The baby’s first food was baked «yellow butter», and the first clothing was a specially sewn «it koynok» (in Kazakh «it koylek» – dog shirt). In this way, the dog’s endurance and vitality were symbolically given to the child, and rituals were performed for the baby to have a happy, long, and healthy life.

«The announcement of the birth of a child is called «süyünchü» (in Kazakh – «süyinshi»), its direct meaning is joy, and the subsequent tradition of giving a gift to the person who brings the news is called «balany körü aqysy» in the form of «körümdük» (in Kazakh – «körimdik») [Alimkulova, 2024].



Fig. 2. «Laying the infant in the cradle – Besikke boleu» (Kyrgyzstan).

Photo by T. Choroeva



Fig. 3. «Laying the infant in the cradle – Besikke boleu» (Kazakhstan).

Photo by G. Temirton

In addition, many other ethnographic objects in museum collections clearly demonstrate the cultural ties between the two peoples. The value of historical artifacts that reflect the worldview, aesthetic, and spiritual principles of the people is especially great. It is historically known that Kazakhs and Kyrgyz, as well as other Turkic peoples, had a wide variety of types and forms of jewelry.

A comparative and analytical description of Kazakh and Kyrgyz jewelry makes it possible to identify common features in the types of jewelry items that prove the kindred roots of the two peoples. For example, examining the common characteristic features of women's jewelry reveals similarities in their aesthetic and design features. While traditional necklaces, bracelets, and earrings are distinguished by a uniform design, one of the unique jewelry items worn by girls on the forehead is the «shekelik» forehead ornament (Fig. 4, 5). The making of «shekelik» jewelry has common technical and uniquely aesthetic examples and methods rooted in the traditions of Turkic peoples.

Kazakh and Kyrgyz women's use of various types of jewelry shows many similarities in traditional aesthetic and technical (structure, composition, ornamentation) manufacturing methods. In this regard, it is written that «Unlike the jewelry of Kyrgyz masters, which differs from Turkmen and Uzbek masters, there are similarities in the modern jewelry of Kazakh and Kyrgyz masters» (Jewelry of Central Asia, <https://voicesoncentralasia.org/jewelry-of-central-asia-past-and-present-of-the-art-tradition/>).

In general, it is no secret that Kazakh and Kyrgyz jewelry items, characterized by «graceful lines and rich geometry, delicate openwork», are also well known outside our country [Diba, 2011; Schletzer & Schletzer, 1983].



Fig. 4. KP 26911/4 «Shekelik» – a forehead ornament with three hanging pendants, has blue stones, three pendants with bells, the lower part is decorated with three red stones, geometric ornament. Jewelry made using forging, chasing, and filigree techniques. Kyrgyzstan. White metal, red stones. Length – 35 cm, pendant plates – 6.7×4 cm (National Central Museum of Kazakhstan exhibition, «Kyrgyz»). Photo by G. Temirton.



Fig. 5. KP 26735/12. Shekelik jewelry. Two large red stones on the upper part, decorated with filigree, the lower part — red stones with a rosette and three hanging pendants with bells inside a flower. Forging, filigree, granulation, enamel techniques. White metal, red stones, filigree, granulation, enamel (National Central Museum of Kazakhstan collection). Photo by G. Temirton.

Today, there are several Kyrgyz jewelry items donated by residents of Kazakhstan in the collections of museums in our country. Among them, the «Shekelik» jewelry item (KP 26911/4) donated by B.S. Naizabekov and Bibigul Naizabekova, residents of the village of Derzhavinsk, Zharkain district, Akmola region, once made a great contribution to revealing the cultural ties between the two peoples. Such jewelry made of silver at that time was an important and significant part of national culture and was closely connected with traditional culture. The technical characteristics and decoration of these jewelry items can be said to have not only aesthetic value, but also magical-protective and amuletic-functional properties. For example, in accordance with the ancient beliefs of Kazakhs and Kyrgyz, jewelry such as «shashbau», «sholpy», and «shekeli» protected girls from the evil eye of evil spirits and protected them from their harmful effects [Abramzon, 1978].

Kazakh and Kyrgyz peoples' traditional lifestyle system considers «the settlement system, residential buildings, housing equipment, samples of national clothing corresponding to folk knowledge» as unique attributes and important features of the culture of nomadic peoples [Kazakh traditional clothing, 2009: 7-9]. Kazakh and Kyrgyz clothing was mostly made from cotton, wool, felt, as well as leather, suede, and sheepskin materials, as they were very convenient for the harsh conditions of steppe and mountainous areas. Of course, the clothing of the two peoples also has its own national characteristics along with many common features.

For example, men's headdresses – the shape, style, and sewing of the «kalpak» – are similar (Fig. 6, 7, 8). Most often, the top of the «kalpak» has a shape similar to a semi-sphere with a high conical top. Such a headdress is usually sewn in the form of a four-wedge circle. The «kalpak» is decorated with black velvet on the seams and black braided cord on the outside.

