

Baby cradle making

Gahvora or cradle is special item in every Tajik household, so is the art of making baby cradles is called *gahvorasozi*. Babies are put into cradles when they are 5 or 7 days old and they sleep in these cradles up to the age of two. The length of cradle is about 1.2 meters with 50 cm width and up to 60 cm height.

The cradle corpus in Tajikistan is made from the willow tree as it is very light weight and some of the parts can be made from the timber taken from walnut or apricot tree. Nowadays craftsmen also use timber from other trees as well such as pine tree.

In two sides it has a semicircular feet attached to an arch-like upper parts, which are connected with the long handle in the middle horizontally.

The semicircular feet allow the cradle to rock and not fall. The depth of cradle is about 12-14 cm where the mattresses will be placed. Cradle is also furnished with the potty; where the child's bottom comes, the mattress and the wooden base have a round hole pierced in them, under which an earthen pot stands. For urine to go to the potty there is used a pipe shape utensil and for the girls a flute shape is used.

The *gahvora* provides a place for the baby to sleep safely away from physical harm and is covered with layers of coverings called *gahvorapush*. This can be made from a light fabric for a warm season and with the thick fabric or sometimes with cotton-filled quilts for the cold seasons. Often further spiritual security is given





by keeping a knife, garlic, pepper, onion and bread underneath to scare away evil spirits intent on harming the child. Triangular charms are usually hung on top, stuffed with cotton and verses from the Koran.

The related ritual to *gahvora* is called *gahvorabandon* that is laying baby on *gahvora* for the first time after birth. *Gahvora* is bought by the bride's parents and its furnishing is prepared at home.



