

서사시
구전 전통
중앙아시아의
과

ORAL TRADITIONS
AND
EPICS OF
CENTRAL ASIA

Foreword

The Silk Road, which acted as a conduit between civilizations in the past, is once again coming under the spotlight within UNESCO as well as the international community as a practical means to resolve the clash of civilizations and to advance the rapprochement of cultures. Along with this development, anticipation for the role of Central Asian countries as a collective platform for intercultural communication is higher than ever.

The nomadic culture of the Central Asian steppes was cosmopolitan as it accepted influences from Manichaeism, Islam, and Buddhism on top of indigenous shamanistic or animistic traditions. Such cultural wisdom and experience should be applied to great efficacy in the resolution of conflicts between civilizations in the world today.

Since the adoption of the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2003 and the subsequent establishment of ICHCAP in Korea, we have worked to construct a cooperative network with Central Asian nations to safeguard intangible cultural heritage in the region.

In 2015, ICHCAP, IICAS, and the National Commission of the Republic of Uzbekistan for UNESCO co-organized an international symposium, gathering leading experts and scholars in the region, with the topic of 'oral traditions and epics' to uncover more profound issues on ICH in the region. As the nomadic tribes of Central Asia have always been migratory, oral traditions have been the core means of intergenerational transmission in their culture. Since ancestral cultural practices and wisdom have been transmitted across generations orally, it is crucial to discuss these issues for safeguarding living

heritage in Central Asia.

It is my pleasure to publish the papers from the symposium, which played a role in rediscovering the value of oral traditions and epics in Central Asia and the Silk Road, for people interested in this area. Also, it is my sincere hope that this activity will have positive effects on safeguarding and raising awareness on ICH in the region.

Once again, I thank the experts and scholars who contributed their papers to help raise pride in our heritage, and Dr. Pilho Park, Director of IICAS; Mr. Alisher Ikramov, Secretary-General of the National Commission of the Republic of Uzbekistan for UNESCO; and the dedicated staff members who worked hard to make this publication possible.

Kwon Huh
Director-General
ICHCAP

CONTENT

Foreword	141
Rustambek Abdullayev	147
_ The Characteristic Features of the Oral Tradition and Dastan as Elements of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Central Asia	
Chinara Beksultanova	167
_ Small Epics as an Important Element of Oral Epic Creativity of the Kyrgyz People	
Eunkyung Oh	179
_ Restoring Lost Memories and Intangible Cultural Heritage Through Eurasian Epics	
Asel Isaeva	191
_ Trilogy of the Epic ‘Manas. Semetey. Seytek’ as National Identity of the Kyrgyz People	
Sabira Kulsariyeva	203
_ Elements of Ethnic Identity and Epic Stories of Kazakhstan	
Bazaraly Muptekeyev, Aliya Sabirova	213
_ The Value of Oral and Traditional Heritage of Kazakhstan and the Great Silk Road	
Geldimyrat Muhammedov	223
_ Epic Traditions in Turkmenistan: ‘The Turkmen Epic Art of ‘Gorogly’	

Urtnasan Norov	229
_ Current Status and Safeguarding Measures of Oral Traditions and Epics in Mongolia	
Urazali Tashmatov	243
_ Oral Folklore in Uzbekistan: Focusing on Narrative Art	
Faroghat Azizi, Burkhon Saifutdinov	251
_ The Condition of Oral Traditions and Epics in Tajikistan and Efforts to Safeguard Them	
Lola Hojiboeva	263
_ Epic Stories that Bridge the Ancient and Present Worlds in Tajikistan	
Jabbor Eshonkulov	271
_ Epic Tradition and Epic Novel ‘Alpomish’	



THE CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES OF THE ORAL TRADITION AND DASTAN AS ELEMENTS OF THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF CENTRAL ASIA

RUSTAMBEK ABDULLAYEV

The State Conservatory of Uzbekistan

The artistic world of traditional culture of Central Asian peoples is determined by contents that lie in certain historical periods and, at the same time, remain outside history. Contemporary science allows us to study the originality of the art of people in Central Asia, which is important for an objective reconstruction of the general picture of the art's evolution. Historical and social changes cannot be studied without a clear understanding of cultural integrity and the perception of the artistic laws of culture and its context in this or that socio-historical period.

Each civilisation, each social system is characterised by the special way it perceives the environment, which determines the understanding of reality by a society and individual during a long period of time. Exploring the world, man creates ideal models of his environment, reflecting it actively with the purpose of making practical changes to it. As we know, this process is associated with the socio-historical practice and conditioned by the specificity of the man interacting with nature and society. The established system of interpretation, systematisation and generalisation on the cultural level is the unity of objective and subjective experiences, that

is, the synthesis of the spiritual and individual continuum with the cultural and historical one, when the resultant system does not only correct the behaviour of an individual and society through control over the acquisition and preservation of knowledge, but also ensures the transmission of selected models.

In the late 20th and early 21st centuries, Central Asian countries were revising their material and spiritual values, reconsidering historical events and seeking ways to discover the true abilities of a person. A traditional-oriented approach became the key element for the understanding of the changes that had been taking place in the regional culture in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. Therefore, the people are seeking to revive the culture - its various genres, styles and performing methods. The word 'tradition' means the tradition that has been transformed influenced by time.

In this respect the artistic heritage or, in a broader sense, the intangible cultural heritage of the Central Asian peoples is highly valuable. The region is the place where for many centuries the perfect art models have been polished and the most effective approaches to the solution of different artistic problems have been tested. The artistic problems consisted in the creation of new images and styles and development of existing genres, when optimal ways of preservation, transmission and changing of initial characteristics of this or that artistic phenomenon were selected and a wider conception of ethnocultural originality and the idea of revival of the national heritage was formed against the background of people's growing self-consciousness.

The 'oral tradition' concept

The question of realisation of the place and role of the traditional art wants special consideration. We regard the traditional culture as a

system of relations connecting a number of different forms, types, genres and traditions, which in combination reflect the integral artistic system of different types of culture (music, dance, applied arts, theatre and others). This conception embraces different functioning spheres of intangible cultural heritage, the basic features of which are the oral art (the element of cultural heritage transmitted orally from memory), variance (the main form of certain art) and collectivity. According to composer I. Stravinsky, 'a real tradition is not a symbol of the past that has disappeared; on the contrary, this is live force vivifying and informing the present.' Hence, intangible cultural heritage is a special sphere of people's spiritual and material life, which forms a stable and understandable system. The heritage's contents reflect in an artistic way a nation's concepts and psychology, forming an unbreakable link with its life.

Intangible cultural heritage (oral poetry, music, dance, theatre, rituals, holidays and applied arts) is the spiritual, philosophic and aesthetic culture traditional for the everyday life of a people, reflecting its mentality; it has formed during the many centuries of collective creativity through oral communication and is embodied in the endless multiplicity of individual and personal variants.

Oral tradition is a broad concept. Contemporary linguistics regard the language of oral communication as the most important aspect, giving it a special place in its systematic descriptions of the linguistic situation. Both the systematic and structural method, which is essential today for a proper analysis of different aspects of traditional culture, and the semiotic approach, which interprets the verbal or musical language as a special variation of a wide range of symbolic systems, are rooted in the structural linguistics, which means that a language is studied as an integral system contributing to a better understanding of the phenomena under study. The oral character

is universally recognised as the main constituting property of people's art opposite to the written culture.

The language of oral tradition is presented as a special, specific language making the bearers of people's epic traditions - the Kyrgyz *manaschi*, Turkmen and Uzbek *bakhshi* and Kazakh and Karakalpak *zhyrau*, - reciting and singing from memory tens and hundreds of thousands of lines of complex poetry absolutely exclusive and possessing unusual capabilities. The same can be said about the bearers of the *makom* artistic traditions, such as *Shashmakom* in the Uzbek and Tajik cultures, *mukam* in the Uygur culture or *mugam* in the Azerbaijani one, who keep in their memories a large number of poetical texts and tunes, rhythms (*usul*), artistic forms and specific culminations at high pitch (*auji*). It means that the performer does not simply learn linear (written) text by heart, which can be observed when the epic tradition is degrading. The performance of the heroic epic *Alpamysh* (*Alpamys*), which nowadays consists in reciting canonised text learnt by heart - the test of the volume of mechanical memory - is a good example, as well as the dastans from the epic *Gorogly* (*Gyorogly*, *Kyorogly*, *Gurugli*), which are narrated today in small fragments following a text from a book.

The live epics and other genres of oral tradition suggest algorithms other than linear texts, which means the texts should be learnt and recited more productively, using the artistic memory of the singer or narrator. The intuitive or conscious mastering of these linear algorithms gives the masters of oral tradition immense opportunities, when they can fold and unfold large epics, such as *Manas*, *Alpamysh*, *Yer targyn* and others, or musical cycles, such as *makom*, *mugam*, instrumental *kyui* or *raga*.

The written texts or music sheets in these large forms of the musical and poetic arts of oral tradition cannot reflect or disclose the inner mechanisms

of their functioning (hence the 'tradition of misunderstanding' of large areas of intangible cultural heritage). The processes of oral tradition are based on the differentiation of various spheres or on the distinguishing of different types of arts, constantly growing in number, when all the branches of intangible cultural heritage are taken into consideration, as well as on the formation of certain styles and types of creative thinking (verbal, musical, poetical, theatrical and so on). This factor influences the formation of its creators, who are the bearers of the tradition.

1. The folk sphere of culture includes people's collective arts (verbal, musical, dancing, the atrical, entertaining and applied arts), links with customs, rituals and holidays or amateur art in an oral tradition.

2. The professional people's art with a rather high oral performing culture (reciting of dastan and makom, vocal and instrumental music, the art of bastakor, cultic and ritual music, performances with the participation of ropewalkers, wits, puppeteers and maskharaboz, and various artistic crafts) - professionals in oral tradition.

3. Amateur activities or amateur movements following the oral and written cultures, which were formed in the 20th century (folk, family, instrumental and makom bands; hobby groups, studies and women's workshops specialising in various crafts, such as embroidery, carpet weaving and others), - that is, organised amateur art, through which artistic ideas returned to people and then came back again in an oral form (for instance, centres for culture and recreation in Uzbekistan). The same can be said about artistic crafts, which demonstrate certain transformation and change of the former principles of craft production on the basis of the new socio-economic and ideological conditions, uniting masters into artels. In the past, when artistic crafts were developing naturally and actively, the masters' items satisfied completely the local people's demand for household and ritual articles;

however, today they are kitch and mass consumption goods.

The oral folk sphere of the traditional culture becomes the basis for the appearance and development of most of the original forms, types and genres of intangible cultural heritage, which can be seen in the art of folk singers and musicians, masters in epic and makom art, virtuoso instrumentalists and craftsmen. The socio-cultural stratigraphy of contemporary musical environment becomes highly mobile. On the one hand, the degradation of the professional oral art, when it returned to the folk area of culture or to the amateur art; on the other hand, professional musicians working with written material try to come to the norms of oral music following the canons of the traditional culture (for instance, folk bands under professional artistic organisations). Hence the two types of activity: the first one is anonymous, impersonal folk art; the second type is personal art. This classification demonstrates the most natural succession of signs of oral tradition: social conditions - psychological realisation - artistic result. The moment of realisation is a crucial link in this chain. The artistic level only gives the final fixation of the result, which is an object of cultural heritage.

This sphere connected with the musical art would synthetise the best achievements in all are as of musical practice. It was the sphere where different types of performing music formed (solo and group music playing) and various artistic methods of understanding the reality - the traditional language and style - appeared. The diversity of genres and types in this system is connected with both cyclic works and separate ones, which took into account the social, ethical and psychological guidelines, criteria of values and norms of the consumers of this sphere of the performing culture. At the same time the people's professional musical art originates from the canons and norms of the guilds of musicians, mourners and

narrators within the structure of corporations of urban workshops, which performed the functions associated with the satisfaction of the needs of the people in towns and villages. Specific genres and forms and related vocal and instrumental musical performing practice developed within the people's professional musical art. From the experience we see that these traditions are highly valuable and have a humanistic and democratic potential for further development. This structural stratification of musical practice indicates the existence of regulated social relations. The latter also caused the appearance of normative and functional spheres in the musical art, which were reflected in special musical treatises ('The treatise on music' written by medieval scholars in Arabic, Farsi and Turkic) and classical oriental literature, works on philosophy and musical terms.

The preservation, transmission and mastering of traditions

Various principles of artistic understanding, traditional schools, the specific *ustoz (ustod, khalypa)-shogird* (masterstudent) teaching system and historical and theoretical conceptions connected with the artistic, cosmological and ethic canons and norms, which reflected the socio-historical experience of the Central Asian peoples, developed in the functioning spheres of intangible cultural heritage. In the traditional culture of the Central Asian peoples the oral transmission of artistic styles, skills and knowledge and styles of performance were directly and indirectly connected with the learning of poetical texts and their principles, when the student or apprentice developed under the influence of the school of his master after the master had died. This indirect succession makes it possible to elongate the link of the chain and thus see a clearer picture of the life of this or that tradition and determine the retrospective series of direct and indirect links that existed between the masters and students.

The traditional cultures of the Central Asian peoples have in them mature schools of crafts and performance, which have been transmitting for many generations the oral musical, theatrical and artistic traditions with the help of an elaborate system. In the contemporary language these are pedagogical methods featuring all the signs of the developed pedagogical process *ustoz-shogird* (master-student) - from the regular system of theoretical knowledge (developed in the medieval 'treatises on music' and regulations *Risola*) through to special technical guides, which make it possible to master singing techniques or techniques for playing a musical instrument, learn verbal vocabulary and poetic rules, study the material and technological peculiarities of crafts and acquire knowledge and skills in producing an article. For instance, *bakhshi* or *zhirau* possessed such high technique in playing the *dutar*, *dombra* or *kobuz* while the society valued music so high that a student was allowed to spend one year on learning only one technical device. Traditionally the master (*ustoz*) passes his knowledge to his student by demonstrating his own skills. Usually these knowledge and transmission methods were concealed from other people. The student had to follow the accepted canons; however, to become a master he was to create a masterpiece - a piece of art that no one has done before. The beginning student or *bakhshi* had remained many years with his master, communicating with him every day, before the former was blessed by the latter (received blessing - *fotikha* or *pata*), which was unofficially equivalent to a 'certificate' allowing the student to create and perform independently.

For instance, the mastering of the traditions of epic stories consisted of the following stages. The early stage consisted in learning to play a musical instrument and learning poetical texts *terma* (*tirme*) or songs; later the student sang some of the *terma* or songs from an epic. At the middle stage,

the student was initiated into the secrets of performing dastans, learnt the manner and style of singing and narrating a certain dastan. The student became the companion of his master in all of the latter's performances at wedding parties and national holidays and at parties held by noble people. He accompanied his master and even performed by himself some of the simplest *terma* while the *ustoz* performed the whole dastan. Thus, the student imitated his master. The duration of this stage depended on the student's abilities and skills, as to receive blessing (*fotikha* or *pata*) from his master enabling him to become *bakshi-dastanchi* and perform independently, he was to learn by heart and be able to perform several dastans. At the advanced stage the student was to have his own repertoire and perform independently, being his master's partner at the same time. The performer was estimated by his ability to follow the canons and use them freely. It was similar to mastering a musical instrument and being able to use its finest technical characteristics.

It should be noted that the traditional *ustoz-shogird* teaching system, which had been used for many centuries, was rejected in the 20th century. This gradually led to the degradation and loss of that unique oral teaching system, in which the professional art of oral narration and artistic crafts of Central Asia had developed since ancient times. Most of the canons have oral forms in the context of protection, preservation and development of intangible cultural heritage. It means that all 'learning rules' are passed through the master-student teaching system, as the traditional *ustoz-shogird* system took into account only the abilities and talent, good voice, ability to play a musical instrument and memory - ability to remember poetical and musical text. For instance, the *Shamshakom* school was guided only by *bayaz* - collections of poems written by the classical oriental poets, where each poem (*gazel*) was accompanied by a definite tune. It means that the

ustoz-shogird system reached its peak in the period of the flowering of the makom art. Therefore, one of the problems of the 21st century is to restore the traditional school system, which will surely ensure further development of professional oral performing art and artistic crafts in present-day conditions.

Dastan, an element of intangible cultural heritage

The art of epic story, dastan, which occupies one of the most important places in the traditional culture of Central Asian peoples, originated in the most ancient times. Its appearance and development conditioned by the artistic and aesthetic needs of ordinary people was connected directly to the ethnogenesis, history and spiritual culture of the region's peoples. *Dastans* reflect, in the best way, a people's history, life, psychological aspects and worldview as well as people's sorrows and joys, troubles and concerns, moral conceptions, dreams about their future and their struggle for the liberation of their land. Hence the main subjects of dastans are mainly of a patriotic and humanistic character. Forming on the basis of people's musical and poetic art characterised by dividing into numerous genres and developing in close relation with the traditional and, to some extent, eastern classical poetry, the art of epic storytellers have always been democratic in character and served ordinary people. The traditional dastans and the musical and poetical genre *terma* (*tirme*) are deep emotionally and valuable from the musical and poetical aspects, having always been real pleasure for their listeners. This is why the epic art of the *bakhshi* storytellers is so viable and popular among people, remaining so for many centuries. The art of *bakhshi* has performed the socio-historical, artistic and aesthetic functions for a very long period of time.

Traditional epic is a great heritage of the Central Asian peoples, playing

a significant part in their lives. Epic traditions originated in old times, but continue to exist and function in many places up to this day. The phenomenon of live epics in the late 20th century is an important factor for the history of the human culture. Meanwhile, the epic is alive as long as it exists in musical form. This fact alone makes epic music a highly important object of research.

Epics and epic storytelling are represented in Central Asia by *dastan* (the word *dastan* translates as 'story,' 'praise,' or 'adventure'), which include both poetical and prosaic elements accompanied by music. *Dastan* is the largest, monumental genre of the traditional culture representing the musical and poetical history of people and describing the real historical events of the ancient time. However, these events have an ideal musical, verbal and poetic form, where the word, poem, music and singing merge into a single monumental musical and poetical genre with its special subjects and performing style. Most of the traditional dastans have come to us from relatively old times (the 12th-century treatise *Kitabul Korkut* ("The book by my grandfather *Korkut*") indicated the formation of the epic genre, mentioning that *Korkut* was an ideal *bakhshi*, whose performance was accompanied on the musical instrument kobuz; he was 'a wise singer and advisor, the keeper of the tradition of the steppe life and follower of the military traditions coming from the antiquity'), unlike the literary works (the poems *Farkhad and Shirin*, *Leyli and Mejnun* and *The seven beauties* by Alisher Navoi and some poems by Firdavsi, Nizami Ganjavi, Abdurakhman Jami and others are also called dastans). During all these centuries they have lived in people's memory, lived their own active artistic lives in the heads and mouths of innumerable generations of performers, as storytellers often participated in the composition of dastans. Trying to leave unchanged the main plots and the artistic base, they nevertheless had to give their

interpretation of some lines and sections, as improvisation was an inherent element in the performance of immense texts from memory. In this process some details were substituted by other ones, more usual and natural for the performer and his listeners. It explains why the dastan texts that have reached our time are so diverse depending on the historical period they belong to.

Dastan is a multicultural phenomenon. The traditional epic as a part of the intangible cultural heritage of Central Asia spreads over the territory of this region. We can distinguish several schools based on geographical location, each with its own musical and poetical language style. Most of these schools continue to function.

The singers and musicians of the makom art and cultic and ritual music are the main bearers of professional oral music in settled populations while those in nomadic groups were represented by epic storytellers - *bakhshi-shair* and *termachi* (the latter performing only in the musical genre of *terma* in dastans), - who accompanied their narrations on the *dombra*, *dutar* or *kobuz*. The nomadic lifestyle certainly influenced the contents and images of the poetical and musical epic art. For instance, the image of a runner, which is a permanent companion of a nomad (*Gorogly*, *Alpamysh*, *Manas*, *Edige*, *Rustam* and others) is one of the most popular ones in the art of the *Kazakh akyn*, *Uzbek bakhshi-shair* or *Turkmen bakhshi* as well as in the recitative art of *gyrau*. This is why the heroic epic *Alpamysh* (*Alpamys*) is the most popular dastan, the 1000th anniversary of which was celebrated widely in 1999. The Turkic-speaking nomadic tribes feature an original style of singing dastans - guttural recitative accompanied on the *dombra* (Uzbeks, Tajik and Kazakhs), a string instrument played by plucking, or the *dutar* (Turkmen, Uygur and Karakalpak) and the *kobuz* (Uzbeks, Karakalpak and Kazakh), a string instrument played with the help of a bow. This original

and inimitable art formed in the medieval period as a result of adoption of old artistic traditions (myths, legends, fairy tales, and historical psalms) and their further development in the live performing practice.

We should remember that dastan is a monumental musical and poetical composition performed by an epic storyteller. Dastan is a combination of different genres and forms of the traditional culture. Some dastans include tens of forms and genres, their performance continuing for hours and even days, depending on the narrator's skills and the audience's mood. Some dastans, such as *Gorogly* (*Gyorogly*, *Gurugli*, *Kyorogly*), form a whole cycle, various versions of the abovementioned work consisting of 40 to 100 dastans. The listeners' approval inspires the storyteller, without which he could hardly perform his epic. Narrating an epic, the storyteller usually uses several tunes, his speech sounding excited and melodic. The recitative is sometimes interrupted by a prosaic story, which is then followed by the next stage of recitative.

The traditional epic stories, dastans, developed from the archaic Turkic folklore and the ancient national history of the Central Asian peoples. They absorbed ancient cultural traditions and the information on the formation of the people they belonged to, including its history and spiritual world and its civil, moral and aesthetic ideals. The original traditional epic poetry and music of the Central Asian peoples created highly powerful artistic images, such as *Alpamysh*, *Gorogly*, *Manas*, *Yer Targyn*, *Edige*, *Yodgor*, *Koblady* and others. The plots and contents of the dastans that exist in the region are very numerous and diverse. They reflect the socio-economic, legal, philosophical and aesthetic ideas of a nation, showing its incessant movement, development and struggle. Dastans can be divided into heroic, historical and romantic dastans, which have developed constantly, interacting and intertwining with each other. In addition, traditional epic storytellers

often narrated military, social, mythological, religious and autobiographic dastans as well as dastans on topical subjects.

