

# MAKAR KONSTANTINOVICH DOBROV (1903-1969)

CHISTOBAEVA N.S.

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**Annotation:** The oral poetry of the Khakass people survived thanks to the masters and keepers of verbal creative work, who carefully kept the works in the memory and skillfully passed them on from generation to generation. In the public environment, the masters of epic were always surrounded by honor and respect. One of the greatest masters of storytelling improvisation is the outstanding khaidzhi-nymakhchi, Makar Konstantinovich Dobrov (1903-1969). The author focuses on the in-depth study of the storyteller's creative work, features of storytelling mastery.

**Keywords:** storyteller, heroic epic, epic tradition, storytelling mastery, repertoire, manuscripts.

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In the rich and diverse oral poetry of the Khakass people, an important place belongs to the heroic tales – “alyptykh nymakh” (алыптых ныммах), in which the history and life, worldview, spiritual wealth and poetic talent of the people are reflected artistically. It represents a precious heritage of the people's traditional culture. Therefore, it is no coincidence that among bearers of the oldest cultural traditions are, first of all, performers of oral folk art – storytellers – khaidzhi-nymakhchi. Khaidzhi-nymakhchi is an improvisational singer who is gifted with a kind of khai “throat singing” and accompanies himself with a folk musical instrument chatkhan or khomys. “A storyteller is the tradition in itself and, at the same time, individuality”

[1, 1994, p. 15]. Storytellers as people with an “extraordinary talent” (B. N. Putilov) were always surrounded by honor and respect. Khaidzhi-nymakhchi must fully master the artistic system of the epic to endow the reproduction of a tale with an integral, complete character. Storytellers have several ways of performing the Khakass' heroic epic. The traditional form of performing the epic is khai “throat singing”, accompanied by a six-or seven-stringed plucked musical instrument – chatkhan. For each storyteller, the manner and style of performing folklore works are individual and determined by both local traditions and a performer's talent, but everyone relies upon the existing folk poetic tradition and thereby develops it.



Famous Khakass storyteller Dobrov M.K. (1903 – 1969). Photo from the Khakass Research Institute of Language, Literature and History manuscript fund

M. K. Dobrov, M. E. Balakhchin, P. V. Kurbizhekov, S. P. Kadyshchev, A. S. Burnakov, K. A. Bastaev, S. I. Shulbaev, V. S. Tyumerekov, N. A. Abdin, T. E. Kudushteev, Tarkop Troyakov, E. N. Kulagasheva, S. I. Sozyev, N. A. Popiyakov, A. I. Yangulov, I. S. Abzhilaev, and many others were notable for their extraordinary talent of performance and breadth of repertoire.

A number of articles, including the author's article, [2; 3] have been written about the storytellers-anniversaries, V. E. Mainogasheva's collection of essays "Khakass storytellers and singers" [4] was published. All this, undoubtedly, played a certain role in popularizing creative work of the Khakass storytellers. However, a more in-depth study of creative work of the Khakass storytellers, features of their storytelling skills, and repertoire requires a special study. This article raises only a few of these questions.

One of the great masters of storytelling improvisations is the famous Khakass storyteller, Makar Konstantinovich Dobrov. He was born in 1903 in the village of Ook Akhsy (Ust-Kamyshta), the Minusinsk County of the Yenisei Governorate. He descended from the kin of Akh Khaskha (Khaas). He had an extensive repertoire, performed works of various genres: heroic epics, fairy tales, historical fables, legends, folk songs, songs-competitions. He knew a large number of proverbs, sayings, and riddles. He was also a good expert on the ancient customs and rituals of the Khakass people. His repertoire includes more than 30 heroic tales, of which the most popular among the people heroic tales were published in the local press "Tuben chonnyn pazy Tulgu-Khyzyl Alyp khystanar" (1951), "Altyn Chus" (1958), "Khan pozyrakh atyg Khan Mirgen" (1969), "Iki akh oi khu-

