

## TRADITIONAL MEDICINE AND ETHICAL HERITAGE OF THE KYRGYZ PEOPLE: TRADITIONS, EXPERIENCE AND MODERNITY

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The article is devoted to Kyrgyz folk medicine and its ethical heritage while revealing traditions and methods used in treatment since ancient times. Traditional Kyrgyz medicine has been closely connected with nature and cultural characteristics of the people when herbs, rituals, physical practices and manual therapy were widely used. Healers passed down their knowledge through the generations, including diagnosis of diseases, use of natural resources and spiritual practices. The influence of modern medicine on natural methods of treatment and related ethical issues have also been reviewed in the article. Examples of traditional methods and their transformation in the context of modern medical practices have been provided. The main attention is paid to synthesis of scientific and folk methods of treatment, opening up new prospects for preservation and development of cultural traditions.

**Keywords:** traditional medicine, Kyrgyz people, ethical heritage, traditions, healers, herbal medicine, manual therapy, diagnosis of diseases, rituals, ethics in medicine, folk practices, modernity, integration with science

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## НАРОДНАЯ МЕДИЦИНА И ЭТИЧЕСКОЕ НАСЛЕДИЕ КЫРГЫЗОВ: ТРАДИЦИИ, ОПЫТ И СОВРЕМЕННОСТЬ

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Статья посвящена народной медицине кыргызов и ее этическому наследию, раскрывая традиции и методы, используемые в лечении с древних времен. Народная медицина кыргызов развивалась в тесном контакте с природой и культурными традициями народа, что определило использование трав, ритуалов, физических практик и мануальной терапии. Знания целителей передавались из поколения в поколение, охватывая диагностику заболеваний, использование природных ресурсов и духовные практики. В статье также рассматривается влияние современной медицины на народные методы лечения и вопросы этики, связанные с их применением. Приведены примеры традиционных методов и их трансформация в контексте современных медицинских практик. Основное внимание уделено синтезу научных и народных методов лечения, что открывает новые перспективы для сохранения и развития культурных традиций.

**Ключевые слова:** народная медицина, кыргызский народ, этическое наследие, традиции, целители, траволечение, мануальная терапия, диагностика заболеваний, ритуалы, этика в медицине, народные практики, современность, интеграция с наукой

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Since ancient times, humans have strived for uncovering the secrets of life and health. They compiled various theories and practices aimed at maintaining and strengthening health. Traditional medicine which develops in close cooperation with nature and cultural characteristics of a particular ethnic group is one of the practices. Traditional medicine of the Kyrgyz people is an important part of the cultural and ethical heritage that has been passed down through the generations.

Just like many other nomadic people, the Kyrgyz people invented treatment methods in close contact with nature. This is how a wide range of treatment methods appeared, including the use of herbs, animals, rituals, and physical practices. Traditional medicine of the Kyrgyz included folk medicine, herbal treatment, massages, manual techniques, as well as rituals related to spiritual and religious practices [1].

Representatives of traditional medicine are classified into several groups:

1. A healer is a specialist who treats with herbs and natural remedies.
2. A mullah, a priest, and a father are religious figures who practice healing through prayers and rituals.

3. A chiropractor is a doctor specializing in manual therapy and treatment of bone diseases.
4. A physician is a general practitioner who uses various treatment methods, including diet and medications.
5. A herb doctor is a specialist who uses herbal decoctions and infusions for medicinal purposes [2].
6. A tabyp (from Arabic, tabib — doctor, healer) is a traditional healer who treats patients with empirical methods and medicinal herbs. Aidaraliev A says that, unlike bakshy, who treated people by reading oak trees (spells) and by expelling evil spirits (jinns, shaitans) from the patient's body, the means and methods of tabyp treatment were very close to the centuries-old ones of the Kyrgyz people and their folk medicine in the proper sense of the word [3].

In traditional folk treatment of the Kyrgyz people, phytotherapeutic agents were mainly used for drinking or ingestion, and tabyps (healers) skillfully and widely used inhalation, powders, compresses, water, steam baths, and lotions [4].