The contents and forms of dastans are based on traditions that had developed for many centuries. The events described in dastans are not limited to one particular tribe; they reflect the ideas and concerns of a whole nation. Heroic struggle for the land or freedom with enemies, salvation of fellow tribesmen or the lover, revenge for robbery or an insult, which finally resulted in a struggle for their people, are the main subjects of dastans, although they often start with a love story, the life of a young hero or some other topic of a similar type. This important subject of dastans determines the inherent elation and pathos of the stories and hyperbolism in the images of the heroes and their physical and moral abilities, on the one hand, and the severe disparagement of their enemies, on the other hand. Certainly, the works are based on the idealisation of the past, which is natural for national and individual consciousness; however, the freedom of imagination, which often makes a plot absolutely fabulous, creates that power of aesthetic generalisation that is typical of the best of dastans and of epic stories in general, that is, of the artistic expression of people's ideal.

The comparative analysis of the epics of Central Asian peoples demonstrates that common plots, motifs and images can often be found in their art. Similar motifs develop mostly on the typological commonality based on the commonality of lifestyles, ideals, dreams and expectations. This is clearly visible from the comparative analysis of the traditional musical and poetical texts of our neighbours - the Mongols, Altaians, Turkmen, Kazakhs and Uzbeks. The commonality of the Central Asian epics rests on the nomadic lifestyle and the religious and philosophical ideas of their creators - the bearers of the tradition, as well as on the commonality of the languages used by the tribes and peoples and relations

between these languages. The interaction and interpenetration of the elements of the archaic epics were caused by their existence in the common ethnocultural space and, therefore, by the commonality of historical, social, cultural, religious and linguistic factors; however, the typological similarity of the cultures of the peoples living at large distances from each other and having no close relations also plays an important role in this respect.

What is the mechanism for the long process of the development of the traditional epic? At early stages epic plots were based on mythology - animism, totemism, fetishism, magic and fairy tale. The next stage is characterised by the development of the mythological material into heroic stories; the role of heroism in the actions of personages rose, which led to the formation of the heroic epic with typical elements, such as the birth of the hero, his feats, wedding, birth of children, his becoming old, - that is, against the background of symbolic universal conceptions. The last stage of the epic's development coincided with the end of the primitive tribal system, which led to the diversification of the dastans' subjects. The period between the late 17th and 20th centuries was characterised by an intensive evolution of the traditional epic with stable forms, stylistic devices, plots and ideas. At the same time, hundreds of storytellers who were the authors of this process were developing the traditions they had inherited in the changing socio-economic environment, bringing their poetical innovations and developing their system of images and range of poetical and musical techniques to canonical forms. Therefore, the dastas was divided into genres, uniting into thematic cycles, sometimes truly immense.

Dastan's performing characteristics

The word *bakhshi* (bagshy, bakshi, baksy, bakhshy) can be found in the languages of many peoples. However, according to numerous sources, it

had different semantics in different historical periods: shaman, magician, sorcerer, Buddhist monk, foreteller, healer, clergyman, secretary and treasurer. In the 13th century Marco Polo wrote about healer-sorcerers who worked for the court of a Mongolian khan and were called *bakhshi*. V. Bartold and A. Samoylovich consider that the word *bakhshi* in Turkic and Iranian languages meant 'teacher'. *Bakhshi* was the name for the healers at the Mongol court, Turkic scribes in the Timurid state, high officials responsible for military troops in the Baburid state and shamans fighting with evil spirits with the help of magic songs accompanied by a musical instrument. When shamanism had been supplanted by Islam, the word 'bakhshi' began to refer to the epic singer, musician and narrator who created and preserved the traditional epic in the history of the culture of Central Asian peoples.

In the old times the Turkic peoples used to call the performer of epic stories *ozan* (poet), *zhyrau* (poet, musician, elder), *ashyk* (epic poet and narrator) and *bakhshi* (teacher and later - narrator, who was called 'bagshy' or *bakhshi* by the Turkmen, 'baksy' by the Kazakhs and Karakalpak and 'bakhshi' by the Kyrgyz, Uygur and Uzbeks). The word *bakhshi* became a strict term for professional singers when they began to perform at national events and holidays and at wedding parties and traditional *saila*, glorifying ancient heroes and their lovers. Continuing the artistic traditions of their predecessors, they made a great contribution to the further development of traditional epic. Uzbeks call the narrators of dastans in different ways: *dastanchi* or *bakhshi* (the term *khalfa* was used with reference to female performers) in *Khoresm*, *yuzboshi*, *bakhshi* or *shair* in Kashkadrya, Surkhandarya and Samarkand, *soki* or *sozanda* in Khujand or Osh provinces, *bakhshi* or *sanovchi* in the Fergana Valley and *baksy* or *jyrau* in Karakalpakstan, *Shair* (poet and narrator) and *bakhshi* (singer and narrator)

are the most common terms.

With monumental plots, dastans require huge improvisational, musical and poetic gifts and skills from the performers. Therefore, *bakhshi*, *dastanchi* and *jirau* are professional performers possessing the art of narration, improvisation and poetic and musical composition and even the dramatic art and the art of mimicry and gesticulation, which they used to deeper impress their listeners. The art of *bakhshi* reflects in the best way the peculiarities of the traditional culture of Central Asian people, with the formation of different local styles with their artistic and aesthetic traditions and ideas and practical *purposes* and objectives on the basis of local performing traditions. *Bakhshi* are the creators and keepers of the traditional epic who also popularised the classical oriental poetry. The local styles that appeared within the uniform art of *bakhshi* were called *yul* by the Uzbeks and *yol* by the Turkmen (the word meaning a 'road,' 'style,' 'direction,' 'school') in combination with the name of a region (for instance, *Khiva yuli* or *akhal yoli*) or a tribe, genre or trend in art in combination with the names of the best bearers of the tradition. Some expert *bakhshi* (masters - *ustoz*, *ustod*) played an important part in the development of local styles: they were able to synthesise the best achievements of local traditions in their art and create their own styles. Such masters were always surrounded by an increasing number of like-minded persons, students and followers, who based their performance art on the main stylistic principles of their leader and created some types of corporation or schools. Within such groups beginning performers learnt the repertoire, adopted the singing skills, experience and traditions and studied following the conventional *ustoz-shogird* (*khalypa-shegird*) system, which ensure transmission of art to other generations both within local styles and within the *bakhshi* art as a whole.

The live epic tradition of Central Asia consists of performing ancient

stories or creating new poems. However, the most important thing is that the unique and complex performing style requiring musical, poetic and dramatic talent, excellent memory and outstanding stamina is preserved and transmitted within the tradition. Ordinary people have always had a special attitude towards storytellers, considering that they possessed magic abilities. Let us remember the Altaian heroic epic performed using the most ancient guttural technique of singing in one tone (*kay*). The Kazakh epic styles are quite diverse. *Dombra* is the leading instrument in the art of *baksy*, *gyrau* and *akyn*, the performers of epic stories and masters of poetry. The poetic texts are performed in melodic recitative; the music helps the *akyn* or *gyrau* concentrate, tuning him to a certain rhythm and making his speech flow, which means the use of recitative makes the performance musical and expressive. Most of the Kazakh epics are instrumental, illustrative and melodic. The performance styles from the Aral Sea, Karmakchi and Mangystau are the most unique and original.

The universally known Kyrgyz epic *Manas* is performed very emotionally without accompaniment; it has a poetical form from beginning to end and its performance is characterised by gesticulation and mimicry. The performers of *Manas* belong to four schools: the Issyk Kul, Talas, Naryn and Chu schools. Smaller epic dastans are also very popular, the poems performed to the accompaniment of the three-string komus. The art of the Turkmen bakhshi comprises five schools, the most popular one being that from Dashauz, which is distinguished by recitative and specific guttural declamation. The musical aspect of the Turkmen dastans is characterised by rich melodies, which are often linear, and the dutar or gijak accompaniment.

Gurugli is the main genre of the Tajik storytellers. They are often accompanied by the *dombra* while their poetic parts are performed in

recitative.

The poetic forms (which usually consist of seven, eight or eleven syllables) that lie in the foundations of most of the texts of the dastan, usually reproduce the heroes' monologues and dialogues, their emotions and mood, battle scenes, descriptions of nature and so on, all of which sounds more emotional when recited to music. Hence the two forms of singing of dastans. The first one is *bugic ovoz* (in closed voice), which consists of guttural singing in recitative to the accompaniment of the dombra (a string instrument played by plucking) characteristic of Samarkand, Kashkadarya and Surkhandarya and of Karakalpak *jyrau*. From 5 to 15 tunes (*nagma*), which may repeat themselves, are used in each dastan. The tunes are short and repetitive. Their character is lyrical and dramatic, bright or vivid depending on the plot. The bakhshi narrate in a usual voice and sing in a guttural tone, which they develop in the course of the training. The second form is *ichki ovoz* (singing in inner voice), which is a more song-based type of singing accompanied by an instrumental band. This form is characteristic of Khoresm and Karakalpakstan. From 15 to 72 tunes (*nagma* or *bakhshi kuy*) are used in each dastan. They are accompanied by an instrumental band (consisting of the dutar, bulaman and gijak or dutar and three-string gijak in Karakalpakstan and in Khoresm until the 20th century and the *tar*, *koshnay* and *doira* in Khoresm since the 20th century). Dastans in the style of *jyrau* are accompanied on the *kobuz*. Khoresm features two trends - *shirvoni* and *ironi*, which differ in repertoire, performance style and instruments.

Local features of dastans are often visible in the performance style, repertoire and range of accompanying instruments. Sometimes local features can be seen in the melodic patterns of bakhshi's terma songs; however, most often they show themselves in the musical language and dialect.

All these local features make the art of bakhshi highly diverse from the musical and stylistic aspects, enriching it with special musical and poetical 'colours'. At the same time, the interaction of poetry and singing, the metre and the forms have more common features than different ones in all the existing *bakhshi* schools. This fact indicates that all the local schools of the *bakhshi* art have common historical roots and that they have influenced each other during the long history of their development. The repertoires and techniques characteristic of each people in the region, as well as the musical languages and dialects and diversity of dastans have the same ideological and emotional effect in the contemporary environment. They have truly huge potential. Dastans, the wonderful epics of Central Asian people, have become part of the world culture as elements of intangible cultural heritage.

SMALL EPICS AS AN IMPORTANT ELEMENT OF ORAL EPIC CREATIVITY OF KYRGYZ PEOPLE

CHINARA BEKSULTANOVA

Institute of History and Cultural Heritage

of National Academy of Sciences of the Kyrgyz Republic

The rich folklore of the Kyrgyz people is an important historical and cultural phenomenon developing over many centuries and spiritually and artistically valuable. As an inexhaustible source of people's wisdom, it reflects the history, life and social, political and spiritual ideals of the people. The oral folklore is the basis of our unique cultural heritage. Due to the harsh conditions of the nomadic life, endless clashes with enemies and invaders, and long distances of migration, the Kyrgyz people have not preserved their spiritual culture in the stone monuments of architecture, papyrus or clay writings but have preserved it in their memory for more than two thousand years of history. Memory proved to be good enough for keeping millions of lines of epic songs and works, which have been passed from generation to generation and reached the present day.

Keeping the world and centuries-long historical experience of the people, epics occupy a significant place among the Kyrgyz people. The classic epic of nomadic culture has developed from fairy tales and mythological works to the historical and heroic epic novels¹.

The principal ideas of the Kyrgyz epic are focused on human values,

reflected in the main epic characters demonstrating heroic valour, restrained wisdom, tolerance and loyalty to the friendship ideals. The epics have reached us in oral form, coming from early ages, and we should not forget this fact when identifying the main features of the national folklore.

Having existed for many centuries in almost the same social condition, the folklore of the Kyrgyz people appeared to be in a completely new situation in the 20th century, which made it quite impossible to pass the epic oral traditions. The traditional civilisation faced with technological genesis leading to radical transformation of the existing culture and lifestyle of the Kyrgyz people, which resulted in the disappearance of genres. In contemporary circumstances, recording in a written form became the only way to preserve the Kyrgyz epics.

Realizing the dramatic situation in the spiritual sphere, people began to seek the ways to preserve the traditional folk culture. As a result, the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage was adopted at the General Conference of UNESCO in 2003, which maintains that 'Protection of intangible cultural heritage is an invaluable factor for bringing human beings closer together and ensuring exchange and understanding among people'. In 2003, 28 elements was proclaimed as 'Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity', among which the art of folk storytellers (*akyns*) of Kyrgyzstan was included under the name of 'The art of tellers of epics (*akyns*) as a part of the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity'.

It is well-known that tradition is an inherent property of folklore in general. Narrators (*akyns*) strengthen the live link between generations, developing the meaning of the Word in the oral tradition. Preservation of such a high heritage of literary art in the people's memory was an essential need of the society and they have developed and reflected the

real ideological system. The oral improvisatory poetry *tekme* is its basis. The improvisatory art is the core of the Kyrgyz folklore, its centrifugal force. Through the epics, we can get an answer to the question what the nomadic civilisation gave to the humanity, what we found and lost in this historic process or which role it played in the self-identification of the ethnos.

The runic writing named *Orkhon-Enisey* originated in Central Asia. All these factors turned the ancient Kyrgyz state into one of the main centres of the Turkic civilisation. The origin and formation of these magnificent epics could be based on a direct result as a response from Kyrgyz people to the countless disasters that had happened to them in the past, after the decline of the Kyrgyz state and their migration to the *Tien-Shan*, their historical territory, where their next stage of history was associated with the struggles with the *Kara-kitai* and *Djungar* people and conquest of Genghis Khan.

Small epics take special and very important place in the treasury of cultural heritage of the Kyrgyz people². 'Small epics' in the oral folklore of Kyrgyz people combined various topics of epic songs, which are not included in the trilogy *Manas*, *Semetei* and *Seytek*. The term 'small epic' does not determine precisely the thing, since the volume of each of them is significant. The total number of small epics varies from 16 to 20. It is difficult to define the number more precisely because of the classification of the genre.

Kyrgyz folklore has a tradition of dividing small epics into the following genre groups:

1. Mythological (*Kojojash*, *Er-Tyoshtyuk*, *Joodarbeshim*);
2. Heroic (*Djanyl-Myrza*, *Kurmanbek*, *Janysh-Baiysh*, *Al-Tabylidy*, *Seyitbek*, *Shyrdakbek*);
3. Social and living (*Kedeykan*, *Mendirman*);
4. Lyrical and romantic (*Oldjobay* and *Kishimdjan*, *Sarinji-Byokey*).

The epics *Kojojash* and *Er-Tyoshtyuk* are ancient epic songs, which were composed during the tribal system. These epics have retained traces of the archaic mythological worldview of Kyrgyz people in their plot and reflected the peculiarity of their perception of the world as primary mythological concepts, such as totemism, animism and fetishism. The subjects of the epics *Kojojash* and *Er-Tyoshtyuk* mainly reflect the interests of the tribal collective in which single hero is the main character, pursuing the goal of preserving the family, as opposed to the representatives of the world of nature.

The epic *Kojojash* has reached us in three versions which are recorded from the narrators S. Konokbaev (1923), A. Usenbaev (1938) and T. Jeentaev (1949) at different times. The history of hunter *Kojojash* existed in the form of an oral prose and consisted of stories and legends. However, the song and epic form of the tale is more traditional, since the epic *Kojojash* was presented in the active repertoire of many well-known Kyrgyz storytellers. All three versions of the epic contain similar elements of plot. Central conflict, reflecting the opposition of the hunter and protector of wild cloven-hoofed animal *Echki Sur* (grey goats) is common for each of them. The version of the narrator A. Usenbaev is considered the most complete and highly artistic. This version contains the background of confrontation of *Kojojash* with *Echki Sur*.

In the mythology of the ancient Kyrgyz people there is a belief in the existence of spirits, protectors of wildlife³. As we see from the contents of the epic *Kojojash*, the hero pays for his relentless pursuit to prove their superiority over the patroness of wild mountain animals. In this central theme, we can see the echo of the totemic beliefs of the ancient Kyrgyz people. Most probably, the idea of inevitability of retribution for violation of human totem taboo is presented in the epic. Ancient human perception

of the world considered in close connection with the natural world around him, trying to justify the need for natural human needs, limiting its activity against the world of wildlife sacred taboos. Profound folk wisdom, which remains relevant in the modern era, where the eternal confrontation is revealed between man and nature forms the story of the epic.

The epic *Er-Tyoshtyuk* is a classic example of the epic of the early tribal system in which the most complete form of mythological picture of the world of the ancient Kyrgyz people is represented. The hero of the epic travelled to the underworld, where he fought with monsters and giants to set free kidnapped people and return them to their native land. The plot of this epic song was widespread among many Turkic peoples of Southern Siberia and Central Asia. It is a well-known fairy story version of the hero *Tyoshtyuk* in the folklore of Kazakh, Bashkir, Tatar and Uzbek peoples. According to the scientists, this circumstance indicates the fact that the plot basis of the epic song about the hero *Tyoshtyuk* formed in ancient times, when the Turkic peoples just appeared. The works of P.A Falev, V.M. Zhirmunsky, H.G Koroglu, S. Zakirov, J. Suvanbekov, S. Kayipov and K. Sadykov are devoted to the study of this epic⁴. Most researchers agree that this epic has passed all stages, from the myth to the heroic and epic tale during its historical evolution. The last phase of its existence was associated with the inclusion of *Tyoshtyuk* in the characters of the epic *Manas*.

The epic songs of heroic content, which are based on stories about the struggle of heroes against foreign invaders, belong to the next genre group of 'small epics'. The main events of the epic songs reflect the historical era of confrontation of Oirat Jungar invasion, dated to the 16th and 18th centuries, which is common for many Turkic peoples. The Mongol speaking representatives of Oirat state received the name *Kalmak* among the Turkic people and just under this name they appear in the Kyrgyz epic *Kurmanbek*, *Al-Tabyldy*,

*Al-Salton, Janyl Myrza, Seyitbek*⁵. There are a number of common features in the poetics of these stories that distinguish them from the previous mythical epic songs. They present a new interpretation of the heroic ideal associated with the chanting of the high spiritual qualities of a hero, his valour and courage. High spiritual qualities of the heroes of these epic stories are presented in self sacrificing for the sake of the protection of the native people and native land from foreign enemies and oppressors. Also, the theme of the internal unity of the people, the struggle of the characters with those who weaken this unity by their intrigues and betrayal become topical in these epic songs. Often a tragic death of the hero causes quarrels among relatives and entourage.

The tale about warrior-maiden *Janyl Myrze* is distinguished by special peculiarity among the epics about folk heroes. The time of formation of this epic story also refers to the historical period of the 16th and 18th centuries.

One of the features of the Kyrgyz nomadic culture is associated with the definition of the place of women in traditional Kyrgyz society, which is reflected in the epic. The respect for the woman, which is regarded as the best heroic quality, has existed in the nomadic mentality from ancient times.

It should be noted that the performance of small epics has its own specifics. As a rule, small epics, except the epic *Er-Tyoshtyuk*, are not performed by storytellers, but performed by singers - *akyns* and are accompanied by a musical instrument. This fact has left a unique imprint not only on the poetics of small epics but also on their ideological and aesthetic content and thematic diversity.

The last group of the genre of small epics is represented by epic songs of lyrical content, on the formation of which the changed social conditions

of the life affected. These conditions have caused interest in the sphere of private life, defined the importance of ethics and needs for lighting in oral poetic art. An extension of the intercultural relations of Kyrgyz people with neighbors in the region could be considered as another factor that influenced on their development as a special genre group, in which the oral creativity of the form of lyrical songs has deep traditional roots. However, the Kyrgyz epic songs *Sarindji-Byokei*, *Oldjobay and Kishimdjan*, *Kedeykan*, *Janysh-Baiysh* have their national roots, since they are based on the long tradition of epic poetry of the preceding period, reflecting the social and domestic problems⁶.

The plot of the epic *Kedeykan*, like that of the epic *Kurmanbek*, reflects the late feudal era, in which a clear class differentiation is shown between rich and poor people. The very name of the main character of the epic *Kedeykan* means 'khan of the poor', which gathers the peers among the poor people, with whom he takes vengeance on bai people, attacking and hijacking their herds. *Kedeykan*, endowed with a clear mind, wins in a verbal duel with a man who is one of Khan's closest persons. *Khan Azimkan* passes his throne to the brave young man as a result of a bet. After becoming *Khan*, *Kedeykan* ruled according to laws of justice, protecting the interests of disadvantaged people.

The epic *Sarindji-Bokey* reflects the social problems of the people, where the family conflict between brothers *Bokey* and *Jamgyrchi* is widely described. Before his death, *Jamgyrchi* asks his brother *Bokey* to bring up his youngest son *Sarindji*. After the death of *Jamgyrchi Khan*, there was a conflict between *Sarindji* and *Bokey*, who wanted to take away the bride of *Sarinji*, beauty *Bermet*, against her will, the young woman having been engaged to him since their childhood. After numerous events and struggles against insidious *Bokey*, *Sarinji* saves his bride *Bermet* from *Bokey* and takes

vengeance on his uncle for all their troubles.

Original epic *Janysh-Baiysh*, both conceptually and in terms of a plot, was formed in the conditions of ethnic and cultural relations with the Turkic-Mongol epic heritage. Some of the motifs of the epic have similarity with the Uzbek epic *Alpamysh* and with Altai epic *Alyp Manash*, in particular, the motifs of captivity during sleep, an invulnerable hero, captured and imprisoned in the dungeon, and rescued with the help of a horse. The epic, according to the scholars, has preserved relics of ancient tales - hero *Baiysh* does not sink in the water, does not burn in fire, cannot be killed by a bullet; wonderful horse Janysh can speak. This confirms that the epic formed and evolved from the earliest times of formation of tribal relations till the late feudal system, covering different stages of history of Kyrgyz people. This is also confirmed by the late epic layer of the tale, where the events related to the invasion of jungarian conquerors are referred to the late Middle Ages (15th and 18th centuries); there Kalmak represents the collective image of the enemy of this period. Thus, the epic *Janysh-Baiysh* describes the heroic struggle of the heroic brothers with the worst enemy of the people, Kalmak.

The plot movement in the epics necessarily involves rituals associated with the birth and the naming of a future hero, a warrior; also there are wedding and household rites, such as wellwishes, conspiracies, laments, wills - this is the traditional background, on which the main script of the epic is built.

Thus, it should be noted that the socio-historical conditions in the history of the formation and existence of small epics caused replacement of certain archaic stories by new, historical ones, which blocked many mythological layers with the layers of people struggling with the Kalmyk invaders.

The history of the study of small epics started in 1956, when the first

extended meeting of the Academic Council of the Institute of Language and Literature 'About the people of small epics' under the Academy of Sciences of the Kyrgyz SSR took place. The main steps for the study of small epics and the first steps to address the compositional differences between existed versions on systematisation of materials and specific attention to the study of the foundations of traditional epics were outlined.