In Kazakh tradition, the «murak» – one of the components of the clothing of khans, sultans, and noble men symbolizing their power and authority – occupies a special place. The structure of the «murak» is similar to the kalpak, but differs in that its top is wider and does not taper upwards.

The «murak» is distinguished by being sewn with golden-silver threads and is used among the people along with names such as «aibr kalpak» and «seukele kalpak» [Kazakh traditional clothing, 2009: 18].



Fig. 6. Photo KP 28224/4 Kalpak. Early 20th century. A man's headdress made of white felt. The crown is composed of four panels. Black velvet is sewn onto the seams of the panels, and a geometric ornament is embroidered with black cord in the middle of the seams. The inner side of the kalpak is trimmed with black velvet, and the lining is made of cotton fabric. (National Central Museum of Kazakhstan collection). Photo by G. Temirton.



Fig. 7. KP 502. Aibr kalpak. 19th century. Made of white felt, velvet, and cotton fabric. A man's headdress. The crown, similar to the four-panel kalpak, is rounded. The outer seams of the kalpak are decorated with black velvet, and the lining is made of cotton fabric. (National Central Museum of Kazakhstan collection). Photo by G. Temirton.



Fig. 8. KP 16042. Taldyrma. Felt, velvet, thread. Almaty region, 20th century. Master: H. Kuykasov (alban). A man's headdress made of white felt. The crown is composed of four panels. Acquired in 1979 during the expedition of the Central State Museum of Kazakhstan in the Almaty region, Narynkol district, from the resident of the village of Voroshilov (now Shaganbaevo), Shaganbaev. (National Central Museum of Kazakhstan collection). Photo by G. Temirton.

One of the most common long-necked stringed musical instruments among Kazakhs and Kyrgyz is the «dombra» and «komuz» (Fig. 9, 10). It should be noted that these instruments are similar in typology to the musical instruments of Turkic peoples, including the Azerbaijani «gopuz», Bashkir «dombra», Turkish «kopuz», Kumyk «agach-kumuz», Khakas «khomys», Yakut «tang syr», etc.

In addition, the singers and musicians of the two peoples have preserved from ancient times the improvisational and especially distinctive folk poetic art of the akyns – «aitys» (in Kyrgyz – «aytysh»). This art continues to be widely used at festivals, concerts, and, of course, in the performances of akyns.



Fig. 9. KP 28224/7. Komuz.

A three-stringed musical instrument of the Kyrgyz people. It is made in the shape of a spoon from a single piece of wood. It has three strings, a bridge, and three tuning pegs. The strings are made of silk thread coated with yellow resin. The head is reinforced with a metal plate and three pegs. 21st century. (National Central Museum of Kazakhstan collection). Photo by G. Temirton.



Fig. 10. KP 15294. Dombira.

A dombira used by the Kazakhs. It was made by an unknown master. This dombira belonged to the wife of Abai Kunanbayev's grandson, the founder of Kazakh written literature — Dildaniki. Donated to the museum in 1978. (National Central Museum of Kazakhstan collection). Photo by G. Temirton.

The nomadic way of life of the two countries left many common features in their culture. Felt products served as an important object of material culture in the life of nomadic peoples. These include carpets (rugs, bedding), yurt coverings, «shashbau», «baskur», yurt wall and dome coverings, horse equipment, and others. Felt products performed not only a utilitarian function in the daily life of nomads, but also an aesthetic one [Thompson & Thomas, 2008].

Along with this, topics such as the peculiarities of the daily material culture of the peoples of Central Asia (particularly Kazakhs and Kyrgyz), especially the steppe pastoral economy, beliefs, types of art and lifestyle, as well as social and ethnic composition, and historical-cultural experience, have been studied not only in the works of domestic researchers but also in the works of many foreign scholars [Chang, 2018; Chang, et al. 2023, Frachetti, 2012; Akiner, 1995, Schletzer, 1984].

Conclusion. The Kazakh and Kyrgyz peoples are fraternal nations whose history of friendship and cultural cooperation spans many centuries. They have close ties through common linguistic roots belonging to the Kipchak group of Turkic languages, as well as «interstate proximity and many centuries of shared history» [Temirgaliyev; Urmanbetova, 2021].

The economic activities and living conditions of the Kazakh or Kyrgyz ethnic groups share similar principles (nomadic dwelling – yurt, nomadic lifestyle, etc.). However, they differ in that the Kazakh ethnic group was mostly formed in the steppe plains of Central Asia, while the Kyrgyz people formed in mountainous areas.

In general, the customs, traditions, and rituals of the Kazakh and Kyrgyz peoples, formed over thousands of years, are being adapted and revived in new conditions, and ethnocultural ties are strengthening year by year. Over the more than 30 years of interstate relations between the two countries, cooperation in the field of culture has established itself as one of the important areas for further development.

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