Knowledge of traditional healers has been passed down through the generations, and this practice has persisted for

**Table.** Traditions, experience and modernity of traditional medicine and ethical heritage of the Kyrgyz people

Aspect	Traditions and experience	Modernity	Example
Knowledge about treatment of plants	Traditional Kyrgyz medicine uses a variety of medicinal plants	Modern medicine uses knowledge about herbs and plants as part of phytotherapy and pharmacy	For example, marigold ( <i>Calendula officinalis</i> ) is used to treat skin diseases.
Diagnostic methods	Diagnostic methods examining pulse, tongue, and external signs were popular in traditional Kyrgyz medicine.	Currently, modern diagnostic methods are used, such as blood tests, ultrasound, etc.	In some clinics, pulse-based diagnostics is combined with modern diagnostic methods.
Rituals and rites	Treatment was often accompanied with rituals and rites performed by shamans and healers	In the modern society, treatment is more science-oriented. However, cultural practices are still important	Herbal rituals are still part of folk customs and festivals
Ethics of handling with patients	In Kyrgyz folk medicine, there is a tradition to respect the sick and provide assistance without financial gain.	Modern ethics in medicine is based on the principles of respect for the patient and maintaining medical confidentiality.	In the Kyrgyz tradition, treating physicians and healers could be given not money but products and services as expression of gratitude.
The role of a family and community	Treatment was often of a collective nature, and the entire community participated in the process.	Today, treatment is mostly individualized, but some villages still have elements of collective care.	In some remote areas of Kyrgyzstan, the family and community continue to participate in treatment
Prevention of diseases	Traditional medicine attaches much value to prevention of diseases through proper nutrition, customs and lifestyle	In modern medicine, disease prevention is also an important aspect of health, but emphasis is made on vaccination and regular checkups.	The Kyrgyz people are taught basic hygiene practices and proper nutrition since childhood
Using health practices	Folk health practices include massages, visiting a steam bath and a sauna, and regular physical activity.	Modern fitness technologies and mass therapy also use similar practices but with new methods and devices.	For example, using hot stones in a folk bath is still an element of physical and spiritual purification.
Transformation in modernity	Traditional methods are constantly adapted to modern reality where traditional remedies are used along with medicinal agents	There is a growing interest in alternative treatment methods, for example, integrative medicine, a combination of folk and traditional methods.	In some clinics of Kyrgyzstan, specialists offer a combination of traditional treatment methods with modern approaches.

many centuries. Practices such as pulse diagnosis, treatment with blood, steam, and splashing on red-hot iron were important methods of traditional medicine. At the same time, this knowledge was closely intertwined with religious and mystical beliefs, which sometimes differed from official medical teachings.

Tabyps usually treated infectious diseases such as anthrax, smallpox, etc., with a variety of methods, including cautery with hot iron or freshly killed animal skin wraps. They also used hot springs of Issyk-Ata and Jeti-Oguz to treat diseases.

Tabyps classified diseases into two groups:

- hot diseases if the pulse is tense;
- cold diseases if the pulse is weak.

Treatment included a diet, increased fluid intake, and other therapeutic measures [5].

Traditional Kyrgyz medicine is not only about treatment but also about ethical standards and traditions. For example, choosing a partner for marriage was highly important as it could affect health of the offspring. Purity of descent had to be followed not to give birth to unhealthy children. For this purpose, they used family record books (sanjira), which helped to identify family ties and avoid marriages between close relatives.

In addition, special attention was given to raising healthy children. The Kyrgyz people had a system of customs and rituals that improved health of children, such as “kireneloo” (removing the evil eye), “apaptoo” (treatment for fright), as well as special wishes for health and longevity, which were expressed through blessings and rituals [6].

As scientific medicine develops, traditional medicine is facing problems related to its integration into modern medical practice. It is important to note that although many traditional methods have a scientific explanation, they often contradict

religious norms. It makes their application controversial in the context of modern ethical and legal standards.

Today, traditional medicine and ethical heritage of the Kyrgyz people have the following traditions, experience and modernity (see table [6]).

The Kyrgyz, who are one of the ancient peoples in the world, have empirically and for centuries developed highly effective medicines that can cure various diseases, and were able to use these medicines and medicines correctly. Medical knowledge was spread among the peoples of Central Asia thanks to the wandering dervishes, who were fond of healing and teaching children. The famous Abu Ali Ibn Sina (Avicenna) received knowledge from wise dervishes as well [7].

Traditional Kyrgyz medicine is an integral part of their culture and ethics. It has come a long way, adapted to modern conditions, but preserved its soul and connection with traditions. It is important that traditional methods of treatment based on the experience of our ancestors are still used and continue to develop. They are also integrated with achievements of modern medicine to create a balanced approach to health. Nevertheless, traditional medicine with centuries of experience still occupies a significant place in the lives of many peoples, including the Kyrgyz. Combination of scientific knowledge with traditional medicine opens up new perspectives for maintaining health and improving the quality of life, as well as for continuing and updating traditions.

One of the main problems of traditional medicine in modern society is its interaction with official medicine and ethical standards. Despite the vast experience, it often faces questions related to safety and effectiveness of the methods used. Modern medical research and new technologies help to integrate ancient knowledge into modern treatment methods contributing to a better understanding and application of folk practices in the modern world.

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