The works of K. Asanaliev, K. Rysaliev, J. Tashtemirov, R. Z. Kydyrbaev were devoted to the study of problems of 'small epics', plot development and poetics. Exploring the *Sarinji Bokey*⁷ and *Janyl Myrza*⁸ R. Z. Kydyrbaeva analyses the epic in strict accordance with the textual principles, based on all known recorded epics of that time, which are principle today. They were recorded in the most active period of collecting folklore texts, and, most importantly, in the conditions of natural existence of the epic. Comparative analysis of the available versions were carried out, defining the era of creation of the epic (domination of Kalmyk people over Kyrgyz people), details of the main character is revealed, parallel has been carried out with the epics of other nations (*Kalevala*, a poem about Joan of Arc, etc.).

Er Tyoshtyuk is a substantial monograph of Kyrgyz scholars and folklorists S. Zakirova⁹, J. Subanbekov¹⁰, B. Kebekovoy¹¹, S. Kaipova¹², K. Sadykova¹³ devoted to small epics.

Research study was completed with a comparative analysis of four versions of Kyrgyz epic with Kazakh version - *Er-Tyoshtyuk* and one for the Western Siberian Tatars - *Yirtyushlyuk*.

The foretelling of Sayakbay Karalaev of epic 'Er-Tyushtyuk' was translated into French. In 1965, the epic was published in Paris under the title of 'The wonderful adventure of *Er Tyushtyuk*, the giant of steppes, to the underground and other places' (An epic of the *Manas* series)¹⁴. The work of N. E. Nikiporets, 'New foreign editions of the epic of the Soviet peoples' was

devoted to this edition. In his work, the author quotes French researchers: 'Kyrgyz people ... have a rare advantage of having preserved to this day the tradition of passing epic tales, the volume and richness of which are highly remarkable'¹⁵.

Thus, small epics of the Kyrgyz people have different aspects, which cover a variety of sides of peoples' life. Today, our primary task is to publish the epic *Manas*, the original small epics, folklore and legends. Promotion and popularisation of the best examples of national culture is a spiritual foundation for the patriotic upbringing of citizens, raising national self-identity, giving importance to universal values, and contributing to further understanding among the peoples and nations in the modern world.

Reference

- 1 Zhirmunskiy V.M. Tyurkskiy geroicheskiy epos. Leningrad, 1974. p. 25.
- 2 Subanbekov J. Kyrgyz elinin baatyrdyk kenje eposu. Frunze, 1963. 21–b.
- 3 Bezertinov R.N. Tengrianstvo – religiya tyurkov i mongolov. Naberezhnye Chelny, 1997. p. 17.
- 4 Zhirmunskiy V.M. Tyurkskiy geroicheskiy epos. Leningrad, 1974; Zakirov S. “Er–Töshtük” eposunun varianttary jana ideyalyk korkomdyk ozgocholyktory. Frunze, 1960; Subanbekov J. Kirgizskiye narodnyye geroicheskiye eposy. Frunze, 1970; Kayypov S. Problemy poetiki eposa “Er–Tyoshtyuk”. Frunze, 1989; Sadykov K. Kyrgyzskiy geroicheskiy epos i russkiy bylinnyy epos v svete tipologicheskoy obshchnosti. Frunze, 1990.
- 5 Subanbekov J. Kyrgyz elinin baatyrdyk kenje eposu. Frunze, 1963. p. 9.
- 6 Kebekova B. Kyrgyz, kazak akyndarynyn chygarmachylyk baylanyshy. Frunze, 1985. p. 32.
- 7 Kydyrbayeva R.Z. Ideyno–khudozhestvennyye osobennosti eposa “Sarinji–Byokyoy”. Frunze, 1958. p. 12.
- 8 Kydyrbayeva R.Z. Narodno–poeticheskiye traditsii v epose “Janyl Myrza”. Frunze, 1960. p. 43.
- 9 Zakirov S. “Er–Töshtük” eposunun varianttary jana ideyalyk korkomdyk ozgocholyktory. Frunze, 1960.
- 10 Subanbekov J. Kirgizskiye narodnyye geroicheskiye eposy. Frunze, 1970. p. 18.
- 11 Kebekova B. Kyrgyz, kazak akyndarynyn chygarmachylyk baylanysh. Frunze, 1985. p. 32.
- 12 Kayypov S. Problemy poetiki eposa “Er–Toshtyuk”. Frunze, 1989. p. 57.
- 13 Sadykov K. Kyrgyzskiy geroicheskiy epos i russkiy bylinnyy epos v svete tipologicheskoy obshchnosti. Frunze, 1990. p. 21.
- 14 Aventures merveilleuses sous terre et ailleurs de Er–Töshtük le géant des steppes. Epopée du cycle de Manas. Gallimard, 1965.

15 Nikiporets N.E. Novyye zarubezhnyye izdaniya eposa narodov SSSR. In: Tekstotogicheskoye izucheniye eposa. Moscow, 1971. p. 13.

RESTORING LOST MEMORIES AND INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE THROUGH EURASIAN EPICS

EUNKYUNG OH

Director of Institute for Eurasian Turkic Studies
of Dongduk Women's University

Relative to the creative economy of South Korea, the importance of the Eurasian Turkic states is growing. The reorganized resource-rich countries of the Eurasian continent, ancient nations belonging to the Silk Road, have established themselves from the beginning of the 21st century as political and economic powers in the international arena. CIS countries such as Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan were protagonists of the great Silk Road that linked the East and the West that had been cut off from each other in ancient times.

Of course, we can suggest the world famous Via Augusta, built in the 4th century B.C. by the Roman Empire, and other European arteries as great roads comparable to the Silk Road. Before that there was great road in Persian Empire, too. However, most of those great historical roads emerged as a means to conquer neighboring countries and show off the exploits of a centralized throne. In this sense, the great and ancient imperial roads were limited by their own boundaries and were not intended to connect various peoples around the world. On the other hand, the Silk Road operated as a truly international road, offering free passage to a variety of people across

borders and making it the driving force of an intense economic and social life of various nations rather than pursuing the political objectives of a particular country.

The Silk Road was made neither for conquering other nations nor to rule them. It was paved spontaneously for life and survival as well as for communication between indigenous peoples. Even though the Silk Road was not 'road' but a network system which connected from a oasis city to city, it was created not for a specific nation but for all peoples to prosper together. And it was a productive and creative path that could integrate the East and the West more than 5 thousand years. That is why we can call the Silk Road great and glorious. This historical spirit of the Silk Road is key for resolving international disputes and conflicts and should be restored by all our representatives attending this gathering today in collaboration with UNESCO. That is a meaningful task for all of us and a milestone of world peace to be achieved. Furthermore, to restore the lost and glorious Silk Road spirit is to restore cultural pride and identity for the descendants of those who created this great route. Thus we cannot but attach significant meaning to this restoring task in so far as it shows a way to organize human activity so that it brings peace and hope for all of mankind.

Not much attention is paid to the fact that the Turks were in the center of the Great Silk Road. It may be controversial that their names were not usually mentioned in the history even though the main route of the Silk Road traveled even to Korea along the steppes of Central Asia. The Turks had resided throughout the whole Silk Road spread over Altai, Tatarstan, Bashkir, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan (even though they are Persian, in the meaning of their cultural ties with Turks in the Central Asia) and Sakha, forming so-called 'Turkic belt'.

Now these Central Eurasian countries are attempting to find their own

national identity, to relive the past glory and restore the national self-esteem. Externally these Eurasian states are attempting to organically integrate their brother Turks who had been scattered over the Eurasian continent in the various spheres of politics, economy, culture and the sciences. This objective is not unrelated to the plan to construct a new 21st century Silk Road, utilizing the existing and abundant natural resources. A policy of visa-free traffic between neighboring brother Turkic countries may serve as the political pavement for the construction of a new Silk Road, and the active movements within these Eurasian countries to restore their own heroic epics and list them as UNESCO intangible cultural heritages represent an attempt to recreate the glorious cultural Silk Road that had been missing for a long time.

In this era of a New Silk Road we are able to build a cultural infrastructure for the promotion of political and economic cooperation between the Eurasian countries and Korea, ultimately by identifying cultural correlations and thus expand a consensus of mutual understanding. Thus our concrete purpose is to research and analyze the epic poems and intangible cultural heritages that both Eurasian and Korean peoples have preserved since ancient times, and finally to discover our binary common cultural code. I think all these efforts will create an environment conducive to the recovery of a cultural homogeneity between the Eurasian and Korean peoples.

It is very meaningful for Korea to take part in this process of restoration. Koreans and Eurasians share numerous common characteristics. Among other things, they are homogeneous in language since the Korean language also belongs to the Altaic language family, like the Turkic languages. Moreover, we can find much evidence that Koreans had had a relationship with the Turks since ancient times. From the cultural and genealogical points of view we can infer a mutual relevance between Koreans and Turks.

Of course, most of such relevance lies in traces that we could not find in existing history books or ancient records, but I believe such traces will be investigated by UNESCO. Now UNESCO is making efforts to restore the ancient intangible cultural heritage of the Eurasians and Koreans.

Although the ancient Turks did not have a written literature, they did have strong oral traditions and folktales. Especially oral narratives including heroic epic poems and other epics that were passed on from ancient to modern times. This points to the possibility of discovering mutual affinities with the ancient Korean cultural heritage and a common cultural code among the different nations, thus dissolving the cultural foreignness and borders existing between Korea and Eurasian countries. Under the present circumstances the only way to dissolve cultural borders is, as I have already suggested, to conduct a comparative analysis of Turkic and Korean oral epics. As seen in the case of many nations, ancient mythology is hidden only in the unconscious memory of the people and there are no records of it. Therefore there is no choice but to rely on orally transmitted works. Since epic poems functioned as substitutes of historic recording before the invention of writing, we can presume the history and culture of a mythological era through oral epics. There is evidence that the Turks used their own letters in the eighth century, but their records only survive in the Orhon inscriptions. It is said that the Central Asian Turks and Goguryeo maintained friendly relationships. However, these records are very fragmented and limit our ability to decipher the ancient cultural codes common to each nation. Still, the inexhaustible number of oral epics passed down from the prehistoric era makes up for the lost national history and memory. At this point it is quite notable that the Eurasian epics contribute to establishing the identity of the Turkic peoples, while there are abundant data that have academic value in these Eurasian epics for deciphering the

origin or cultural code inherent to the Korean people.

In the process of comparative study, we have noticed an interesting fact, that there is no heroic epic poem in Korea comparable to the colorful Turkic epic poems narrating historical events. If we remember that Koreans had been living an agricultural life for a long time rather than a nomadic life, it is very noteworthy that the Korean heroic epic poems that are intrinsic to horse-riding peoples have come down as a form of shamanic epic poems. This makes it necessary to carry out a comparative study between Korean shamanic epic poems and the Turkic epos in Central Asia which have a strong oral tradition. If we assume that Korean heroic epic stories and historical facts had been potentially dissolved in the shamanic epic poems, the Turkic oral literature that has been delivered in the form of both heroic and shamanic epics will provide valuable clues not only for analyzing and investigating the general mechanism of epos, but will also offer significant information concerning the prehistory of Korea.

The reason that Turkic epic poems are important is that they are related to ancient history. Notable among them is *Alpamysh*, which is known to represent the Turkic nations and appears in many different versions. For example, the Altay version is more like a mythology; in time it gradually changed into the epic poem which includes historical facts in the process of being disseminated and transformed into the versions of *Kongrot* and *Oghuz*. Epic poems played an important role to preserve the history and spread a story in time without records or chroniclers. Thus, a history of the migration of Turkic peoples and the formation of particular tribe can be inferred from the different versions of *Alpamysh*. In the version of *Altay Alp Batir*, his wife and their seven sons are regarded as ancestors of the Altaic people. Moreover, *Alpamysh* in the Uzbek version contributed to the unification of tribes and is described as the ancestor of each of the tribes.

In this manner, the epic poem, which had been integrated from 'the Turkic Belt', or the Silk Road of the Turkic people, which played such a large role in world history, give us important clues for understanding the worldview of the Turkic peoples. It is same with the worldview of present-day Turkic people, and moreover it preserves the 'archetype' of Korean shamanic epic poems.

Oral literature, compared to written literature, contains greater universality in that it transmits the morality and universal consciousness of human beings more than specific individual emotions.

Manas, *Keroglu* and *Alpamysh* are known as the typical heroic epic poems of the Central Asian Turkic peoples. Such epic poems have been delivered as *Alip Manash* among Altay mountaineers, as *Alpamis* among Kazakhs and Karakalpaks, as *Alpamysh* among Uzbeks, as *Alpamisa* among Bashikirs, as *Alip Menshen* among Tatars, and as *Bamsi Beyrek* among *Oghuz Turks*.

The diffusion of the epic poem over the Central Asian region played an important role in the dissolution and integration of regional nomad peoples and firmly laid the economic and cultural solidarity between Eurasian peoples.

At first the Turkic epic poem existed in the foothills of Altai as early as the 7th and 8th centuries and was then supplanted to the Syrdarya River region by the Oghuz Turks around the 9th and 10th centuries. From then on, the epic began to spread into the Kazakh steppe as *the Kypchaks* moved westward. The final version of *Alpamysh*, which Uzbeks and Kazakhs share, had been completed with the migration of the Uzbeks to Southern Uzbekistan.

The heroic epic poem had spread widely among Turkic tribes in the form of various versions. These versions are divided largely into four variants:

Kongrat, *Kypchak*, *Oghuz*, and *Altai*. According to the assumption of V. Zhirmunsky the heroic features that appeared in the *Alpamysh* versions began to spread among Turkic tribes residing in the Altai Mountains in the form of legends as early as the 6th and 8th centuries, from there they were transferred to the southern area of the Syrdaria River with the migration of *the Oghuz* tribe and then flowed to the *Kypchaks* just before the Mongolian invasion. Karl Reichle asserts that *the Oghuz* version was already formed between the 9th and 11th centuries even before the westward migration of the Oghuz. Topographically the Oghuz version ranges over East Anatolia, Azerbaijan, the Caucasus and Iran, while Kongrot spread around Syrdaria and Altai along the Altai Mountains. *Bamsi Beyrek*, regarded as the Oghuz version, contains folk tales narrated in *the Book of Dede Korkut*, which is the most famous among the epic stories of the ancient Turks. It bears similarity with *Alpamysh* in plot and subjects, because the content of epic tales exerted influence on each other since the Kongrot and *Oghuz tribes* had begun to have relationships. This kind of *Alpamysh* has been conveyed in the form of the epic poem among Uzbeks, Kara-kalpaks, Kazakhs, and tribes around Altai, whereas it is legend or folk story among Tajiks, Tartars and some Central Asian people.

The epic of *Manas* is distinguished both in its size and in its degree of artistic completion from other world epics. The importance of this great epic poetry is not at all inferior to that of the Homeric epic. It is expected that the study of *Manas* could make it possible to restore the prototype of Central Asian prehistory, literature, philosophy and folklore to some extent, to say nothing of scientific achievements in the study of epics. We cannot exclude the possibility that the prototype of the work has been changed in the artistic shaping process, but the history known to everybody and content of *Manas* largely coincide with each other. From this point of view, *Manas* can

be valuable unrecorded historical data, let alone one of the most valuable epics.

Even though *Manas* is a Kyrgyz epic poem, it can be counted as the history of most of the Turks in Central Asia. The reality is that world history has been written in the eyes of western historians with orientalist views until the present time and very little attention has been paid to the history of the Turks, Tajiks and Central Asia as far as the international community is concerned. *Manas* is the name of a legendary Kyrgyz leader who laid a cornerstone for the Kyrgyz people scattered over Central Asia to find their identity and win their independence as well as the name of a heroic epic poem that conveys the nomadic history of the Kyrgyz people.

An epic about Turkic history focusing on Kyrgyz and its significant events had been passed on in part even before the 10th century, and it came to take a unified oral form among the Kyrgyz people in the second half of the 10th century. However, there was no specific title or name to cover this entire narrative as a genre. Kyrgyz Khan Manas had settled down with a group of his compatriots in present day Kyrgyzstan, which began to take shape as an independent state only in the 14th century. Then people began to sing all this story called *Manas* and include the other poems that had up to that point been passed orally as *Manas*. This epic poem, the story of the heroic deeds of Manas, his son Semetei and his grandson Seitek, was orally transmitted until the 15th century.

Manas was not created on the basis of personal imagination by a specific writer or storyteller. It was composed of narratives taken from contemporary incidents and trends. *Manas* is known for not being related to *Alpamysh*, but they have considerable affinities in accordance with the performers' styles, both being heroic epics. Likewise, such cultural affinities between Korean and Eurasian intangible cultural heritage should

be compared and analyzed as a series.

Therefore I would like to urge UNESCO not to stop restoring valuable intangible cultural heritage for the development of world culture. To this end it would be quite necessary:

- To identify the process of formation and development of the Turkic epic poems in terms of culture and history;
- To identify the affinities between Korean and Eurasian epic poems;
- To set up a pan-Asian database for the research of Korean folklore as a prehistoric cultural code transcending shamanism;
- To establish homogeneous cultural correlations between Korean and Eurasian peoples for further open cultural interaction.

The research supported by UNESCO on intangible cultural heritage and epic poems will act as a bridge to restore the lost valuable memory of the past and to link the past to the present. Furthermore, this bridge will also reestablish the connection between the countries of the Great Silk Road that had been disrupted at one point in the past. And then the bridge may come to be called a bridge of open communication and integration in its real meaning, which would coincide with the spirit of the Great Silk Road. Therefore, UNESCO in collaboration with us, the Turkic specialists, should assume the cherished mission of paving the road and building the bridge for these peoples to open their minds.

Reference

- 라츠네프스키(1992), 김호동역, 『징기스한』, 지식산업사, 136-137 쪽.
- 박종성(2002), 「중앙아시아·아프리카 구비서사시와 한국 창세시의 변 천」, 『구비문학, 분석과 해석의 실제』, 서울: 도서출판 월인, 185-194 쪽.
- 서대석(2001), 「동아시아 영웅 신화의 비교연구」, 『한국 신화의 비교연구』, 서울: 집문당, 556 -564 쪽.
- 양민중(2006), 「동북아시아 무속 구비문학사 연구」, 『슬라브 연구』, 제22권 제1호, 273-314쪽.
- 오은경·마맛쿨 조라예브(2011), 「알페르쉬 서사시에 재현된 신화적 요소」, 『중앙아시아·카프카즈 연구』, 제 3권 제1호, 47-66쪽.
- 오은경(2011), 「알페르쉬 서사시의 수르한다리여 판본에 한 고찰」, 『중동연구』, 제 30권 2호, 97-112쪽.
- (2011), 「우즈베크 알페르쉬와 한국 주몽신화의 활쏘기 모티프 비교연구」, 『외국문학연구』, 제44호, 121-136쪽.
- (2013), 「우즈베크의 구연자와 구연학과, 알페르쉬 콘그룻(우즈 베크) 판본의 구연본 연구」, 『중동연구』, 제 32 권 1호, 139-166쪽.
- (2011), 「알페르쉬와 주몽신화의 영웅 신화적 요소 비교연구」, 『중동문제연구』, 명지중동문제연구소, 제10권, 2호, 105-125쪽.
- (2015), 「우즈베크 영웅서사시를 통한 우즈베크인의 욕망과 자아 이상(ego ideal) 분석」, 『한국중동학회논총』, 제36권 제1호, 147-177쪽.
- (2015), 「투르크 구전서사시의 샤머니즘적 모티프 연구」, 『중동문제연구』, 14권 3호, 2015, 115-145쪽.
- 조동일(1980), 「무가의 문학적 성격」, 『구비문학의 세계』, 서울: 새 문사, 236쪽.
- (1994), 『한국문학통사』(3판), 지식산업사, 568 -569 쪽.
- 캠벨 조셉(1999), 『천의 얼굴을 가진 영웅』, 이윤기 옮김, 서울: 민음사, 44-45쪽.
- Bayat Fuzuli(2006), Oğuz Destan Dünyası, İstanbul: Ötüken,
- Caferoğlu A.(1953), “Türk Onomastiğinde At Kültürü”, Türkiyat Mecmuası Cilt X'dan Ayrı Basım, İstanbul: Osman Yalçın Matbaası, p. 202.

- Cemilođlu Mustafa(1999), Halk Hikayelerinde Dođum Motifi , Uludađı Üniversitesi Basımevi, Bursa.
- Chawick & Zhirmunsky(1969), Oral Epic of Central Asia , Cambridge Univ. Press.
- Cornford F.(1952), Principium Sapientiae, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Çınar Ali Abbas(1993), Türklerde At ve Atçılık, Kültür Bakanlığı Halk Kültürlerini Araştırma ve Geliştirme Genel Müdürlüğü yayınları, Ankara: Feryal Matbaası.
- Direnkova N. P.(1949), “Ohotnichie Legendi Kumandinstsev,” Shornik Muzeya Antropologi I Etnografi, T. 11.
- Ergun Metin, Alıp Manaş, T.C. Kültür Bakanlığı: Ankara, 1998. Fedakar, Selami(2001), “Alpamiş Destanı ve Bey Böylek Hikayesi Arasında Bir Karşılaştırma”, Milli Folklor, yıl: 13, Sayı: 51, s.51-64.
- (2004), “Alpamiş Destanı ve Dede Korkut Kitabı'nda Kahramanların Ortaya Çıkışı”, Milli Folklor , yıl: 16, Sayı:61, s.134-141.
- (2004), Sözlü Kompozisyon Teorisi Bağlamında Özbek Destan Anlatıcıları, Mitten Meddaha Türk Halk Anlatıları Uluslararası Sempozyumu, Gazi Üniversitesi, Ankara, s.1-10.
- Mirzayev T.(1968) “Alpamiş” Destanının Özbek Varyantları. Taşkent: Fan.
- Memmedov A.M.(1983), “Azerbaycan Dilinin Erken Tarihine Dair Materiallar”, Azerbaycan Filologiyası Meseleleri, Baku, p.19.
- Köprülü F.(1978), “Alp”, İslam Ansiklopedisi, c. 1, İstanbul, pp. 380-381
- Reichl K.(1992), Turkic oral epic poetry: Tradition, Forms, Poetic Structure, New York-London: Garland, (The Albert Bates Lord Studies in Oral Tradition 7).
- Ođuz Öcal(1998), “Türk Halkbilimi Çalışmalarında Eş Metin ve Benzer Metin Sorunu”, Milli Folklor, s. 42, pp. 2-6. Ögel Bahaeddin(1984), Türk Kültür Tarihine Giriş IV, Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, p. 97-201.
- Potantin G.N.(1899), Vostochnie Motivi Srednevekovom Yevropeyskom Epose, Moskova. Üçüncü Kemal(2006), Alpamiş, İstanbul: Töre Yayın.
- Yarmatov, İ.(1993), “Alpamiş” Destanındaki Surhayl Timsalinin Mitolojik Temeli, İlimiy tehnika taraqqiyoti -istiqlol garovi. Taşkent.

