

## Summary

The collection of materials and articles (ed. Dmitriy Funk) brought forward provides an insight into the history and culture of the Chelkans. This is the third book in the ethnologic series – it follows the 1994 and 1996 collections which were titled “Problems of Ethnic History and Culture of the Turkic-Mongol Peoples of South Siberia and Adjacent Territories”. Starting with this book the whole series gets a shorter title “Altaistic Researches”.

The Chelkans (native name – *Shalgan*) are a very small Turkic ethnic community, who were labeled ‘an ethnographic group of Northern Altaians’ (in line with the Tubalar and Kumandins) by our science during Soviet period. At present they reside in Turochakskiy aimak in Altai Republic (settlements Turochak, Suronash, Kurmach-Baigol, Chuyka, Biyka, Mayskiy, Talon etc.). Many Chelkans live in the town of Tashtagol and Kyzyl-Shorskiy sel'soviet (village council), in Gornaya Shoriya (Tashtagol region, south of Kemerovo district). The Chelkans residing in Altai are listed as “Altai”, while Chelkans in Gornaya Shoriya – as “Shors”. As of now the total Chelkan population is estimated at 700-800 persons.

Depressing is the lack of information on the Chelkans in research papers. Almost none of the Chelkan traditional ethnographic issues has been tackled. You can count on your fingers the research papers in Chelkan ethnology. The first article in the collection – a review by A. Karpukhin – vividly depicts major achievements and vast lacunas in the history of ethnological research of the Chelkans.

Besides historiographic, the book includes three other distinct chapters.

The chapter on “Ethnic history and ethnic demography” is made of three articles. The first is a masterpiece of Russian ethnography – “Notes on the origin of the Chelkan-Lebedins” by L.P. Potapov (a world-renowned scholar of Altai) published in Novosibirsk in 1974. It is followed by two editorials which aim to analyze fresh, newly-retrieved data on the Chelkan population, settlement and a number of ethnodemographic aspects. One focuses on the population statistics for the Kondomo-Shelkalsk' volost' (region) in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the other – on current data for a Chelkan settlement of Suronash as of 1990.

Another chapter is devoted to the Chelkan spiritual culture. First Russian translation of an article by K. Hilden dating back to 1916 (published in Helsinki in Swedish) is included. It provides unique data on shamanism collected by Hilden through interviews with Chelkan shamans in person. A truly informative and interesting article by G. Sychenko, based on interviews with one of the last Chelkan (the author tends to call them “Chalkan”) she-shamans taken in 1985 and 1992 also tackles the shaman question. “The Chelkan art of sculpture” by S.V. Ivanov is an excerpt from his monograph on Altai, Siberian Tartar and Khakass sculpture published in Leningrad in 1979. An editorial on Chelkan traditional anthroponimical model comes last in the chapter.

The volume is the first in the series to feature a section “Readers’ Letters”. A Teleut lady L. Ryumina writes of her working experience in the Chelkan settlement of Kurmach-Baigol in 1948-1949.

Unfortunately, some of the researchers contacted by the editor (particularly those from St. Petersburg, Omsk, Kemerovo, Novokuznetsk, Gorno-Altaysk) didn’t get a chance of taking part in the creation of the book. Still, though the book hasn’t turned out the way we anticipated it to, we hope it will foster further Altaistic research.

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