lun" (1969), etc. A lot of fairy tales, myths, legends, fables, recorded from Makar Konstantinovich, were published in the 50th-60th of the 20th century in collections of Khakass folk fairy tales (1946, 1951, 1955, 1956, 1958, 1960). Variants of some legends, fables, and fairy tales, performed by Makar Konstantinovich, are available in N. F. Katanov's records and published in "Samples of Turkic tribes' folk literature" ("Scotter's chick" p. 270, № 165; "Sixty tall tales" p. 379, № 372; "Adychakh and Kechokh" p. 208, № 385; "Curious wife" p. 454, № 447; "Bai and a snake" p. 512, № 579; "Mother-in-law and daughter-in-law" p. 303 № 271 [5, 1907]. Unfortunately, many epic works from Makar Konstantinovich's repertoire remained unrecorded. Since childhood, Makar Konstantinovich was surrounded by folk music and folk poetry, which affected creative work of the future famous khaidzhi-nymakhchi. The transmission of performing art from seniors to juniors was one of the most common forms of preserving, continuing, and developing folk art. The well-known Yakut folklorist, V. V. Illarionov notes that "it is in the family environment where, from childhood, a future storyteller perceives all the nuances of storytelling, first of all learning the content of olonkho, using epic formulas in everyday colloquial speech, trying to convey his thoughts in the poetic language of olonkho" [6, 1982, p. 23-24]. As for Makar Konstantinovich's storytelling mastery, he started performing folk works from childhood, having learnt them from his mother Sortykh, who knew these works in a great variety, but heroic tales were mostly adopted by the future storyteller from his father and fellow villagers, and began to compete only from the age of 16. In the questionnaire of the storyteller, according to

the master himself, it is written that "as a child, he loved to listen to the performance of various storytellers, taletellers and then retold what he had heard to his age mates. It was enough to retell a story a couple of times, and the text was completely remembered" [7, 1969, p. 6]. Makar Konstantinovich had many excellent teachers, outstanding storytellers of that time, including Tochak Sofyanov, Otyi Raikov, Khyrchyn Karachakov and many others. In 1915 in village Ust-Uibat, when he was 12 years old, he first heard tale "Akh Khulunnan Khulun" from the 70-year-old storyteller, Otyi Raikov, whose repertoire included many tales. Later, in 1936, he heard the same heroic tale from Otyi Raikov's son. In the manuscript of 1957, it is indicated that at the time of recording there were no longer those who knew and performed this heroic tale. In the questionnaire of the storyteller there is a record that since 1921, he was a chairman of the Village Council, but after working for four years, due to smallpox in childhood, he became blind. But despite this, he always remained an active, energetic, and positive person. He took an active part in the work of the Association of the Blind and in 1933 was elected chairman of the Regional Council of the Blind, and in this position he worked for ten years.

As a storyteller, Makar Konstantinovich Dobrov was respected and very popular among the people. Makar Konstantinovich Dobrov was a master of epic, had an outstanding storytelling skill, his tales are distinguished by expressiveness, a colorful artistic language, individual style. Being unusually gifted poetically, he performed heroic tales to the accompaniment of khomys. Unfortunately, in his mature years, his khai disappeared, and he performed "alyptykh nymakh" (АЛЫПТЫҢ НЫМАХ), as a

recitative. Many works of oral folk art, recorded from Makar Konstantinovich Dobrov, are stored in the funds of Khakass Research Institute of Language, Literature and History, including twelve unpublished heroic tales. The records were made at the time of the active existence of heroic epic. The content of tales, transmitted by collectors in a very detailed retelling, preserves the integrity of a plot and harmony of a composition, as well as the traditional epic formulas and figures of speech.

The name of Makar Konstantinovich Dobrov is known not only in his homeland, but also abroad. Thus, in 1932 Makar Konstantinovich took part in the 5th All-Union Congress of Writers, besides, he actively participated in various cultural events in Krasnoyarsk, Novosibirsk, Tomsk, Irkutsk, and in the Altai Region. In 1957 he was accepted as a member of the USSR Union of Writers for his talented improvisations, for the preservation and development of epic creative work, as

a guardian of the people's memory, traditions and morality.

Makar Konstantinovich Dobrov made a huge contribution to the fund of Khakass folklore. Having devoted himself to the art of storytelling and raised among storytellers, he not only performed creatively the traditional folklore of the past, but also created new works, thereby continuing to develop and enrich oral poetry of his people.

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## INFORMATION ABOUT AUTHOR

**CHISTOBAEVA Nadezhda Stepanovna**, Candidate of Philology, Head of the Department of Folklore, Khakass Research Institute of Language, Literature and History, 655017, Abakan, 23 Shchetinkin Str., e-mail: Chistobaeva-76@mail.ru