- Zarifov, H.(1958), Folklor va arxeologiya materiallarini qiyosiy o'rganish masalasiga doir, Özbek dili ve Edebiyati. Taşkent., sayı 1.
- Iyoldoshev I., Baxsh Atamasi hakida, O'zbek Tili va Adabiyoti, 2004, 1-son, pp. 59– 62.
- Jirmunskiy V.M. Voprosi genezisa v istorii epocheskogo skazani ya ob Alpamishе, Tashkent: O'z Fan,1959, pp. 26–60.
- Jo'rayev M. Bo'ri hakidagi qadimgi Turkiy miflar va O'zbek folklori: Adab'iot gulshani. O'zbek filologiyaciga irtadqiqotlar. 1-kitob.–Toshkent: Mehnat, 1999. pp.8-16
- Jalolov G'. Alpomish distaoni va ertaklar//O'zbek tili va adabiyoti- Toshkent, 1999. – 2-son- pp.11-14.
- Mirzayev T. Alpomish dostonining O'zbek Variantlari. Toshkent: Fan, 1968. p. 97.
- Mikhailov T.M. Shamanizm i Epos//Epicheskoe tvorchestvo Narodov Cibiri-Ulan Eda, 1973. – pp.91.
- Maxmut Koshgariy. Devonu Lug'ot Turk. III jilt. – Toshkent: Fan, 1963. –p.155.
- Potanin G.N. Primechaniya//Nikiforov N.Ya. Anoskiy cbornik— Omsk, 1915. — pp. 221–224.
- Reichl K. Turkiy Epos: traditsii, formi, poeticheskaya cturktura./per. c. angl. V.Treicter pod red. D.A.F unka–M: Vost.lit. 2008.– pp.54–55.
- Urdimov Sh. Alplik tizimi haqidagi tasavvurlar va “Alpomish” dastoni, “Alpomish” O'zbek xalq qahramonlik eposi. – Tashkent Fan, 1999. B.159.

TRILOGY OF THE EPIC 'MANAS, SEMETEV, SEYTEK' AS NATIONAL IDENTITY OF KYRGYZ PEOPLE

ASEL ISAEVA

Institute of Language and Literature of the National Academy
of Sciences of the Kyrgyz Republic

The epic *Manas* occupies a central place in the spiritual culture of the Kyrgyz people as a consolidating factor of the ethnos and basis for self-identity. The significance of the epic in the treasury of human heritage was recognised by the world community in 1995. The resolution 'On celebration of the 1000th anniversary of the Kyrgyz National Epos *Manas* was adopted at the 49th session of the UN General Assembly carried out by UNESCO and UNDP. The 1000th anniversary of the epic 'Manas' was celebrated on the international level with the participation of more than 60 countries. A number of exhibitions, festivals, and conferences dedicated to the epic 'Manas' were held in Turkey, China, USA, Russia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Belarus and other countries. The inclusion of *Manas* on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2013 was the next important step in the recognition of the Epos as World Heritage.

Throughout their historical past the Kyrgyz people led the nomadic way of life which defined the component of its spiritual life almost entirely embodied in the oral epic and lyrical arts. The epic *Manas* became the core of the Kyrgyz epic poetry during that period of history. An epic full

of historical memory absorbing the most important events of the people mainly relating to the struggling for independence and defining its genre is a heroic epic. As is known, the historical formation of the heroic epic took a long period. This formation went gradually, - that is, initially it was a myth, then a fairy tale and finally an archaic epic.

The period of major transformations of the genre form took place between the genre of fairy tale and heroic epic¹. The main feature and peculiarity of fairy tales is the presence of magic represented by heroes and magical tools. Due to the fact that the tale was formed at the early stages of the development of the human society, the human being felt a total dependence on the forces of the outside world, the other world - deities, spirits, etc.; therefore the hero was weak, dependent and needed assistance. Therefore, heroes with magic and magical qualities became important in the fairy tale.

An epic (an archaic one) appeared in the later period, and it came from fairy-tale stories. In this regard, epic stories are so much common with fairy tales. But, at the same time, the epic represents a new genre. Epics occur during that period, at the stage of the development of the human culture, when man becomes aware of his own capability, and no longer needs the help of magic and supernatural forces. The growing trust in the human abilities has led to the fact that the heroes of this genre are persons with extraordinary qualities, selected, endowed with special qualities that are generalised in the definition of a 'hero', which is not typical of a fairy tale.

But the genre of epic is not homogeneous. It went through various stages of formation in the process of its historical development. S. Neklyudov divides the epic by the time of its appearance and formation into two groups: the archaic epics and heroic ones².

Mythological themes always prevail in the archaic epic, which is rooted

in the fairytale; heroes are endowed with special qualities, but to some extent they depend on external magical powers. *Er Toshtyuk*, *Kojodjash* and *Kokul* are archaic epics in the Kyrgyz folklore. Archaic epics basically have commonality with the oral-poetic heritage of other Turkic peoples, with whom the ancient Kyrgyz people shared common geographical, political and cultural ties during the general history in *Yenisei*, *Altai*.

Heroic epics are products of the folk epic poetry of later times, which can be roughly determined by the actual historical events that are reflected in an art form.

Speaking about the historical background of the composition of the heroic epic, S. Neklyudov notes that heroic epic stories occur in nations that have passed the phase of state consolidation. They give the depiction of historical enemies of the people creating epic, which makes them the reflection of historical wars. In the Kyrgyz epic heritage the heroic epics are the following: *Manas*, *Semetei*, *Seytek*, *Kurmanbek*, *Er Tabyldy* and *Janyl Myrza*.

The heroic historical epic is basically an archaic one. It appeared that the archaic epic has absorbed some historical memories. The epic *Manas* has a long process of development, characterised by the overlapping of later realities with the more ancient ones. In the course of time the bearers of the epic ceased to understand the value of many archaic motifs; however, the ingrained tradition has preserved them for the descendants.

The role and place of the epic *Manas* in the Kyrgyz oral folklore is generally defined as a nationwide epic. Having appeared and developed at the stage of the state consolidation of the Kyrgyz people (8th and 9th centuries), the epic evolution was completed. *Manas* was well known around the people, regardless of the clan they belonged to, was performed everywhere on territory populated by the Kyrgyz ethnos and was perceived as a national identity. Here lies the main difference between 'small epics'

and ‘Manas’: they were created within one tribe and described storylines connected with one particular race, which made it possible to regard them as tribes.

Its belonging entirely to the Kyrgyz people is the main feature of the epic, which is confirmed by E. Meletinsky, a well-known folklorist: *Manas* belongs exclusively to the Kyrgyz people and its content was determined by the history of the Kyrgyz people³.

The epic *Manas* was discovered by Chokan Valikhanov (the great Kazakh scholar, traveller, historian, ethnographer and scout) in 1856, during his expedition to Lake Issyk Kul. Initially he recorded on paper one of the most important episodes of the epic, *Reminiscences of Kokete* as well as historical, ethnographic and philological assessment of the *Essays of Jungaria*⁴. After Ch. Valikhanov, Vasily Radlov (Friedrich Wilhelm), a Russian scientist of the German origin, travelled to Issyk-Kul in 1862, where he recorded the main episodes of the epic as well as *Er Toshtyuk* in the Chu Valley in 1869. The text of the epic was published by him in Cyrillic transcription in the work *Examples of folk literature of Turkic peoples*⁵. He was the first who translated the epic into a foreign (German) language and published it in Berlin.

V. Radlov highly appreciated the poetic structure of the epic and noted the richness of its content and integrity of the epic as a uniform epos. The scientist was able to find the development of the Kyrgyz folklore unaffected by the external civilisation: ‘These songs clearly prove that the folk poetry of the Kara-Kyrgyz people belong to some period, which can be referred to as ‘the truly epic period’. This period coincides with the classical Greek period, when the Greek epic song about the Trojan War had not yet been recorded, but lived in the real form of folk poetry in the oral traditions’⁶. He gave special importance to the figures of storytellers,

their improvisatory art. V. Radlov was the first to raise the issue about the recording of the epic on the paper.

Thus, Ch. Valikhanov and V. Radlov are the initiators of contemporary studies on *Manas* and of systematic recording of the epic.

Regular systematic work on the recording of the oral folklore of the Kyrgyz people started in 1922, during the Soviet time. At that very time the Manuscript Fund of the National Academy of Sciences of the Kyrgyz Republic was established. From 1922 to 1926, Ybyray Abdurahmanov and Kayym Miftakov (folklorists) carried out complete recording of the epic *Manas* (part I) from Sagymbay Orozbekov, one of the last great storytellers of the 20th century. The scientists could not record the second and third parts (*Semetei* and *Seytek*) of the epic due to the latter's illness and death in 1930. The full version of the epic was recorded at different times from the other great storyteller Sayakbay Karalaev by the scientists of the Academy of Sciences. At the present time 35 versions of the epic *Manas*, *Semetei*, *Seytek* are kept in the Manuscript Collections of the National Academy of Sciences of the Kyrgyz Republic, which have been recorded from various narrators in the following years.

The structure of the epic *Manas* is a complex conglomerate of episodes, which are united by one storyline and the main character, Manas. Speaking about the structure of the epic, Ch. Valikhanov made an important conclusion: *Manas* is an encyclopedic collection of all Kyrgyz myths, fairy tales, legends, belonging to the same time and grouped around a single person, hero Manas. It is like a steppe Iliad. This great epic covers information about the lifestyle, traditions, customs, geography, religious and medical knowledge, as well as the international relations of the Kyrgyz people⁷.

Being a trilogy (as most of epics are), the epic is based on the principle

of genealogical cyclisation. Narration about several generations of heroes - *Manas*, his son *Semetei* and his grandson *Seytek* - is the main character of the story development. Sayakbai Karala uluu expanded the legend by adding a story about *Kenen*, the son of *Seytek*, and then his descendants *Alymsyrak* and *Kulansyrak*. Narrator Jusup Mamai, who lived in China, recorded the narration about seven generations of *Manas*. But the ternary structure remains the most stable form of a traditional epic.

Despite the wide range of versions, *Manas*, *Semetei*, *Seytek* is a single work. This is confirmed by the unity of the plot, themes and images. The artwork is sealed by uniform ideological orientation. Various versions have similar artistic wordings which have a traditional and stable nature. The idea about the main story components of epic narration, which include the core event that composes the pivot of the epic story, was already shaped among the people.

The latest researches of the epic - linguists, historians, ethnographers and folklorists - have proved the idea of Ch. Valikhanov about the encyclopedic character of the epic, revealing in it the following information on ethnography and state system of the Kyrgyz people:

- 2,000 personal names (in the version by Sagymbay Orozbakuulu);
- 6,000 terms relating to horse breeding and animal husbandry;
- 150 terms relating to the state system, starting from the Hun terms till the terms from the late 19th to 20th centuries;
- 180 zoonyms;
- 300 everyday life terms;
- 500 tokens of military ranks.

These data show the scale of the image space of the epic, which is preserved and passed only in oral. Therefore, the storytellers are very important in the preservation and development of the epic, who

were referred to as *jomokchu* during the *truly epic period* and *manaschi* (*semeteychi*) in the Soviet times. The strongest of them developed the epic by adding their own episodes to the traditional composition, thereby combining the performance, reproduction and development of the legend in their works. The role of storytellers was so great that the people kept the names of the most significant of them in their memories. R. Z. *Kydyrbaeva*, who studied the epic, writes: ‘... the last (19th) century informed us about the names of the narrators of *Manas*: Keldybek, Akylbek, Nazar, Tynybek, Balyk, Diykanbay, Suranchi, Chonbasha, Teltay, Kalmyrza, Donuzbay, Zhandak, Choodon’⁸. Sagymbay Orozbakuulu, Sayakbai Karala uluu, Shapak Yrysmendi uluu, Togolok Moldo, Bagys Sazan uluu, Moldobasan Musulmanku luulu, Ybyrayim Abdyrakman uluu, Mambet Chokmoruulu, Akmat Yrysmende uluu, Shaabay Aziz uluu were the successors of the tradition in the 20th century.

The nature of the storytelling in the epic *Manas* is explained in the same manner by *manaschi*, one of such statements having been recorded by V. Radlov: ‘I can sing any song, because the God endowed me with the art of singing. The Lord puts words in my lips and I do not look for the words; I did not learn any songs, all lyrics flow out of me’⁹. As we see, storytellers hold that they do not learn the text of the legend, it being given to them from the God, referring to sacred forces that manage them. These forces come to them when Ayan (prophetic dream, vision) instructed them clearly to spread the epic *Manas* among the people. Disobedience led to serious problems, such as diseases, infertility and even death. Today’s storytellers also confirm this, many of them having come to the epic through illness.

Many researchers have tried to give explanation to this phenomenon. The most convincing justification is found in the papers of prominent folklorist H. *Korogly*, who believes that shamans stood at the beginning of the oral epic

tradition, confirming that the initial purpose of folklore was associated with certain rituals or sacred functions. The scientist explains that ‘...the Kyrgyz, Kazakh and Uzbek people have understood the word (*baksi, bakshi*) as a ‘sorcerer’, ‘magician’, ‘folk healer’, ‘magical songs’ and cast out the evil spirit by playing the *dutar*.

Therefore, in the past, the Turkic people attributed magic power to the art of the singer and the profession of the narrator of epic songs was associated with the repertoire of folk ritual songs. When shamanism was supplanted by Islam and the shaman as a cult priest gave place to the *mullah, bakhshi* had only attributes of shamanism: music and singing’¹⁰. These words by H. Korogly are confirmed by the fact that some *manaschi* (Keldibek) was proved to possess the gift of healing art; moreover, in the past the performance of the epic was often practised in the house of an ill person, which helped his recovery. Thus, it seems that there is a connection between the storytelling art and sacred forces patronising *manaschi*.

According to R. Z. Kydyrbaeva, the storytelling art of *manaschi* is a combination of the stability of the oral tradition and improvisation as an integral part of the tradition¹¹. The conservative expression (Perri-Lord theory¹²) does not allow the epic change totally. There are formulas, a required poetic model. Such models are common for the epic poetics and usually *manaschi* performs them almost without change; here is an example:

Urunarga too tappay, I cannot find the mountains to measure my strength,
Urusharga joo tappay, I cannot find the place to fight,
Chaynaryna tash tappay, I cannot find the stones to grind with my teeth,
Yzøryne bash tappay ..., I cannot find heads to tear them off...

This formula is used almost unchanged in the basic version of the epic *Manas* which shows how strong the tradition of storytelling is. The formulas become so established (polished) in the period of the epic development, which transferred in the final form to the new tale of another narrator. Besides the formula phrases, *manaschi* also observes the traditions of transferring of key episodes of the epic, its characters, conditions and toponymy. On the other hand, improvisation becomes an integral part of the storytelling, without which it would have been impossible for the epic to develop. Improvisation led to the inclusion of new episodes, alternation of the names of certain characters (minor characters, for example *Kojodjash - Shypshiydar*, *Kuttumergen - Kuttubiy*). The names of the main characters are preserved strictly unchanged in all versions related to the traditionality of the epic.

The abovementioned facts make it clear that the tale art of *manaschi* is a complex syncretic allegation, composed not only of assertions about selectivity of a storyteller, endowed by the God, but also of the inclusion of an artistic talent consisting in great mastership in words, rhythm and artistry.

As for the content of the epic, we should note the complexity of the comprehensive study of all available records of *Manas* because of its spaciousness and multiplicity of versions. Nevertheless, the researchers of *Manas* made a great contribution to this sphere. So, E. Meletinsky defined succinctly the main idea of the epic: 'Manas is not the eradicator of the 'evil' in the world like *Geser*, but is a person that united the Kyrgyz people. Uniting the Kyrgyz tribes *Manas* fights against the feudal separatism of their relatives, and as a conqueror - with the conquered khans'¹³. He points to one significant aspect in the activity of *Manas*: for the sake of uniting people he had to fight against a foreign enemy, overcome resistance of the chieftains of the tribes, who did not want to create such a union, and struggle against the

envy of his relatives wishing to take his place.

The struggle against *vassal khans*, restoration of coalition created by Manas, which was subsequently destroyed by his relatives, became the leading subjects in the second and third parts of the trilogy - *Semetei* and *Seytek*.

Studying the motifs in the epic, we conclude that 'Manas' has absorbed a large number of ancient motifs, which brings it to the epic works of *the Oghuz*, the Turkic people. In this sense, the epic proves that folklore in general, and epic in particular, is a cosmopolitan phenomenon. For example, the motifs of childlessness, finding a bride, battle with a one-eyed giant, which is widespread in the world epic, were revealed in 'Manas'. These motifs draw us to the archaic past. Many archaic motifs were blurred by subsequent modernisation of the story, but their primary meaning remains the same (for example, marriage to *Kanykei*, fighting with giants - *ayar, balban*). But in light of the heroic genre, the heroic theme stands in first place in 'Manas'. *Manas* struggled with real enemies, *the Kalmaks*, who existed in real history, whereas his sworn brother, Almambet, who had the same strength as *Manas*, fought against mythical creatures. In this way, *Manas* passes this archaic function to his sworn brother, leaving for himself the opportunity of struggling with a real enemy. Such separation of functions is interesting indeed, because it shows clearly two separate directions, - that is, archaic and heroic epics.

The archaic direction, despite the glorification of the plot, as well as the subsequent Islamisation, plays an important role in *Manas*. In his oath he swore before the battle, Manas used the following formula phrase, which refers us to the era of the ancient religion of Tengris:

May the earth punish me,
May the bottomless sky punish me.

Manas is always accompanied by animals in his campaigns, mainly by mythological ones: bird *Alpkarakush* (Semurg), the representative of the upper world, lions and tigers, members of the middle world, and *Ajdaar* (dragon), the representative of the lower world.

The ethnographic descriptions of the ancient lifestyle of the Kyrgyz people, when they lived on the banks of the Yenisei, occupy an important place in the epic. Thus, an interesting description of funeral rites is given in *Khan Koketey's* will. *Koketey Khan* asks to remove the flesh from his dead body with a sharp dagger and wash the bones with koumiss. Here is mentioned the ancient rite of the Kyrgyz: the bones of the dead were buried, the value of which is preserved in the language (*søøk køyu*).

The epic as the product of folk art has always been a flexible and mobile system in the process of its development, which incorporated new realities with the advent of new eras and the manifestation of the important events in the life of the ethnos. These new realities were incorporated in the epic naturally, and the resulting transformations did not have an effect on the integrity of its structure. The coexistence of ancient and modern military weapons, such as bows with arrows and cannons or rifles, was not a problem for listeners. The rifles replace the ancient weapon - the bow and arrows - and become a full symbol of war and weaponry in the later period. This does not contradict the nature of the epic, as the principal meaning of the murder weapon is not lost, but simply transferred to the new item.

Summarising the review of the epic *Manas*, we should note that the trilogy is a phenomenon of national identity, which continues to be a major spiritual heritage of the Kyrgyz people. Besides, the ideological component should not prevail over scientific approaches to the studying of one of the greatest heritages of oral traditions, but should identify all the new trends, both in the textual and comparative study of the nature of the epic.

Reference

- 1 Propp V.Ya. Istoricheskiye korni volshebnoy skazki. Moskva, 1998; Propp V.Ya. Morfologiya volshebnoy skazki. Moskva, 2001.
- 2 Neklyudov S. Epos kak fol'klornyy zhanr / <http://postnauka.ru/video/12527> (videolektsiya)
- 3 Meletinskiy Ye.M. Kirgizskiy epos o Manase, Istoriya vseмирnoy literatury. T. 3. Moskva, 1985. p. 583.
- 4 Valikhanov Ch. Ocherki Jungarii, Manas: geroicheskiy epos kirgizskogo naroda. Frunze, 1968.
- 5 Radlov V.V. Obraztsy narodnoy literatury severnykh tyurkskikh plemen. Ch. 5. Narechiye dikokamennykh kirgizov / V.V. Radlov. Sankt-Peterburg, 1885; Radlov V.V. Obraztsy narodnoy literatury severnykh tyurkskikh plemen. Predisloviye. Frunze, 1968.
- 6 Radlov V.V. Obraztsy narodnoy literatury severnykh tyurkskikh plemen. Predisloviye. Frunze, 1968. p.16.
- 7 Valikhanov Ch. Ocherki Jungarii. Manas: geroicheskiy epos kirgizskogo naroda. Frunze, 1968. p. 38.
- 8 Kydyrbayeva R.Z. Skazitel'skoye masterstvo manaschi. Frunze, 1984. p. 5.
- 9 Radlov V.V. Obraztsy narodnoy literatury severnykh tyurkskikh plemen. Predisloviye. Frunze, 1968. p. 28.
- 10 Korogly Kh. Shaman, polkovodets, ozan, Sovetskaya tyurkologiya. 1972. №3; Korogly Kh. Skazitel'stvo u tyurkov, Rukopisnyy Fond Kydyrbayevoy R.Z.
- 11 Kydyrbayeva R.Z. Skazitel'skoye masterstvo manaschi. Frunze, 1984.
- 12 Lord A.B. Skazitel'. Moskva, 1994.
- 13 Meletinskiy Ye.M. Kirgizskiy epos o Manase, Istoriya vseмирnoy literatury. T. 3. Moskva, 1985. p. 584.

ELEMENTS OF ETHNIC IDENTITY AND EPIC STORIES OF KAZAKHSTAN

SABIRA KULSARIYEVA

Kazakh National University named after Al-Farabi

Starting my report, I would like to emphasize that ethnic identity has always been represented by a wide range of elements beginning from the basic such as the ethnic self-consciousness. I deliberately abstain from academic style of delivering and specific terms and definitions, understanding that nowadays the audience is widely represented not only by the professional ethnologists and anthropologists, but by the representatives of culture sector and general public as well.

We all are aware of how much importance and attention UNESCO pays for safeguarding world cultural heritage. Over the years humanity has created a culturally diverse and interrelated global community. One of its characteristics is the Representative list of the intangible cultural heritage (ICH) of humanity that encounters many nations' spiritual and cultural heritage. The register as well as the Convention for the safeguarding of ICH embodies many years of UNESCO's efforts and hard work towards safeguarding the ICH of humanity and today it represents common heritage of all mankind that will be carefully transmitted from generation to generation as one of the most valuable things existing on the earth. Kazakhstan ratified the Convention in 2011 and the work on ICH inventory-making and creation of mechanisms to safeguard our ICH recently began. In

this regard there is much work to accomplish in the long run.

