

## Shaitankol (Devil's lake)

Shaitankol is considered as the most mysterious lake of Karkaralinsk. It is located in 5 km to the south-west from Karkaralinsk, high in the mountains Bugly, at altitude of 1200 meters above sea level. The trail to it starts from the dam and runs along a small mountain stream of Karkaralinsk picturesque valley. The river has width of one or two meters and its depth is quite small. The bottom is quite visible and you can see rolled pebbles, sand, protruding rocks and tree roots there. The river is supplied from the springs emerging at the surface at the foot of the slopes. Who saw it once at least will never forget. This bright blue bowl of water is surrounded by steep cliffs and almost impassable forest. According to local people, no one saw the bottom of the lake and measured it. How could it occur, in the forest, among the rocks? There are versions, that it is located in the crater of the extinct volcano. But nobody knows for sure. Nobody made research of the lake in details.



There are many legends connected with Shaitankol, but as you might know, all of them have sad endings. The lovers die, drown and disappear. Local people constantly meet wood-goblins, mermaids and monsters. There is inexplicable atmosphere in Shaitankol. Birds do not sing, the wind does not blow and even mosquitos do not squeak. There is silence in this area.

One of the legends tells about lovers Sulushash and Altai. Rich and powerful bai Tleuberdy owned most of the vast Kazakh steppes. But he valued the beauty of his sixteen-year-old daughter Sulushash more than all the treasures. She was in love with Altai, the herdsman of his father's horses. She knew that her father sought a son of the noble myrza in marriage with

her, so she decided to run away with Altai. The faithful friend of Altai, Kaisar ran together with them.

The lovers wandered in the wilderness, until they found refuge in the mountains of Karkaralinsk. One autumn day they reached the lake. Altai and Kaisar, left Sulushash on the beach and went hunting to get food. During hunting Kaisar fell down the cliff and fell to death on the sharp rocks. The grief of Altai was disconsolate. At this time, Sulushash suffocated by smoke of the burning forest. Escaping from the fire, she ran around the lake, and met a tiger. It was mad of fire and rushed to Sulushash. The girl chose to die in the lake.

".. Altai! My beloved, farewell!" - she cried and jumped into the lake. The echo brought those words to Altai, but when he came, it was too late. Sulushash's velvet skullcap was lonely swaying in the gray from ashes waters of the lake. Altai could not survive such grief – the life without Sulushash was not necessary. He stabbed a dagger in his chest without any hesitation. People created such a tragic legend, and Sabit Mukanov presented it with poetic syllable decades later.

Since that time, the lake that killed three young lives was called Shaitankol – The Devil's lake.