Speaking of Kazakhstan, we cannot mention the fact that nowadays our country refers to the list of states characterized by diverse ethnic, religious and cultural background. This has not always been the case, multiethnic composition of Kazakhstan has been formed by the 20th century as a result of series of historic events. Let me briefly mention the most important of them.

At the end of the 1920s, Kazakhstan (one of the USSR republics at that time) was mainly monoethnic. It is widely known that the policy of Stalinist leadership was aimed to create the society without social classes, the society of equal; however, one of the measures applied for the purpose of creating such society was terror and intimidation. The first political frontiersmen appeared on the territory of Kazakhstan in the 1920s. Mainly it was the representatives of clergy, opposition, intellectuals, artists and former the Imperial government officials. It is also important to note that in the middle of the 1920s, all prospering farmers and businessmen who achieved material wealth were ‘dispossessed’ of their property and forced to migrate to other regions of the USSR.

Another tragic page in the history of Kazakhstan as a part of Soviet state was political repressions being particularly strong after 1934. Kazakhstan as well as the northern regions of the USSR - the Urals and Siberia - were chosen as a place of exile for the millions of Soviet citizens. Karaganda concentration camp *Karlag* as a part infamous Gulag was located in the central region of Kazakhstan. It was a big concentration camp where the ideological opponents of *Bolsheviks* from all over the territory of the USSR were exiled. Another concentration camp was located in the Kazakh steppes was *ALZHIR* (Akmola camp for the wives of the traitors of Motherland), where wives of prominent party and military leaders were

exiled. Among the officially declared enemies were Kazakhstan people of different ethnic backgrounds that faced repressions and persecutions - some of them were shot and others were sent to prisons and concentration camps. The regime of keeping people in fear of retaliatory terror machine was established all over the territory of the USSR.

Since 1935 relocations took massive character and were often carried out along ethnic lines: 64,000 people from Ukraine namely Germans and Polish were deported. With the purpose of 'clearing up' the border lines of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkmenistan the big communities of Kurds, Armenians, Turks and Iranians were moved in 1937 to southern Kazakhstan. In 1937 nearly 300,000 ethnic Koreans were forcibly deported from the Far East.

The beginning of the Great Patriotic War initiated a new wave of political repressions. Primarily they affected on the Volga Germans. Hundreds of thousands of Germans were deported to the Republic of Komi, the Urals, Kazakhstan and Siberia. During three weeks, nearly half a million Germans were moved to Kazakhstan. During the Second World War such ethnic groups as Karachai, Kalmyks, Chechens, Ingushes, Greeks, Bulgarians, Crimean Tatars, Kurds, Meskhetian Turks and other were repressed and forcibly exiled from the territory of the northern and southern Caucasus and Crimea to Kazakhstan.

It would be wrong to define the actions taken by the USSR government as lacking logic. The German forces indeed planned to strengthen their positions in the Caucuses and other regions by means of introducing their agents among the local population to conduct a sabotage and at tracting the ethnic minorities on the side of Wehrmacht. However, even such risks cannot be invoked to justify forced deportation of entire nations.

By the time of the first massive and forced migrations, the Kazakh

population was citizens of one big USSR state for nearly 20 years and closely associated themselves with the big family of brotherhood nations. People coming to Kazakhstan landed from freight train wagons to face the harsh wilderness of steppes with no food, accommodation or any essential items for surviving. The local Kazakh people living nearby brought food, water, clothes and often welcomed the sick, weak people and families with infants despite the fear of punishment. To a large extent, the support of the local population, their care and compassion helped deported people to survive in harsh conditions. This attitude was employed after the rehabilitation of the deportees. Representatives of once alien ethnic groups became an essential part of Kazakhstan society, its fundamental and core integrating element. Nowadays representatives of all ethnic groups living in Kazakhstan take part in political, social and economic life of the country.

It is widely known that diasporas living in isolation from their maternal homeland and native ethnic environment develop in their own way. Their traditional culture is influenced by a number of social factors, such as different legal and linguistic environment, cultural and other differences.

In this regard, the goal of every ethnic group regardless of its quantitative composition is safeguarding the elements of their native culture such as rituals and traditions. There are very favourable conditions in the Republic of Kazakhstan for safeguarding traditional culture of different ethnic groups. Every ethnic group has its cultural centers, associations monitored and supported by the Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan. One of the primary goals set by the National Committee for the Safeguarding of ICH is inventory-making of the ICH of not only Kazakh people, but all ethnic groups represented in Kazakhstan.

We live in a rapidly changing world. A normal living in modern society is associated with constant growth. The advanced production technologies

offer a variety of goods, and the range of services and assortment of products are expanding. Mobility of the population is increasing in industrial and postindustrial societies; close interaction of people from different parts of the world lead to a blurring of cultural differences between people. However, ethnic issues still prevail in the world; it would be wrong to assume that only some countries face them. Ethnic issues existing in many European countries, Canada, post-Soviet areas and many other regions of the world prove that the problem of ethnic identification is still relevant and global. Therefore, I would like to draw attention to the fact that the Republic of Kazakhstan is aimed to create conditions for the peaceful, conflict-free coexistence of many nations and nurture tolerance among the Kazakhstani citizens towards the incoming immigrants.

To date, the scientists have not reached consensus on main markers of ethnic identity; however most of them relate to the language. Indeed, the language competence, the language behavior and the language preference serve as a factor of identification with one's ethnic community and the level of identity is often determined by the preference of language rather than its actual use. As a rule, people define their ethnic identity with the native ethnic groups and among signs linking them with their ethnic community they name a language, a historical fate, customs, traditions, rituals and other certain character traits.

The language as one of the most important ethnic features develops, transforms and changes under certain conditions and situations. There is an example with the Kazakh language. For over 24 years, Kazakhstan has been an independent state, and the earlier period from the annexation of Kazakhstan to the Russian empire in the 18th century until 1991 is characterized by the strong influence of the Russian language. The documentation and social activities were conducted in Russian, especially

during the 70-year period of USSR existence. The state policy and ideological doctrine led to the formation of a unified society, strengthening of the Russian language among the population of Kazakhstan and displacement of the native Kazakh language to the private and family level. During the entire Soviet rule, the main state language all over the territory of the USSR was Russian. By the 1980s the official documentation in urban areas was fully Russian and documentation in the Kazakh language was very limited in rural areas. The policy led to the decrease of the number of schools with the Kazakh language of instruction throughout the territory of Kazakhstan.

Two factors in addition to public policy led to the ‘russification’ of the Kazakh people: increase in the share of Russian-speaking population and the development of education system. The first process was implemented in stages: construction of large industrial enterprises, then evacuation of factories and their employees during the Great Patriotic War (the Second World War) from the European territories of the USSR, then development of virgin and fallow lands for farming needs. All the processes required migration of the Russian-speaking employees, their families, etc. By that time, the Soviet Union collapsed according to some political analysts; the total number of the Russian speaking population of Kazakhstan outnumbered the native Kazakh population. Thus, there was a linguistic assimilation meaning suppression of one language group by a bigger one.

All the factors listed above are not the only reasons for linguistic assimilation, we just focused on the most obvious and major reasons seriously impacting the situation. In this regard, this is a typical situation for any population falling within the political and economic dependence from the strong center, and it has many historic records throughout the world.

At the present moment we are witnessing a situation as the Kazakh

language has legally gained the status of the state language but in fact has not yet become ubiquitous. Lately in such spheres as jurisdiction, public administration, education, science, culture, and mass media, the Kazakh language has taken the firm position. For example, in the field of public administration, one of the employment requirements for the aspiring civil servants is knowledge of the state language, to the extent necessary to perform the official duties. Currently at preschool, middle and high schools, pupils study the Kazakh language as a compulsory subject already yielding positive results.

For sure, the language is one of the factors of ethnic identity, but at the same time, the level of ethnic identity does not always reflect the actual possession of the mother tongue. In support of the thesis on transformation or loss of native language, I would like to note, for instance, that the Kazakhstani Koreans not speaking their native language, but the Russian or Kazakh languages, have safeguarded and maintained their ethnic identity and traditional culture.

Apart from language, the ethnic identity can be defined by a number of factors or markers, including the elements of traditional culture. The abovementioned historic legacy of the Soviet ideological doctrine rule as well affected the state of many elements of traditional culture. During that period traditional culture was perceived as unnecessary remnants of past being alien to a progressive Soviet man, many elements of traditional knowledge and practices were irretrievably lost. Some cultural elements have undergone natural transformation and adaptation to the changes of surrounding environment while others survived losing the basis of motivation.

The surge of ethnic identity occurring as a consequence of gaining independence by Kazakhstan drew public attention to the need of reviving lost traditions necessary for strengthening ethnic identity. All this coincided

with the program of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan aimed to return the Kazakh repatriates from neighboring countries to their historic homeland. As I mentioned before, every diaspora/ethnic group living away from their homeland aims to preserve its culture and traditions intact. In this regard, the Kazakh repatriates called *Oralmans* in great extent brought back some of the traditions which we have lost and they safeguarded, such as the forgotten craft techniques, different types of crafts, traditional healing practices, knowledge in traditional veterinary medicine and much more.

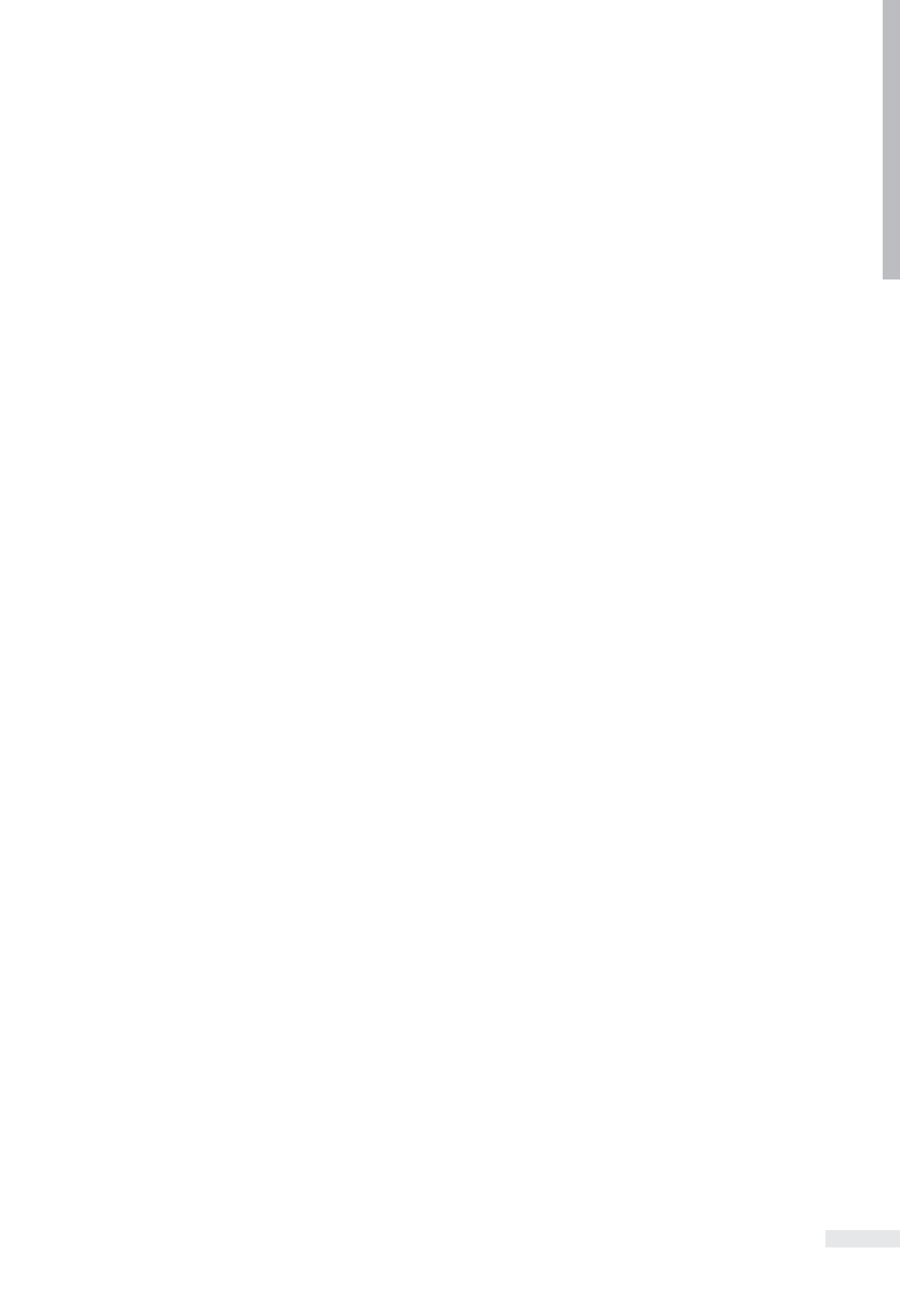
To date, the National Committee for the Safeguarding of the ICH of the Republic of Kazakhstan after raising awareness among general public on the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding ICH took initial steps towards ICH inventory-making in Kazakhstan. It is true that the required speed of work did not come at once, but today we can already witness the results of the work carried out. Our efforts can be seen in the National Register of ICH elements, nominations submitted for the inscription on the Representative list of the ICH of humanity. A number of artisan practices, performing arts, vocal genres, play on various folk instruments, rituals and festivals, hunting with birds of prey, folk games like *Asyks* and many more have been inventoried.

Among the ICH elements included in the National ICH Register there are epic tales like the cycle of 50 heroic epics. Such a big number of epic poems each having heroic story are influenced by the history of the Kazakh people who throughout the centuries were subject to numerous military attacks. Every heroic epic tale is dedicated to one outstanding soldier *Batyr*, his character, personality and heroic deeds. Being narrated from one generation to another and surviving throughout ages in the form of oral narrations, epics serve the function of forming the sense of patriotism

among younger generation.

The epic stories of the Kazakh people are not limited only to heroic and military content, but one of the main themes praised in world culture is the theme of love. Love as well as other feelings like jealousy, treachery and loyalty is reflected in famous lyric-epic poems like *Kozy-Korpesh and Bayan-Sulu*, *Kyz Zhibek*, *Enlik-Kebek* and many other epics. These epics are an excellent illustration of the complex tribal relations among the Kazakh people. The subtlety of the Kazakh poetry shows romantic nature of nomads, whose entire lives passed in deep conjunction with the nature and therefore philosophic reflections.

At this point let me complete my brief overview of ethnic identity in Kazakhstan and the Kazakh epic stories which I described without violating timing and existing rules. A more detailed description of these two topics deserves writing of doctoral theses.



THE VALUE OF ORAL AND TRADITIONAL HERITAGE OF KAZAKHSTAN AND THE GREAT SILK ROAD

BAZARALY MUPTKEYEV

Kazakh National University of Arts

ALIYA SABYROVA

Kazakh National Conservatory

The Kazakh oral tradition is closely associated with the culture and lifestyle of nomadic civilisation. One of the main branches of the Great Silk Road is known to have led across Central Asia and Kazakhstan. The instrumental and oral traditions of numerous nomadic and settled nations were developing along the Great Silk Road in close interethnic contacts. In particular, many scientists and researchers note that different cultures and ethnic groups have common variations of tamboura-like instruments with silk strings and dulcimer-like instruments and traditional guttural singing.

The latest research into the genesis and regional peculiarities of the Kazakh instrumental music carried out by G. Omarova reveal two major spheres in the musical space: the Eastern sphere, including Mongolia, the eastern, northern, central and southeastern regions of Kazakhstan, China, Korea, Russia's southern Siberia, Kyrgyzstan, the northwestern regions of Uzbekistan (Kashkadarya and Surkhandarya Provinces), and the Western sphere, including Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Azerbaijan, Turkey, Iran,

Karakalpakstan (Uzbekistan) and the western and southwestern parts of Kazakhstan (the Syrdarya area, Mangistau, Aktobe, Atyrau, Oral).

These musical spheres can be identified through the bourdon-overtone scale, the specific structure of the stringed musical instruments played by plucking (in particular, the rectangular or oval-shaped and arched bodies) and their tonal and compositional structure formed through its frets.

Nowadays only few branches of the Kazakh oral performing art are identifiable.

The singing tradition

The large sphere of the folk song genre in the Kazakh music can be divided into two big groups:

I - ritual genres: 1) the songs (*oleng*) of the life cycle rituals (birth, marriage, funerals); 2) ritual, mystic and shamanistic songs (*arbau*, *badik*, *kulapsan* and *baksysaryny*); 3) calendar songs (Islamic rituals - *jarapazan*, *sahar*; the rituals of the oriental New Year (*Nauryz*) - *nauryzoleng*)

II - common genres: 1) children's folklore (children's songs and songs for children - *otirikoleng*, *sanamak*, *oiynoleng*, *jumbakoleng*); 2) youth folklore (youth songs and games); 3) *karaoleng* (traditional song lyrics); 4) the instructive and didactic genres of the epic and *akyn* (singing) traditions - professional traditional singing - *anshulik*, *terme*, *tolgau*, *nasihat*, *minajat*, *amanat*, *hatoleng*, *osiet*, *nakyloz*, *shygarmaoleng*, *Qissa-dastan*, *jyr*, *bastau* and traditional instrumental legends (*kyi*).

The instrumental performing tradition

Dombra, *sybyzgy*, *kobyz* and folk instruments (*jetigen*, *shankobyz*, *sazsyrnai*, *dabyl*, *asataiak* and so on). The analysis of the material collected in the course of the field trips aimed at systematisation and identification

of ICH showed that the elements of the abovementioned oral performing traditions had changed, which was associated with the latest urbanisation tendencies and changes in the socio-economic conditions. Earlier the elements of the steppe civilisation determined the image of the culture, while nowadays the culture of big cities has a great impact on the existence of traditional music space. Nevertheless, new layers of traditional music folklore continue to emerge, and the latest ICH field trip in Kazakhstan showed that there were a number of unexplored and unresearched branches of traditional culture left, such as *ahunjirau* - performance of literary poetry, the modern type of Goliard poetry known among people as *salserilik*, the storytelling *jyrau*, *Shezhireshi* - the keepers of the steppe historiography, *kozha* - the bearers of ICH in the contemporary social stratum, *tore* - the descendents of Genghis Khan, *biy* - judges, *aksakal* - tribal elders, *asaba (tamada)* - entertainers and so on.

The function of *toybastar* (a special ritual and gifts presented at the end of a wedding party), *aitys* and various traditional games have changed by now. In the 1950s - 1980s *toybastar* was performed at the end of a wedding party and had the form of a poetic contest (*aitys*) between two families of the newlyweds (a woman from the bride's side and a man from the bridegroom's side). The *aitys* competition heated up the atmosphere, since each side supported the participants with exclamations and monetary gifts. In the modern practice *toy* (wedding party) ends with short blessings from relatives and gifts.

Many ICH elements have disappeared in contemporary practice, particularly those connected with traditional rituals. In the last few years, *oralmans* (representatives of Kazakh diasporas who returned to their historic homeland from abroad) have brought and disseminated the ancient types of *synsu* (the weeping of a bride), *korisu* (a funeral ritual song), different forms

of applied arts (*keste* - traditional embroidering, *zergerlik* - jeweller's art, *teri ondeu* - leather processing, *agashsheberi* - a master in woodcutting, *usta* - a blacksmith and so on). Unfortunately, even these forms of traditional business are not in demand in towns and cities and, therefore, are left behind with the lack of succession and passing. The traditional story-telling school - *jirshilik* - and the art of *kuyshi* - performers on folk instruments - do not have followers and students nowadays.

Therefore, the contemporary keepers and bearers of different traditional ICH elements (folklore, singing, musical and instrumental arts, traditional crafts and so on) come up with the following proposals: to support ideologically and financially ICH activities in governmental bodies, educational institutions, non-governmental organisations and regional and municipal centres - wherever it is possible to establish various educational workshops, studios, schools, hobby groups and so on with the purpose of teaching children the traditional art; to provide ICH bearers and practitioners with a socially and publicly recognised status to support them financially and morally; to create an electronic database for the identification and systematisation of ICH; to make the electronic database available for the general public on the Internet; to establish a department at the Ministry of Culture and Sports of the Republic of Kazakhstan that would deal with the revival of ICH; to launch special TV and radio programmes to propagandise ICH in the mass media; to organise centres for systematisation and cataloguing of ICH at universities and Houses for Traditional Arts in administrative centres; to create a new specialisation, an 'ICH expert,' at institutions of higher education.

Formation of ICH at the present stage

In the period of globalization, it is the ICH that forms the core of

traditional art, which has been safeguarded by our ancestors. Nowadays, a number of political, socio-cultural, historic, ethnic, aesthetic, urbanistic and other factors influence the formation and development of ICH.

By their dependence on urbanisation ICH performers can be divided into steppe performers and urban performers. As many rural people have migrated to urban areas, the Kazakh performing art has also moved to big cities.

The imperial policy of the Soviet state resulted in a loss of 70% of the authentic performing tradition, the rest having adapted to the urban life. In the urban environment (a town or the centre of a district or province) the performing tradition (*anshilik* - the singing tradition, and *shilik* - the instrumental tradition) mainly popularises the art of the European type or that of a mixed type through public organisations (primarily entertaining centres, concert halls and the mass media).

In towns the development of ICH elements is levelled and standardised, and they lose their authentic valuable qualities. Music schools copy European systems in teaching traditional musicians separate specialities, such as *dombyrashi*, *kobyzshi*, *sybyzgyshi*. The European performing styles usually eliminate some of the communicative elements of ICH (for instance, telling *kuy* legends).

Traditionally, outstanding *kuyshi* could play several instruments at a very high level, aside from being good in singing and storytelling. Thus, the Kyrgyz traditional art to this day demonstrates the original high quality. On the contrary, the Kazakh government gives no support to the authentic art of ICH.

Today in Kazakhstan there are several regional schools of traditional performance: the western part of the country - Mangystau, Atyrau, Oral, Aktobe, Kyzylorda and Aral, as well as among the Kazakh people in the

Karakalpak Republic of Uzbekistan and in Turkmenistan is dominated by the instrumental tradition called *tokpe*, its song, epic and akyn versions being the most common for the regions. There is also the shertpe instrumental tradition, which is known as arka in the central part of Kazakhstan, karatau in the south and *jetisu* in the south-east and east, which include Altay Tarbagatay, Bayan Olgi region of Mongolia, and the Xijiang-Uyghur and Ile-Kazakh regions of China.

Every style has its own performing manner, principles of compositional structure, specific scales (*pernelikzhuye*) and other typical features. Only the traditional ICH bearers from the steppes know all the details of each style.

As the entire music education system in Kazakhstan is built on the European notation system, the contemporary musical culture of Kazakhstan is characterised by both the *traditional type of kuy performance* and the *orchestral type of kuy performance*. Therefore, recently two systems of music education have been used in the educational institutions: the universal system (offering general courses on different regional performance techniques and preparing folk musicians for traditional ensembles and orchestras) and the traditional learning system aimed at in-depth learning of the musical semantics of one particular regional school, without using the notation system and following the master-student principle.

Unfortunately, the number of the bearers of the authentic steppe forms of ICH is decreasing year after year. The situation about the bearers of regional performing traditions is particularly poor. According to a survey, most of these people are quite aged and have no target audience and no successors. In the course of the ICH field trips, the respondents asked for the following measures to be taken to safeguard the ICH they practiced

(their requests were audio and video recorded): to open the schools of Talasbek Asemkulov and Dauletbek Saduakassov representing the shertpe style traditions; to open the traditional *tokpe* school represented by masters Shamil Abiltayev, Edil Basygharayev, Zhumabek Kadyrkulov, Azirbay Oskebayev (the traditional art of Atyrau, Mangystau and Aktobe); to open a museum and a workshop managed by Darkembay Shokparuly in the village of Akshi, Almaty Province with a possibility of further development of traditional jewellery, a blacksmith's art and other forms of applied arts with Daulet Darkembayuly (son of Darkembay Shokparuly) as a master; to render financial support to the 'Center of Traditional Singing' located in Semey, East Kazakhstan region.

All these proposals want to be immediately included in the list of urgent things to be done to safeguard the ICH.

The audio and video records and the use of information technologies (digital systems) have been and still are the main format of safeguarding the heritage.

Up to this day 70% of ICH materials is stored in state and private funds. Among them are the 'Golden fund' of the Kazakh Radio, the State Photo-Phono Archive, the audio recording fund of the Auezov Institute of Literature and Arts under the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the laboratory of folklore at the Kurmangazy Kazakh National Conervatoire. The private collections of Almat Mergaliev and Uali Bekenov should also be mentioned. The foreign funds include the Tashkent records factory *Melodiya*, which recorded the most valuable heritage of the traditional Kazakh culture.

Since 2012 the Korkyt Ata Scientific Research Institute under the scientific research laboratory at the Kazakh National University of Arts has carried out several music and ethnographic expeditions to different regions of the country. The researchers of the laboratory have made up a list of ICH and

its bearers in Kazakhstan, along with questionnaires. And the National ICH register with the detailed information on bearers and practitioners of ICH of Kazakhstan. Besides, for three years now the researchers have been implementing a scientific project named *The Kazakh National Art: the Continuity of Traditions* (collection, studying and systematisation' aimed at systematisation and identification of different ICH elements of Kazakhstan. The first stage of the project was supported by a number of international organisations, including UNESCO, the organiser of the forum. We would like to study your experience in safeguarding and development of ICH and are in need of your further support in the following fields of the art of our country: *anshilikoner* (the traditional art of singing), *kyishilikoner* (the traditional instrumental music), *koloner* (the applied art), *sal-serilik* (the inventive actors), and *salt-dastyr rasimder inoryndau* (the performance of traditional ceremonies).

Reference

- 1 Omarova G. Kobyzovaya traditsiya. Voprosy izucheniya kazakhskoy traditsionnoy muzyki, Almaty, 2009. p.203
- 2 Karakulov B.I. Simmetriya zvukoryadov kazakhskoy dombry, Kazakhskaya muzyka: Traditsii i sovremennost', Alma-Ata, 1992. Karakulov B.I. K voprosu o lokalizatsii ladovykh struktur v kazakhskoy narodnoy monodii, Vestnik AN KazSSR, 1972. № 8. pp.55-59



EPIC TRADITIONS IN TURKMENISTAN: THE TURKMEN EPIC ART OF ‘GOROGLY’

GELDIMYRAT MUHAMMEDOV

National Institute of Manuscripts of Academy of Sciences of Turkmenistan

The Turkmenistan intangible cultural property comprises five domains that are summarised below:

1. Oral expressions - oral folklore
2. Traditions, customs and people's beliefs
3. Traditional performing arts
4. Traditional craftsmanship
5. Traditional knowledge

Epics are included in the ‘oral traditions’ section. By now more than 10 elements have been identified in this field, including such epics as *Gorogly*, *Shasenem and Garip*, *Zokhre and Takhir*, *Khuyrlukga and Khemra*, *Sayatly Khemra*, *Asly Kerem*, *Arzy-Gambar*, *Khatamnama*, *Warka-Gulsha*, *Kasym oglan*, *Melike-Dilaram*, *Nejep oglan* and *Tulum Hoja*. *Gorogly* occupies a special position among the abovementioned range of epics.

People that bear, practise and pass this heritage are called by the Turkmen people *Dessanchy bagshy*, - that is, epic performers specialised in *Gorogly*.

In Turkmenistan *Dessanchy bagshy*, each with their own distinctive narrative techniques, have developed in 2 welayats (regions) - Dashoguz and Lebap. The element is also available in the neighbouring countries, such as

Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Iran, being also found throughout the world in territories, where Turkmen ethnic groups have lived since ancient times.

The Turkmen epic *Gorogly* has more than 50 different versions (legends). The aspiration of the Turkmen people for happy life, unification, freedom and justice are reflected in the epic. Bravery, honesty, patriotism, friendship, tolerance, fairness and forthrightness are glorified in the epic.

The entire storytelling includes the range of legendary achievements by ancient hero *Gorogly* and his 40 *Dzhigits*, recording all major events in the traditional lives of Turkmen. The people's conceptions of and attitude to their past, present and future were reflected in the epic.

Gorogly is a genre of oral epic, where prose and poetry alternate and where the prosaic parts narrate about the heroes behaviours and happenings they find themselves involved in, while the poetic part reveals their feelings.

Gorogly is an outstanding creation and an oral encyclopaedia of the Turkmen people, which still remains an inexhaustible source feeding their cultural psychology, national character, mentality, creative capacity and artistic skills.

It is a combination of narrative, singing, vocal improvisation and musical composition, including theatrical dramatic elements. It is usually performed by *Dessanchy bagshy*, who is characterised by unusual memory, outstanding musical skills and talents and an ability to tell stories to the accompaniment of traditional musical instruments, such as *dutar* (a two-stringed instrument played by plucking) and *gyjak* (a fiddle-like Turkmen musical instrument). *Bagshy's* narration, signing of different melodies from the poetic parts and his mastery in playing *the dutar*, as well as his ability to improvise are in close intercommunication and form a whole content.

The people's conceptions of and attitude to their past, present and future were reflected in the epic.

Experienced *Dessanchy bagshy* is the bearer of the epic, who practises the narration of *Gorogly*. The master selects the youngest epic learners and teaches them. The epic learners who are interested in epics must have diligence, good memory, imaginative minds, abilities in playing the *dutar*, be gifted, have a pleasant voice and a strong wish to learn epic telling for a long time (up to 5-10 years) under the master's guidance and supervision.

Guided by the master, the learner enriches his repertoire, at the same time improving and polishing his own performing art and skills. In addition, he learns the moral and ethical norms in performing epics. The master blesses the learner in front of the public after he has passed his exam and received positive estimates, which entitle him to perform epics independently for an audience and teach young learners.

The master passes his knowledge to his learners through teaching and providing them with access to documented sources in different formats (printed versions, audios and videos).

People learn *Gorogly* at special events, where *Dessanchy bagsy* performs *dessans* as well as from different documented sources of related social institutions.

The passing of skills (playing the *dutar*, narrating, signing, improvisation, theatrical elements) is an integral part of *Gorogly*. The skills are acquired through special training, when they are practiced together with the master for 5-10 years at no charge. It ensures constant flow between the younger generation and the old to close the skills gap.

The Turkmen National conservatory, State school of culture and arts and specialised musical schools at the *velayats* develop the learners' skills in playing *the dutar* before they enter on the epic learning.

The epic *Gorogly* has a wide social function in Turkmen communities. Reflexive knowledge of communities associated with emotions relating to meanings and values originating from the epics becomes a basis for social relations and ties connecting individuals or groups and determining their future actions to promote interaction and activation of social networks.

Through the epics, Turkmens learn, enjoy and pass their common historical and social values to younger generations as a social tool to hand down rich knowledge and values, which strengthen the awareness of national identity, national pride and national unity among the Turkmens.

The epics also play an important role for Turkmens in the upbringing of young people; particularly it refers to diligence, accuracy of thinking, loving of their history, culture, homeland and people of Turkmenistan and respect other nations and cultures.

In the epos, the features of behaviour of the Turkmens, such as humanness, wisdom, generosity, hospitality, tolerance, leadership, fearlessness, open-heartedness, patriotism, respect for elders, cheerfulness, musical talent, keeping and redeem a promise, faithfulness to the people and friends, love for homeland and nature, social behaviour, mentality and diligence have been disclosed.

Knowledge and skills related to the epics such as narration, traditional music, performing art, Turkmen language, poetry, traditional customs, traditional knowledge (including *Akhal-Teke* horses breeding, hunting etc.), traditional life style evolved during the millennium are determined as an indicator of cultural identity of the Turkmen.

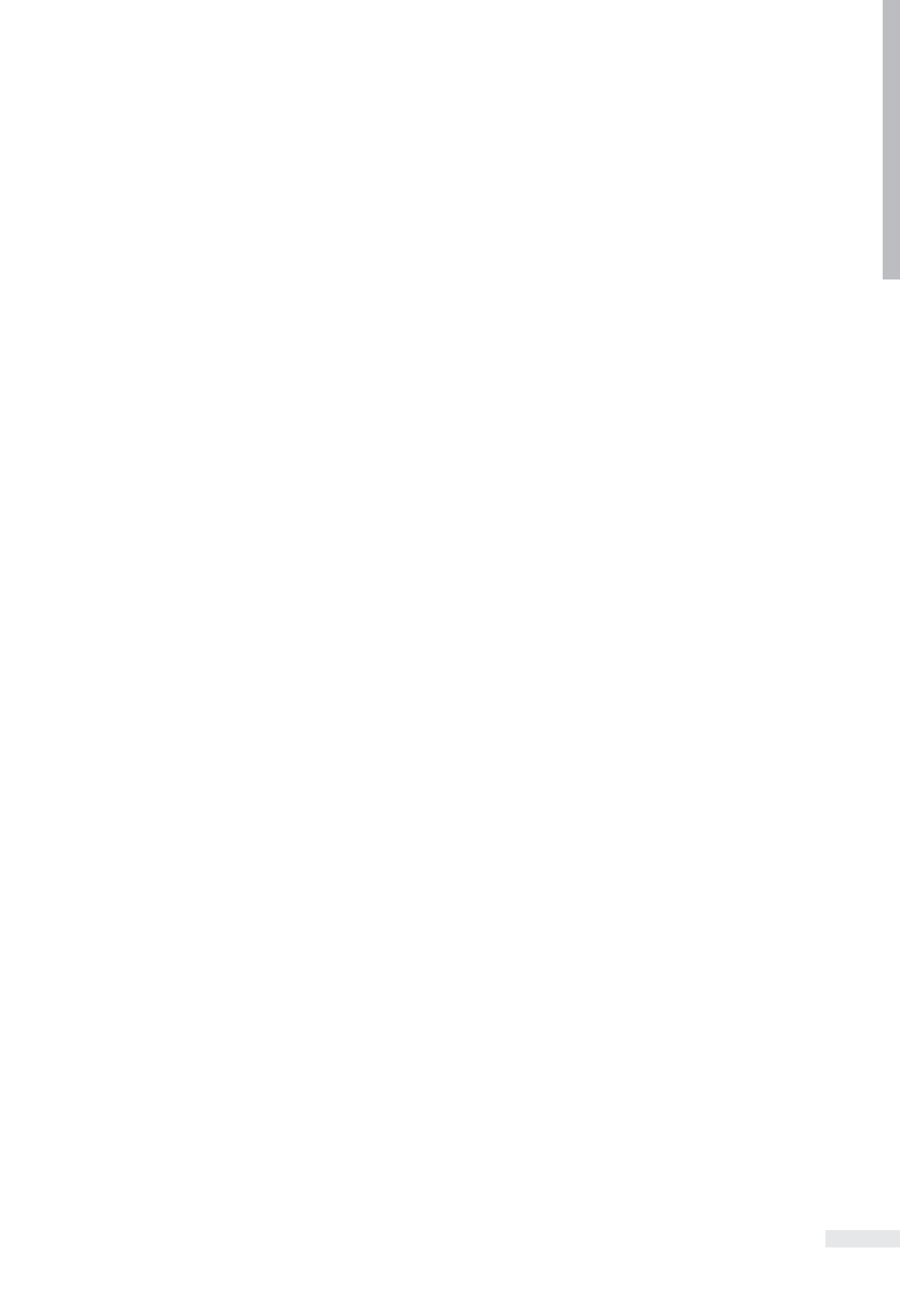
Therefore the epic is considered a moral and ethical code of mentality and identity of the Turkmen nation in the period of globalisation.

The viability of the element has been ensured by the enthusiasm of epic masters through the teaching of interested learners in the past. The learners

polished their skills at gatherings, such as wedding ceremonies, competition among *bagshy* (epic singers) etc.

The Dessanchy bagshy is one of the main promoters of *Gorogly*. Recognised epic masters try to teach and pass the element to prospective learners in the manner inherited from their ancestors. It testifies to the viability *Gorogly* at present and in the future. It is important to organise regularly national and religious holidays, celebrations, commemorations and cultural festivals, both national and international, to ensure the viability of the element today. The existing *Bagshylar oyi* (houses of bagshy) in each province, where epic masters exchange their experience by monthly gathering together as well as audio and video recording studios and TV and Radio broadcasting companies also contribute a lot to the maintenance and dissemination of the element among potential learners.

Moreover, the audience interested in the study of the dessan, international and domestic scholars, students and learners is gradually increasing (expanding) year by year, which is another example of the epic's viability.



CURRENT STATUS AND SAFEGUARDING MEASURES OF ORAL TRADITIONS AND EPICS IN MONGOLIA

Urtnasan Norov

Foundation for the Protection of Natural and Cultural Heritage (Mongolia)

Central Asia is a region that has served as the centre of social and economic, in particular cultural interrelations of East and West. The nations of this region have a rich cultural heritage and ancient traditions like any nation in the world.

The nations of Central Asia - Mongolia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan - make up a unified cultural space, defined by great grassland steppes and famous mountains, nomadic culture and common history, relics and traditions. Throughout this region we find petroglyphs, keregsur, steles, ruins and other monuments attesting to the mingling of peoples in the Central Asian steppe since prehistory. The territory of our own nation, Mongolia, has indeed been the centre several nomadic empires at various stages in history, established by different peoples of Central Asia sharing a similar cultural origin - Hunnu, Khitan, Turks, Uighurs, Kyrgyz and Mongols. The peoples of Central Asia do distinguish with their unique way of life, rituals, belief and worship, customs and traditions, oral traditions and folk arts derived from nomadic culture and civilizations. One of such precious intangible heritage of Central Asia is the epic traditions. The great epics of Central Asia such as *Geser*, *Jangar*, and

Manas have united the nomadic people through its similarities of origin, form, structural composition, and content, and have gathered us here in Tashkent.

Thus it would naturally be extremely valuable for us to increase our cooperation in studying and protecting our common Central Asian heritage. UNESCO has already supported a number of activities in this direction, including the international symposium festival on Central Asian epics held in 1997 and 2013 in Mongolia as a follow up to the UNESCO Declaration and Convention on safeguarding intangible cultural heritage, and a series of scientific conferences and expeditions within the 'Silk Roads: Roads of dialogue' and 'Steppe road' projects and the festival of Central Asia's countries titled *Cultural diversity of Central Asia and dialogue* held at Headquarters of UNESCO in Paris (2005). We hope this Tashkent meeting may serve as an impetus for a more systematic organization of joint scientific research and expeditions involving all Central Asian States, and for the establishment of joint policies for protecting our valuable intangible heritage - including language, oral traditions, nomadic folk knowledge and technologies, folk music and dance, and epics. A regional approach to such actions, supported by UNESCO and our national governments, would help us to strengthen our common heritage while promoting better awareness of our diversity. Therefore I look forward to more discussions and meetings in the context of this meeting which I hope will lay the ground for productive dialogue and cooperation.

There are today around seven thousand languages spoken on earth. They are divided into twenty six language families. The Mongolian language belongs to the Altaic language family, together with the Manchu and Tungus languages. This language is, in fact, an inexhaustible treasure that reflects the subtle inventive thinking and creative skills of the Mongolians.

This thinking is expressed in the Mongolian oral traditions, traditional arts, customs, and habits, which have been transmitted through many generations to our own.

According to the views of scholars, this abundant treasure of folklore can be divided into several types: oral poetry without melodies (spells and incantations, words of libation and anointment, words of propitious omen, Mongolian triad, proverbs and aphorisms and riddles so on), oral traditions, accompanied by melodies (words accompanied by melodies to cause a mother animal to accept its young, benediction, odes, epics, so on) oral prose literature traditions (folk tales, real life legend so on)¹. Mongolians created great epics, such as the *Secret History of Mongols*, *the Gêsér*, *Žangar* and *Han Haranguj*, among others. These epics feed the romantic, adventure-seeking, and aesthetic needs of present day audiences.

There are some very interesting and special oral traditions in Mongolia. For example:

The charm and spell is one form of the ancient oral traditions which endeavours to achieve one's ends by the supernatural powers of words, sounds and gestures².

When an udder of an animal is swelled we shake a (brass) ladle and speak:

The head of animal is up
The head of swelling is down,
Èm dom èm dom (soon be cured)

When we castrate animals, we burn juniper needles and carry this animal cross bar and speak:

Be as light as a feather,
Cure quicker than the speed of bullet,
Hurray, hurray dur, dur suuhaa

Mongolian oral tradition is referred to our customs and habits. One of the remarkable examples is the words of libation and anointment. The libation is the offering of the first drops of milk or of any dairy product to heaven, spirits of shamans, souls of progenitors, or mountain and water spirits, we make this milk libation on choosing a day that is auspicious to the powerful heaven. There are words of libation:

Vault of patronage, Ambrosial nymph, Life-giving planet,
Blue-sky,
Clouded earth, Both are the best Twinkling stars, Round
sun, Crescent moon

The Mongolian triad is referred to the Mongolian preference of symbolism - number three which is traditional. In other words, a triad is an expression of triple destitutions in oral literature. This kind or genre is not common in the literatures of other nations. The composition of most triads consists of upper, middle and low realms or organic, inorganic and human objects which display universal phenomenon, for example:

In three destitutions of the universe,
Sky is destitute of pillars (upper realm), Mountain is
destitute of girdle (middle realm) Ocean is destitute of
lid (nymphic realm)

Three riches of the universe,
Sky is rich in stars (upper realm),
Earth is rich in roots (middle realm) Ocean is rich in
water (nymphic realm)

Three lovelinesses of the universe,
The full moon is lovely (inorganic universe), The flowers
are lovely (organic universe)
The maxims of parents are lovely (human universe)³

Traditions and rituals related to animal husbandry hold a major position in the Mongolian traditional practices and customs. One of the most important is the singing meant to cause a mother-animal to accept its young. This special practice relies upon a unique form of psychological relationship between humans and their domesticated animals. The practice calms animals with harmonious singing and lyrical music, which is meant to form or strengthen the bond between the mother and its offspring (or an unrelated orphan offspring).

My pure-white ewe,
Why do you reject your lamb? The smell of your milk is
In his tail!
Hos! Hos! Hos! Hos!
Prosperous summer will arrive
The world will be verdant
Your nipples will be caked
Who will suck them?
Toig! Toig! Toig! Toig!⁴

Mongolian epics

One of the richest legacies developed by Mongolians for many centuries is the lengthy heroic epics. An epic is the largest genre of poetry, and it was formed in the process of folklore development. The art of reciting the Mongolian epic thrived until the beginning of the twentieth century. These epics can be enormous - *the Zangar epic* consists of several thousands of lines of text - and several of the most famous Mongolian epics, such as the *Zangar*, *Geserijn Tuuz*, *Khan Kharanguj*, and *Bum-Erdene* epics, have become the subject of studies at the worldwide level nowadays. Over 280 epics are registered at present.

Today there are about ten minstrels of different ethnic groups, including the Urianhaj, Durvud, Bajad and Halkh nationalities in different parts of Mongolia. These artists have inherited the rare cultural legacy of several thousand years of history and they are making contributions to revive the epic reciting traditions and bequeath them to the young generations. The epic reciting art is called 'tuul' hajlah'. A person who is skilled at reciting epics is called a 'tuul'c'.

Everybody is interested in how and when the epics originated. These magnificent expressions of the cultural legacy of Mongols likely originated as tales that spoke about the gallant deeds of our ancestor-chieftains and brave warriors. According to researches, the main type of heroic epic of Central Asia, specially of Mongolian heroic epic was formed in the 1st century A.D.⁵

The ambitions of ancient nomadic people who seek to live in harmony and quest for peace are reflected in the actions and views of the epics. Famous specialist of Mongolia J. Vladimirtsov noted that Mongolian epics are strongly linked to life on the steppe. The epics are national poems gracefully expressing nomadic views and dreams. The subjects of Mongol

epics include gallant knights, beautiful damsels, romances, trusty steeds, marriages, and struggles⁶.

The epic is sung not in ordinary vocal sounds, but in overtone singing similar to throat singing that manipulates the resonance through vocal folds, which might even be related to religious rituals. It's substantial to consider the epic melodies are similar to the shamanist calling of ancestral spirits and Buddhist mantra chanting in bass voice. We say in Mongolian not 'singing epic', but 'to tune epic', because the epic is recited in different sound than singing. It's interesting that this feature of singing overtone has been formed, transmitted and developed in its classical form only among nomads.

They are performed by a minstrel who is gifted at relating stories or in speech-art and can accompany themselves with a tuneful melody on a horse-head fiddle, *tovsuur* (two-stringed lute), *ekil* (western Mongolian fiddle with two strings), or *huucir* (four-stringed bowed instrument) according to established rules and customs.

There is a very strict rule not to change a hero's name or to reorder the actions of the epics. Nor is it acceptable to recite an epic at every place. The recitation of an epic is acceptable only at solemn state ceremonies, weddings, Naadam festivals, children's hair-cutting ceremonies, child-naming ceremonies, ceremonies held before hunting, mountain-worship and cairnworship ceremonies. They symbolize the good future for coming generations⁷.

Some epics can be recited in summer. For instance, it is forbidden to recite the epic Han Haranguj in summer. The reason is that the hero of the epic rebelled against heaven and earth and rescued the populace from lightning. Thus, Mongolians believe that if one recites the epic Han Haranguj in the summer, lightning may strike. It is unacceptable to recite epics on ordinary days in one's household. The head of the household brings the *tovsuur* to

one's home and places it in the honourable part of the home, and it spends several nights there. Then the minstrel is invited to the household. A ghee lamp is kindled. The offerings are prepared. The epic is selected by discussing with the people there. If one wishes to have a child, the epic *Erhnacin* harcaga ('Spoiled tierce-hawk') will be performed; if one wishes to be without misfortune, the epic 'Han Haranguj' will be performed; if one wishes to be fortunate, the epic *Bajan cagaan övgön* (Rich white old man) will be performed. If one wishes to exorcize evil spirits, the epic *Talyn har bodon* (Black boar of the steppe), and *Hürèl arslan magnaj* (Forehead of bronze lion) will be recited.

The recitation of an epic should begin at the moment when the stars appear at night. The Mongolian epics are very lengthy. There is a tradition among minstrels (*tuul'c*) in Mongolia, totune (sing) 'Ode to Altai Mountain' as prelude to singing epics. The recitation of epic breaks several times during the night. Some epics are recited for several nights. There is a forbiddance to make a noise while minstrel starts reciting an epic. If you knew one or two epics, you were not recognized as *tuul'c* or minstrel. There was a custom to eulogize the rich resources of the local mountains, rivers and game before a minstrel starts reciting an epic.

Mongolian epics consist of from hundreds to thousands of lines of text. To become minstrel (*tuul'c*) it is necessary for a person to have a good memory, good imagination, and great interest in reciting epics. This is the skill which can be taught by minstrels and obtained with one's own efforts. Mongol *Tuuli* was inscribed on the UNESCO List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding in 2009.

There were considerable obstacles to the evolution, development, preservation and conservation of the Mongolian intangible cultural heritage in the long span of its history⁸. Since the collapse of their Empire, Mongols

have split and warred with each other many times. The Mongol nation came under the rule of the Manchu empire for two hundred years. These events restrained our spiritual and aesthetic sense, including the development and prosperity of the national intangible cultural heritage. In addition, Mongolia was subjected to the world communist ideology. Because of this, there was a forward step in certain fields of society. But under the motto of 'Proletarian new culture', traditional culture, customs, and national sentiment were suppressed as old, backward, obsolescent, and superstitious. The ideological campaigns against nationalism worked to interrupt the natural succession of the intangible cultural heritage. National items were mostly ignored. The folklore, folk art, traditions, customs, folk knowledge and traditional technologies were banned or destroyed. It was great tragedy for the Mongolians. It is not exaggeration to say that the practices of good national rituals, customs, ceremonies, and festivities were limited or fell in oblivion in that period.

After this victimization of the Mongolian culture came urbanization and the spread of globalization into Mongolia. In these conditions, modern popular culture has come to occupy the spaces that traditional culture used to hold and to make traditional cultural ways increasingly irrelevant in the lives of our people.

The Mongolian intangible cultural heritage has survived this difficult road of development and continues to maintain its rich content and artistic and aesthetic value. It remains worthy of art and literature of Mongolia. Mongolian language, folklore, traditional art, craft, traditional treatment, knowledge and wisdom are still being maintained.

Since 1990, Mongolia has opened to the rest of the world and embarked on a new path of development. Our national pride has been revived. We have reanimated our traditional culture and heritage and there is now a favourable

condition to preserve and safeguard our national culture.

The Mongolian Parliament adopted the Law on the Protection of Cultural Heritage. The President of Mongolia issued decrees on the reverence and protection of the horse-headed fiddle, long song, and *höömej*. The government also approved national programmes to develop folk art, the horse-headed fiddle playing, long song, *höömej* singing, *tuuli* (epic) and *bielgee* dancing, all of which play significant roles in developing folk art.

Since 1997 Mongolia has more closely cooperated with UNESCO. Mongolian experts and specialists actively participated in UNESCO programmes and projects to safeguard the intangible cultural heritage. The 'Central Asian Epic' international symposium and festival was held in Mongolia in 1998. At this moment, Mongolian cultural figures and artists established the National Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage and started truly virtuous activities for the registration of artists, audio and audio-visual recordings and other types of documentation in the newly established centre.

For the last few years, thanks to the generous support from the Cultural Heritage Administration of the Republic of Korea and the International Information and Networking Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage of the Asia-Pacific Region under the auspices of UNESCO in the Republic of Korea, we have been implementing a series of projects aimed at safeguarding the intangible cultural heritage of Mongolia. Within the implementation of these projects, major measures have been taken to form a favourable legal background, establish an inventory fund of the ICH, and bring UNESCO's Living Human Treasures System into Mongolia.

In addition, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science of Mongolia, the Cultural and Arts Committee, and other NGOs organize traditional art festivals as well as contests and exhibitions on traditional performing arts

and craftsmanship on a regular basis. These organizations have also taken other measures to promote traditional culture and the arts in all provinces and cities in Mongolia, which also shows progress.

The National Programme of Mongolian Epic has been implemented since 2011 and within the framework of this Programme, the Government of Mongolia made a decision to organize the 'Central Asian Epic', 2nd International Symposium and Festival.

'Central Asian Epics' Regional Symposium Festival II was held from the 5th to 7th of August 2013 in Ulaanbaatar. The Symposium II was entitled 'Means of the safeguarding the epic, reviving the living tradition of epic performance and ensuring viability' and involved more than 100 epic performers, researchers, experts, scholars and specialists from 15 countries, such as Mongolia, Buryat Republic (Russian Federation), Tuva (Russian Federation), Kalmyk (Russian Federation), Saha-Yakut (Russian Federation), Xingjiang China, Inner Mongolia, USA, Korea, Kazakhstan, Tajikstan, Kongo, etc.

The UNESCO project on 'Safeguarding and Revitalizing the Mongolian Traditional Epic' started in June 2013. The contract was signed with 9 trainers-bearers and started to conduct apprenticeship-method trainings for revival and transmission. Each home-tutoring apprenticeship training centre trains 2-3 students and transmits 2-3 epics along with the technique. Rituals and customs related to epic performance will also be restored - primarily, the tradition of reciting epics during public and family festive events and rituals.

The guidebook for epic practitioners with contents including particularly the various techniques of epic performance and traditional knowledge of transmission has been produced and published 1000 pieces. Its purpose is to provide them with a step-by-step complete guide on the techniques to learn epic.

Serial publications will be produced. They will cover every text of epics from various ethnic groups in Mongolia and existing materials abroad concerning the Mongolian epics. There is also a significant amount of research materials and texts of epics collected since the 1940s in Mongolia that has never been published before. These volumes will serve as important and main accessories for research, study, dissemination and transmission.

Reference

- 1 Dulam S. Mongol'skiy yazyk i kul'tura, nematerial'nogo naslediya mongolov. UB, 2010. p.21.
- 2 Dulam S. Mongol'skiy yazyk i kul'tura, nematerial'nogo naslediya mongolov. UB, 2010. p.21.
- 3 Sodnom B. Mongol ardyn "Yerteuntsiyn gurav (triad), deureuviyn tukhay". Ulaanbaatar, 1964.
- 4 Sampildendev KH., Urtnasan N. Mongol zan üyl, bayar yoslolyn tovchoon. Ulaanbaatar, 2006. pp.41-42.
- 5 Katuu B. Predisloviye, v knige "Teuv Aziyn Tuul - II", UB, 2013. p.13.
- 6 Vladimirtsov B.ZH. Mongol-Oyratskiy geroicheskiy epos. Peterburg, 2007. p.23.
- 7 Molomzhamts L. Mongolian epics. In the book: Intangible Heritage of the Mongols. UB, 2010. pp.33-34.
- 8 Urtnasan N. Urtyn duug khamgaalakh tukhay. V knige: Mongol ündestniy urtyn duu. Ulaanbaatar, 2013. pp.93-94.



ORAL FOLKLORE IN UZBEKISTAN :FOCUSING ON NARRATIVE ART

URAZALI TASHMATOV

State Institute of Art and Culture of Uzbekistan

The people inhabiting the present territory of Uzbekistan have their rich folklore, like any other nation on the earth. Dastans are special among the genres of folklore epics in terms of volume and variety of the means of expression. Like other major genres of folk art, they arise on the basis of archaic folklore and ancient national history and incorporate both ancient cultural traditions and the memory of the formation of the people, their spiritual world and historical destinies, their civil, moral and aesthetic ideals. *Dastan* (in Persian داستان), means 'story'. It is the epic folklore and literature of the Middle East and Southeast Asia. Dastans are either folklore or literary interpretations of heroic myths, legends and fairy stories.

Uzbek national dastan has gone a long way of historical development. The epoch of ancient Turkic epic is almost the same era as the period of the Saka and Massagetae. The epic work of Turkic folklore *Alpamysh* could coexist with other epic works of those times, such as *Tamaris* and *Shirak*, *Siyavush*, *Iskander*; today there is only a small part of those epic works left.

Folklorists usually define dastan in several ways:

- Heroic epics (*Alpamysh*, *Yadgar*), whose epic essence is closely related to the patriarchal-tribal relations, with the life and manners of Turkic tribes, which in the distant past were nomadic or semi-nomadic

- martial dastans (*Yusuf and Ahmed, Alibek and Balibek*);
- heroic-romantic dastans (*Lonely Ahmed, cycle Rustam, cycle Gorogly*);
- romantic dastans (*Kuntugmysh, Ravshan, Khorezm dastan*);
- dastans of social medium (*Sahibkyran, Arzigul, Shirin and Shakar*);
- book epics (*Farhad and Shirin, Layla and Majnun, Bahram and Gulandan* etc.).

There are also historical dastans, where themes, images and ideas are related to historical events and historical fiction dastans - *Tulumby* (15th century) *Shaybanikhon* and *Aychinar* (16th century). They describe the fates of individuals who are historical, with real events and facts, for example, the relationship between Shaybanikhon and Babur, Babur's campaign in Afghanistan etc. However, the task of folklore authors is obviously in propagandizing history through fiction.

The repertoire of the leading Bakhshi also includes autobiographical dastans. (*Autobiography* by Eragasha Dzhumanbulbul-oglu, *My Days* by Fazil Yuldash, 'Happy Generation' by Nazar Islam oglu, 'My days are' by Abdulla oglu Nurali and others). In the past every ruler had their own *bakhshi*. For example, Chenghis Khan had Ulugh Zhirchi bakhshi, Tuhtamish had Kamolzoda and Zhakhon Mirza bakhshi, Muhammad Rahimhon II (a Khiva khan) had Riza Bakhshi, Nasrullo, emir of Bukhara, had Ernazar Bakhshi. Bakhshi in the courts of rulers told not only traditional dastans, but also created works praising their rulers. The folklorists distinguish the following bakhshi schools in the territory of Uzbekistan: Bulungur school, Kurgan school, Shakhrizyabs school; Kamay school; Sherabad school; Kharezm school; Karakalpak school.

The most famous representative of *Bulungur school* is Fozil Yuldosh ogli (1872-1955). He performed the following dastans: *Alpomish, Yodgor, Yusuf and Ahmad, Zulfizar, Malikai ayer, Nurali, Murodhon, Shirin and Shakar*

and others, *Mukhammad shoir* who lived in the second half of the 18th century was a teacher of *Yoldosh bulbul* (father of *Fozil Yoldosh ogli*). This school prepared some outstanding bakhshi, such as Chinni shoir, Rakhim bulbul, Zhora, Fozil shoir, Yorlaqab and others.

Ergash Jumanbulbul ogli (1868-1937) and Polkan shoir (1874-1941) are representatives of *Kurgan school*. They performed the following dastans: *Alpamish*, *Yakka Ahmad*, *Oysuluv*, *Kuntugmish*, *The birth of Gorogli*, *Yunus pari*, *Miskol pari*, *Avazkhon*, *Khasankhon* and others.

The bakhshi living in the south of Uzbekistan consider themselves representatives of the Sherabad school. Representatives of this school are Shernazar Beknazar ogli and his apprentices are Mardonkul Avliyokul ogli, Normurod bakhshi, Nurali Boymat ogli, Boriboy Ahmad ogli. Nowadays the representatives of this bakhshi school are safeguarding and continuing the traditions of this school.

The bakhshi performers can be classified according to the manner of performance and use of musical instruments.

Use of musical instruments: *Karakalpak dutar* (Karakalpakistan)

Tar, accordion (bulaman) and *doira* (Khorezm)

Kobiz (Karakalpakistan)

Dombira (all other regions)

The Karakalpak performers of dastans are called *baksy* or *jirau*, depending on their repertoire, use of musical instruments and manner of performance.

Baksy performs to the accompaniment of Karakalpak dutar, singing in traditional voice and performing only dastans of a romantic nature. *Jirau* plays *the kobyz*, sings in throaty voice and performs only heroic dastans.

The dastan performers of Khorezm region accompany on the dutar and bulaman. Transcaucasian tar and Russian accordion became very popular in the middle of the last century in Khorezm region. Nowadays, *the bakhshi*

of Khorezm region use tar, accordion and doira. They sing in traditional voice. Moreover, songs from dastans are very popular in Khorezm region in contrast to other regions and they are used almost everywhere.

The ancient traditions are preserved in all the other regions of Uzbekistan, which means they use archaic musical instruments, such as dombira, and throaty voice.

Dastans are not only an oral performance. The performer must sing it and perform like a theatrical actor. Thus the performer must be talented in many ways. A *bakhshi* (performer of dastans) must know the texts of several dastans and have the following skills:

- play folk instruments;
- narrate in an interesting way;
- sing (often in a radically different way from modern singers with traditional vocals);
- interpret (Bakhshi can narrate the same story in different ways);
- be a poet (compose verses without preparation);
- be an actor and be able to do many other things.

Most often the poetic part of dastans is the main text of the performance in the form of seven to eight syllabus or hendecasyllable poems. In addition to poems *saj* rhythmic or rhymed prose is used in dastans.

Bakhshi usually begins his speech with the tuning of an instrument and playing of short tunes and usually he asks ‘What do you want me to sing?’ in all regions, except Khorezm. Often this question is asked in a singing voice, and only then bakhshi starts performing. The full performance of dastan takes a lot of time and thus bakhshi needs to have a rest: he stops and holds tradition *dumbira tuntarmok* (turn over the dombira). Then bakhshi turns his dombira over and reads a poem:

I took you from the house,
and you are looking for your friend. Now I will turn you
over,
because it is midnight
you have gathered all your friends,
now I need to have a rest. After the rest I will narrate
the rest of the text, now it is time to spread a belbog¹

Then bakhshi takes off his belbog, chapan and goes out. At this point, some of those participants spread belbog in the middle of the room and anyone in the room leaves money as a reward for the excellent performance.

However, in the Khorezm region bakhshi performs the melody ‘Tuyingda kaytsing’ (Let all return to your wedding party). And at this point the listeners reward and thank bakhshi financially.

Folklore expeditions have a great value, safeguarding and protecting dastans. The huge amounts of dastans were recorded during the expedition organised by the Museum of Literature named after Alisher Navai and faculty of philology of Karshi State Pedagogical Institute in 1969. The expedition was led by folklorist M. Muradov and A. Kahharov.

The expedition consisted of more than thirty bakhshi poets - Kadir Bakhshi Rakhimov, Yusuf Utagan-oglu, Tangier Safarov Enchantment Kiyomi-oglu Mamarayim youzbashi, Tashmurada Tourogli, Eshmurada Sherdan-oglu Normurod Poyon-oglu Khushvaktov Mardanakulova, Eshkobila Sash-ogly, Gayima bakhshi, Hayitnazara Alisayd-oglu, Cora and Chora Umirova, Hazratnula bakhshi, Rajab Normurod-oglu Khushvaktov Satarova, Kuzya Ruzieva, the last person having recorded more than a dozen original folk dastans, which had not been previously recorded.

Great attention is paid to the safeguarding and protection of dastans in

the period of independence. There is the *National Bakhshi of Uzbekistan* award and very famous representatives of narrative art are awarded. Moreover, the most talented young dastan performers are awarded with the *Nikhol* award.

The department of folklore teaches the skills of playing musical instruments and singing excerpts from dastans in many musical and art schools of Khorezm, Karakalpakstan, Surhandarya. The adoption of the State Programme for protection, safeguarding and use of the intangible cultural heritage opens up new horizons in the safeguarding of all kinds of folk art.

The State Programme supports the publication of the masterpieces of Uzbek folklore. The largest part of this edition must consist of dastans.



Reference

- 1 Zhirmunskiy V.M., Zarirov Kh. T. Uzbekskiy narodnyy geroicheskiy epos. Moskva, 1947.
- 2 Zhurayev M., Primkulova M. Mif, fol'klor va adabiyot. Toshkent, 2012.
- 3 Mamazonov S. Doston. Wikipedia, 2007.
- 4 Mirzayev T. Alpomish. Tashkent, 1999.
- 5 Paksoy H.B. Dastan Genre in Central Asia. Wikipedia, 2007.
- 6 Ergashev A. Kashkadaryo dostonchiligi. Toshkent, 2008.



THE CONDITION OF ORAL TRADITIONS AND EPICS IN TAJIKISTAN AND EFFORTS TO SAFEGUARD THEM

FAROGHAT AZIZI

NGO 'Odam va Olam'

BURKHON SAIFUTDINOV

Ministry of Culture Republic of Tajikistan

One can say without any overstatement that, during the several last years, the significance of one of UNESCO category 2 center, the International Information and Networking Center for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region under the auspices of UNESCO (ICHCAP), was essential in supporting the initiatives to safeguard the intangible cultural heritage in Tajikistan .

It is known that, after the adoption of the UNESCO Convention on intangible cultural heritage safeguarding (2003), a wave of initiatives and efforts to safeguard intangible cultural heritage covered Central Asia, because there had been a process of self-recognition and changing opinions on spiritual heritage after the collapse of the USSR.

According to article 2, point 2 of the Convention, this heritage includes:

- oral traditions and expression forms, including the language as the bearer of intangible cultural heritage;

- performance art;
- customs, ceremonies, and celebrates;
- ceremonies connected with nature and universe;
- knowledge and skills connected with traditional crafts

Each of these listed items represents a separate layer of heritage. The contemporary Tajik are closely connected with their intangible cultural heritage. It is necessary to note that, in modern Tajik society, the traditional mentality and the way of life occupy an important place. Therefore, one can note that in modern Tajik society, knowledge and skills connected with traditional crafts are still stable while customs, ceremonies, and rituals occupy an important place in everyday life of the society. The skills and the best experience connected with intangible cultural heritage are revered among the people. Moreover, one should note the significance of some kinds of intangible cultural heritage among young people.

However, it is impossible for us to say the same about the situation in traditional performance art. Unfortunately, the circle of the bearers and admirers of these performance arts are limited to the old generation.

Generally, owing to the cultural policy conducted by the government of the Republic of Tajikistan in the period of independence and, of course, to the deep studying of the essence of the Convention (2003) in modern Tajik society, the attitude toward native intangible cultural heritage has improved. To acquire traditional knowledge and the best experience of previous generations has become very important.

For example, the Tajik, like many other nations, have a traditional method of artistic creation, well-known under the name of *ustod-shogird* (teacher-pupil). Since ancient times, the method has been formed on the basis of traditional arts and crafts. Owing to the method, many kinds of artistic

creation exist today. This method is valuable in transferring traditional oral art.

Traditional oral art of the Tajik, like that of the other nations of Central Asia, has two branches: professional and folk arts. These branches make our traditional cultures original. In the Soviet period, a misunderstanding of the specificity of the region destroyed the traditional ustod-shogird system. Many kinds of art, including the oral, musical, performing, and other types, became secondary. With time the generation of connoisseurs of traditional oral art gradually disappeared, taking valuable knowledge and skills away. As a result, the traditional ustod-shogird system was on the verge of disappearance¹.

Therefore, the Ministry of Culture supported an initiative to conduct the Festival ustod-shogird, where NGO 'Odam va Olam' took an important part in reviving it². The Festival was unusual in its structure. It continued for one year. Teachers (ustods) and their pupils (shogirds) were selected from all over Tajikistan. The main criteria in selecting the teachers were their skill, their experience as a teacher (no fewer than 5 pupils) and their age (no older than 35 years). There were not many such ustods in Tajikistan. Therefore, the Festival couldn't cover all kinds of arts, crafts and performances. So, ustods and shogirds in traditional professional singing (classical maqoms and traditional falak) and crafts (jewelry and embroidery) were chosen.

The duties of ustods included the compilation of educational-methodical provision (EMP) on the type of ustod-shogird method. According to the educational-creative festival, some educational programmes were revived.

A syllabus on complex disciplines necessary for the ustod-shogird system was offered. On finishing the educational festival, the Ustod-Teacher Certificate was given. To ensure the continuation of the tradition, the materials of the festival were published as a guideline for introducing the

tradition into educational institutions³.

Such attention to this method is conditioned by the fact that this method provides many oral traditions with vitality. A good knowledge of the method guarantees a successful revival of one or other kind of traditional oral art.

In Tajikistan, the traditions of oral art form a more variable and considerable part of the intangible cultural heritage. As a genre, this oral folk art includes fairy tales, proverbs, riddles, songs, rubai, lullabies, stories, oaths, anecdotes, cries, aphorisms, traditional songs, rapid speeches, *askiya* and many others.

The documentation of the intangible cultural heritage has advanced recently. Special and purposeful work on safeguarding intangible cultural heritage has been conducted with the support of the government of Tajikistan. Among many efforts undertaken by the government, we should note the establishment of two official festivals devoted to the main phenomena of Tajik traditional music - *Shashmaqom Day* (since 12 May 2000) and *Falak Day* (since 10 October 2007). The festivals were established by a special decree from the president of Tajikistan. Such measures taken by the president of the country himself to safeguard through the official glorification and cultivation of high spirituality of the Tajik people is an unprecedented and unique step. Many special state programmes on the development of intangible cultural heritage in the modern society were accepted by the government of Tajikistan⁴.

In safeguarding the intangible cultural heritage of Tajikistan we would like to note the significance of collaboration with ICHCAP. From the first days of the activity of the organization, Tajikistan was represented (according to the recommendation of the Ministry of Culture and National Commission for UNESCO in Tajikistan) by NGO *Odam va Olam*. Within

the framework of the projects supported by ICHCAP, NGO *Odam va Olam* did important work collaborating with the Ministry of Culture. A number of instructive documents were formed and optimal ways of inventorying intangible cultural heritage were found⁵.

Several versions of questionnaires were preliminarily elaborated to collect the different kinds of folklore.

The first version included the name, genre, performer's name, information on the performer (age, sex, nationality, and contacts), residence, date (language, text, audio/video material); then all versions of accessible texts were recorded. Further, the questionnaire could be continued with textual records from other performers from other places (points 9-12). Information on available literature and data of experts concluded the questionnaire (point 15: *abed*)⁶:

Questionnaire on the kind of oral folk art (folklore)

Version 1

Code

1. Name:
2. Genre/kind:
3. Performers of versions:
 - a) Name, surname, family name:
 - b) Date of birth:
 - c) Sex:
 - d) Nationality of performer:
 - e) Address:
 - f) Contacts:
4. Place of existence:
5. Date of the first record:

6. Language:
7. Text (written):
8. Records (audio/video):
9. Versions:
10. Date of the second record:
11. Place of records:
12. Texts of versions:
13. Information on performers of versions:
14. Additional information:
15. Other data:
 - a) Historical:
 - b) Used literature:
 - c) New study:
 - d) From whom information was recorded:
16. Inventory author

In the second version, information on a genre (point 2), source of art (point 3), and place of existence (connection with some ceremony is meant) (point 4) have been included.

Nevertheless, every time real practice concretises, corrects, and improves the questionnaire. Today, the last version of the questionnaire consists of 19 points and includes the following questions⁷:

CODE

1. Name:
2. Place of existence:
3. History of origin:
4. Currently existent versions (texts):
5. Total number of versions (historical and current):

6. Terminology:
7. Personalities of epics (commonality and difference in versions):
8. Performers of versions:
 - a) Name, surname, family name:
 - b) Date of birth:
 - c) Nationality of performer:
 - d) Address:
 - e) Contacts:
9. Availability of art / family schools of epics:
10. Form of performance (wordy, musical, dramatised)
11. Records (audio/video/written):
12. Photos:
13. Available literature:
14. Texts of versions:
 - a) wordy:
 - b) musical:
 - c) description of dramatised text (dress, manner of performance and actions are described):
15. From whom the information was written:
16. Date:
17. Author of inventory:
18. Location of questionnaire:
19. Contacts of the compiler of questionnaire (physical/juridical person)

Epic stories form a considerable part of folklore. One can name folklore and written sources as sources of epic stories. Epic stories were collected in written sources since the most ancient times and Middle Ages, which became popular as literary pieces (in genres *doslon*, *hamosa*, *qissa*); now, in folklore,

epic stories develop more in the genres of *dostons* and *qissa* existing in many versions.

Generally, today the epic stories of the Tajik exist in these two versions. Religious epic stories in the context of Islamic culture exist in the genres of *naʼt* and *maddoh*.

As kinds of intangible cultural heritage, they generated its own storytelling performance art. Some of them have also theatrical characters. And these kinds of performance art are known now under the names of *dostlonsuroi*, *qis,sagui*, *hamosagui*, *naikhoni*, *maddohkhoni*.

In today's culture of the Tajik, one can note two kinds of epic stories: aboriginal Tajik epics (with Iranian origins) and adopted ones. The aboriginal Tajik epic stories, which, on the one hand, have been perpetuated in literature and, on the other hand, in folklore, develop in three versions: wordy, musical, and dramatised; the adopted ones, however, develop only in folklore, predominantly in the form of singing.

However, one should say that the adopted epics have got a new life in the Tajik's culture. *Gurugli* and *Alpomysh* belong to the group of adopted epic stories. First of all, this novelty concerns language.

As a rule, both *Gurugli* and *Alpomysh* are performed in Tajik. Of course, the epic *Gurugli* is more popular⁸. In the works on the Tajik folklore, there is opinion that the correct pronunciation of 'Gurugli' is *Gurguli* (The Tajik: 'an athlete from a grave')⁹. In Turkic languages, this word means 'the son of a grave'. The following novelty in Tajik culture concerns the change of the main hero's name. In the Tajik version, he is *Avaz*, not *Gurugli*.

However, the manner of guttural singing has been generally preserved. Certainly, this guttural singing is not equal to the original one. The guttural singing is not specific to Tajik singing arts at all. As for the melodies of this epic, they are based on Tajik rhythms and melodic nuances. It is known

that rhythm and melody's nuances are directly connected with the words of a text.

The epic *Gurugli* exists in the modern Tajik culture in the vocal version only. The popularity of the epic indicates that several generations of guruglikhons - performers of this epic have been brought up in a Tajik society. Among them there are well-known Khikmat Rizo, Azizbek Ziyoyev (Varzob district), and Shef-Sulton (Sari Hosor). Guruglikhon akai Shef Sulton has composed several dostons about the military commanders of the 1990's civil war in Tajikistan. These dostons became favorite and popular among people. Having renewed the text, he used previous melodies from Guruglidostons.

Alpomysh is less popular among the Tajik. It is known from the available records of fieldwork that it exists in the form of fairy tales and fragments.

In the context of the aboriginal Tajik epics that originated in the antique and medieval periods, the singing and telling traditions, such as *shohnomakhoni*, *Barzunomakhoni*, *Rusiamnomakhoni*, and *Suhrobnomakhoni* remain increasingly popular and didactical *qissahoi bobogi*¹⁰ and many lyrical epic stories have been preserved up to now. They also exist in three versions - in words, music, and theatre.

Many of today's narrators prefer the mixed form of performance.

One should note that *Gurugli* is sung to the accompaniment of two little stringed musical instruments *dutor/dumbra*¹¹. In other kinds of epic stories different Tajik folk musical instruments can be used. This question also needs detailed study.

The choice of the theme of an epic as a special theme of today's forum by ICHCAP is timely and expedient. For Tajikistan this theme is very important today.

Many aspects concerning the epic stories remain unstudied in the Tajik

study of literature, musicology and culturology.

The epic of any nation is memory, favorite figures and plots, and one can say and think they are probably quite numerous on the Silk Road. To revive those rich traditions will enrich the spirituality of modern society. The community subjects and images will always assist in keeping friendship and unity between peoples.

Reference

- 1 Azizi F. Maqom i Falak kak yavleniya professional'nogo traditsionnogo muzykal'nogo tvorchestva tadjhikov. Dushanbe, 2009. p. 16–50; 265–282; Rakhimov S. Estetika Zoroastrizma. Dushanbe, 2006. p. 26–27; 166–167; Karimov S. Izustnaya forma peredachi muzykal'nogo materiala kak odna iz aktual'nykh metodik sovremennogo muzykal'nogo vuza, Azizi F., Karimov S. Traditsionnyye metodiki: issledovaniye i vnedreniye. Dushanbe, 2013. p. 35–40; Azizi F.A. Sistema muzykal'nogo obrazovaniya v Tadjikistane: effektivnoye sovmeshcheniye traditsionnykh i akademicheskikh printsipov obucheniya. Dushanbe, 2013. p. 41–52.
- 2 Representatives of NGO 'Odam va Olam participated the working out the draft of the state programme of development of art crafts for 2009–2015 (P RT №513, 31 October, 2008) and proposed to organise the festival ustod–shogird in 2012.
- 3 Korbardi sunnatii ustod–shogird. Rokhnamo (Traditsionnaya metodika ustod–shogird. Rukovodstvo). Dushanbe, 2013. 87 P.
- 4 For details, see: nematerial'nogo kul'turnogo naslediya Okhrana usiliya v Tadjikistane. Incollaboration s «Odam va Olam». ICHCAP, 2014. 127 s.
- 5 See: Khifzi merosi farkhangi ma"navii mardum. Rakhnamo. (Okhrana nematerial'nogo kul'turnogo naslediya. Rukovodstvo.), Dushanbe, 2013. 115 s.
- 6 Khifzi merosi farkhangi ma"navii mardum. Rakhnamo. (Okhrana nematerial'nogo kul'turnogo naslediya. Rukovodstvo.), Dushanbe, 2013. p. 59.
- 7 Khifzi merosi farkhangi ma"navii mardum. Rakhnamo. (Okhrana nematerial'nogo kul'turnogo naslediya. Rukovodstvo.), Dushanbe, 2013. p. 62.
- 8 Rakhimov K. Ba'ze khususiyatkhoi omuzishi raviyakhoi guruglikhoni. (Nekotoryye problemy izucheniya stiley gurgulikhoni), Falak va mas'alakhoi ta'rikhi–nazariyavii musikii tochik. Machmuai makolot. (Falak i istoriko–teoreticheskiye problemy tadjhikskoy muzyki. Sb. st.). Dushanbe, 2009. p. 179–187.

9 Murodov F. “Gaybzod”, “purigur”, “gurzo” yo “gurguli”. (“Gaybzod”, “purigur”, “gurzo” ili “gurguli”), Falak va mas’alakhoi ta’rikhi–nazariyavii musikii tochik. Machmuai makolot. (Falak i istoriko–teoreticheskiye problemytadzhikskoy muzyki. Sb. st.). Dushanbe, 2009. p. 233–241.

10 ‘Kissakhoi bobogi’.

11 Rakhimov K. Ba’ze khususiyatkhoi omuzishi raviyakhoi guruglikhoni. (Nekotoryye problemy izucheniya stiley gurgulikhoni), Falak va mas’alakhoi ta’rikhi–nazariyavii musikii tochik. Machmuai makolot. (Falak i istoriko–teoreticheskiye problemy tadzhikskoy muzyki. Sb. st.). Dushanbe, 2009. p. 179–187.

EPIC STORIES THAT BRIDGE THE ANCIENT AND PRESENT WORLDS IN TAJIKISTAN

LOLA HOJIBOEVA

Tajik National University

Epics form a considerable part of the cultural heritage of the Tajik. The oral epic traditions in the Tajik culture appeared and formed in the most ancient period of its history, originating from the mythology of ancient Iranian peoples.

Avesta is a well-known written source, which includes the mythological concepts of ancient Iranian peoples, particularly the ancestors of Tajik, about the universe. The fragments of this source contain the earliest epic elements narrating about fights and battles, which afterwards served as plots for the most ancient oral and written stories and legends. One should note that these elements were of a certain universal character: they do not demonstrate enmity and fight among people - fight, battles, and, therefore, heroic exploits and feats occur between the man and other forces that are often presented as daews. For example, the *Avesta* type of the first man (*Gaya Maretan / Gev Mart / Gev Mars*), created by Ahura Mazda, is presented as a figure of the first king - *Kayumars* - with some changes in the oral epic stories (*dostons*) and later in *Shohnoma* by *Firdawsi*. He ruled the society where people, animals and birds were in a primordial harmony and brotherhood. The first collision of two adversarial forces occurred when *Ahriman* (*Avesta: Angra Manyu*), overpowered by envy watching the world

of light and kindness created by Ahura Mazda, sent his creation, the daew, into this world, who killed noble prince *Siyomak* by way of guile, thereby provoking enmity between himself and *Kayumars*. This line of events predetermines a further epic development of the plot: for the first time facing the death of his like, who, moreover, was his dear son and prince, *Kayumars* and all his kingdom were overcome by the deepest grief and mourning, from which they got out at the call of *Ahura Mazda*. For the first time, an army was formed to fight with the dark force, *Ahriman's* creation. The great army was formed of all the people, animals and birds from *the kingdom of Kayumars*, with the king himself forming the final link. Led by Hushang, the son of killed *Siyomak* and great-child of *Kayumars*, the army was seeking to revenge. Therefore, for the first time a great epic battle was described. The fight of the man, who had been created by *Ahura Mazda* and who represented the world of light and kindness, with the destroying force of *Angra Manyu* was glorified.

The presence and participation of certain intangible supernatural force in them is a distinguishing feature of the heroic deeds representing these plots in an epic genre and giving a unique color to them. In the history of the Tajik mythology and ancient culture this force is formulated and interpreted in the conception *farr [-a] (farr[-a]-i ezadi; farr[-a]-i kayoni)*. So, the universal scales of epic plots reflected in the 'Avesta' sources, - that is, in *Avesta*, *Bundahishn*, *Dinkart* etc., in the 10th century, with some changes, formed the base of *Shahname* by Abumansuri, *Shahname* by Mas'udi Marvazi, the first (mythological), stage of *Shahname* by Firdawsi, *Shahname* by Sa'olabi and others.

Further development of the earliest epics can be traced in some mythological plots, such as those of poems about *Tahmuras*, *Jamshed* (*Avesta: Yima*), *Zahhok*, and later in the plots of works of the early

athletic period (the story about Faridun and his sons and so on). At this very point the initial stage of the formation of the epic elements ended and the new stage of their further development began, when the genre of epic developed as an integral phenomenon. Here, one should pay attention to the classification of Tajik epic pieces in oral and written traditions, which will allow us to study the general mechanism of the forming of this genre more closely.

As is well-known, the genre of epic stories (*hamosa*) comes from oral traditions. In accordance with the classification generally accepted in literature today, for the first time offered by Z. Safo in his fundamental investigation *Hamosasaroī dar Eron*, where the author refers to modern Iran, Tajikistan, and Afghanistan under the name of 'Iran', the following varieties are present in the Tajik-Persian literature:

- National - *hamosai milli*
- Historical - *hamosai ta'rikhi*

The first variety includes epic pieces that were developed as a form of expressing admiration and glorifying the heroes of different times. The cores of these epic stories go back to the earliest period of the formation of the eastern Iranian group of peoples, who were the ethnic ancestors of the Tajik.

Those epic stories were usually devoted to athletes and knights, that is, to those who defended kindness. Songs, stories, legends and, later, poems were composed in their honour. The principal aim - to defend the fatherland and home - was expressed in their persons and propagated by glorifying courage, heroism, and athletic deeds.

A considerable part of the Tajik epic heritage held in the oral traditions belongs to this variety. From the history we know that later, in different periods of the history of the Tajik culture and literature, oral versions

of epics served as the main sources of written epic works. This kind of modified epic stories includes *Ayotkori Zariron* (about the military campaign of king *Gushtosp* (*Kavi Vishtaspa*) and his brother, commander (*Zarir*), *Kornomai Ardasher Bobakon* (about Ardasher's victory over Ardavon and his other heroic deeds), *Dostoni Rustamu Isfandiyor* (a story about Rustam and Isfandiyor), *Kitobi Kailuhrospshoh* (a book about king Durosp, Gushtasp's father), *Nomai Pironi Visa* (the letter of Piron Visa, the councilor of king Afrosiyob), *Dostoni Bahromi Chubin* (a story about athlete Bahrom Chubin) and others. The heroic deeds and actions of the whole pleiad of rulers were also glorified in *Khudainamak*, an annalistic book of the pre-Islamic period, and some others. The tradition was stably continued in the Islamic period of the Tajik culture. Continuing those traditions of epic pieces in the Islamic period different authors compiled *Shohnoma* (9th-10th century), *Garshospnoma* (about athlete Garshosp's heroic actions) by Asadi Tusi (11th century), *Bahmannoma* (about Bahman, Isfandiyor's son) and *Kushnoma* (about Kush with elephant's tusks - pildandon - Zahhok's cousin) by *Iranshah Ibn Abulkhair* (11th-12th century), *Faromarznoma* (about Faro-marz, Rustam's son) and *Bonugushaspnoma* (about the athletic deeds of Bonugushasp, Rustam's daughter) by unknown authors (11th century), *Barzunoma* (about farmer-athlete Barzu, Suhrob's son and Rustam's grandson) by *Ato Ibn Ya'kub* (11th century),

Savsannoma (about a female musician - romishgar - who captivated athletes) (11th century), *Shariyornoma* (about athlete Shahriyor, Barzu's son and Rustam's great grandson) by Usmon Mukhtori Ghaznavi (late 11th-early 12th century), *Ozarbarzinnoma* (about Ozarbarzin, Faro marz's son and the grandson of Rustam and the king of Kashmir), *Bezhanoma* (about athlete Bezhan, Gev Gudarzid's and Bonugushasp's son), *Luhrospnoma* (about king Luhrosp, Gushtosp's father), *Dostoni Kuki Kuhzod* (a story

about Rustam's victory at a very young in his duel with athlete Kuk), *Dostoni Shabrang* (a story about the fight of Rustam with Shabrang, a white daew's son), *Jahongirnoma* (about Jahongir, Rustam's son, his duel with his father and his death from a white daew), *Somnoma* (about athlete Som, Zol's father and Rustam's grandfather) by Khoju (13th century) and others.

In the present-day Tajik culture these epic stories have the form of declaiming, singing with the elements of theatre. The following are the most popular:

The cycle of stories (*dastans*) about Rustam is the most popular and best-known epic work that has remained to the present time in the oral cultural traditions nakkoli, shohnomakhoni etc. These stories exist both in the poetical and the prosaic versions.

The story about *Suhrob* is a well-known Tajik epic story that belongs to the genre of tragedy and has been preserved in an oral form.

The story about *Barzu* continues the cycle of epics about the athletic family of Som Narimon, Rustam's grandfather and Barzu's great grandfather; Barzu, Suhrob's son and Rustam's grandson, who was born after his father's death, is glorified as the main hero. In the medieval period the plot of this epic, which had appeared in ancient times and has reached our days, was reflected in a separate epic poem by Ato Ibn Ya'qub, a Tajik and Persian poet of the late 11th early 12th century, who was also mentioned as Atoii Rozi under the nickname of Nokuk in some sources. The oral versions of this epic have the form of prose embellished with some poetical fragments².

The story about *Bonugushasp* includes texts of an epic character, where the feats and athletic deeds of *Bonugushasp*, the daughter of Rustam, the key figure in Tajik epics, are eulogised and glorified.

Amir Hamza is a folk epic known under names of *Dostoni Amir Hamza* (a story about Amir Hamza), *Rumuzi Hamza* (Hamza's symbols), *Qissai Amir*

Hamza (a legend about Amir Hamza) and *Hamzanoma* (about Hamza). Later the oral text served as a base for the formation of a written version that was told to have been created by order of Hamza Ibn Abdulloh, one of the officials of Khurasan (9th century), its plot being developed further in a later period, in the 11th and 12th centuries. Today qissai Amir Hamza (Kulob region) is known in folklore.

The second variety, to which the stories of historical character belong, reached its peak of development starting from the 12th century, that is, it practically appeared on the stage, when, peculiar to the early Middle Ages, the type of national epics gave place to the themes glorifying historical personalities and figures. *Iskandarnoma* by Nizami, a great Tajik and Persian poet and thinker (12th century), was at the beginnings of the traditional epics. A worthy continuation is traced in well-known poems of other Tajik classicists - Amir Khusraw Dehlavi (13th century) and Abdurahmon Jomi (15th century). Many stories about Iskandar (Alexander the Great) have been written. Later, this tradition was taken by the Uzbek literature, the piece of Alisher Navoi (15th century) being its perfect example.

The historical epics also include religious epic stories, which appeared in the Islamic culture, glorifying and eulogising the deeds of the Islam leader. They include primarily *Khovarnoma* (Khovaronnoma), *Sohibqironnoma*, *Khudovandnoma*, *Hamlai Haidari* and other works. Today, this kind of epic is known as the na't / madh genre in the Tajik culture. Here it should be noted that na't represents the cyclic form of pieces. In the Tajik musical culture this vocal tradition of epics exists under the name of na'tkhoni/maddoh[i]khoni.

Therefore, the epic stories of the Tajik exist primarily in the doston genre. Qissa (hence, the form of creation is qissakhoni, qissagui) is another

genre of epic stories in the Tajik culture. This tradition also includes singing, narrating, dancing, dramatising etc. Unfortunately, the present-day Tajik culturology and ethnography possess but scanty information on this issue. The epics *qissa Kosimi Zarrinkabo*, *Kosimnoma* and others remain popular among people. The so-called *qissahoi boboi (bobogi)* represents a separate tradition. They have formed a separate type of performance branch under the name of bobokhoni.

Together with the primordial Tajik epic stories that go back to the early centuries, the epic traditions of the Tajik also include stories taken from the neighbouring nations and epics. *Gurugli/Gurguli* and 'Alpomish' belong to them.

Epic *Gurugli/Gurguli*, which was genetically taken from neighbouring people, was given a new life within the Tajik culture. Relating the dostons about Chambuli Maston and his heroes in Tajik, *Gurugli/Gurguli* has the form of a musical performance and fairy tale. Guttural singing that is untypical of the Tajik vocal art is used in musical performance. The form of fairy tale *Gurzod* (Tajik: *born in a grave*) is also found in some Tajik sources.

The epic *Alpomysh* is known to have the form of a fairy tale only. According to the data of the Folklore Fund of Institute of language and literature at AS of RT, we know about the records of *Alpomish* in Tajik (Leninabad Region, present-day Sughd Region in Tajikistan, Qashqadarya Region in Uzbekistan, 1950s). According to researchers, elements typical of the Tajik version were formed in it.

It was a review of the most famous epic stories known to have been preserved in the oral traditions of the Tajik.

Reference

- 1 Safo Zabehullo. "Epos in Iran". Tehran: Firdaws, 2011. p. 6.
- 2 Rustam and Barzu, "Mardumgiyoh" (Scientific Journal of Folk culture). Dushanbe: 1993, №2. pp. 91-95.
- 3 Dushanbe: 1993, №2. pp. 91-95.
- 4 Avesta. Kniga 1. Dushanbe, 2014. 839 P.
- 5 Braginskiy I.S. Iz istorii tadzhikskoy narodnoy poezii. Moskva, 1956.
- 6 Bundahish. Dushanbe, 2006. 196 P.
- 7 Merosi khattii boston (Drevneye pis'mennoye naslediye). Kniga 2. T. 1. Dushanbe, 2014. 478 P.
- 8 Ne'matzoda T.N. 'Barzunoma', 'Shakhriyornoma' i ikh vzyaimosvyaz' s 'Shokhnoma'. Dushanbe, 2005. 19 P.
- 9 Ripka, Yan. Istoriya persidskoy i tadzhikskoy literatury. Moscow, 1970. 440 P.
- 10 Rustam va Barzu (Rustam and Barzu). "Mardumgiyoh" (nauchnyy zhurnal narodnoy kul'tury). Dushanbe, 1993, №2. p. 91-95.
- 11 Safo, Zabiholla. Hamāsa Sarayı Dar Iran (Epos v Irane). Teheran, 2011. 680 P.
- 12 Ferdawsi, Abulqosim. Shohnoma. T. 1. Dushanbe: Irfon, 1964, 468 P.

EPIC TRADITION AND EPIC NOVEL 'ALPOMISH'

JABBOR ESHONKULOV

Institute of Language and Literature

of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan

Learning oral epic traditions means learning people's lifestyle, traditions, customs and history, their present and future, their way of thinking and their spirit. Specifically, it means understanding the originality of a nation, its qualities, wishes, way of living and outlook or, in other words, learning the oral traditions of a nation means to study the nation itself.

The process of modernising our present morals depends on how we have studied literary heritage, including the originality and degree of mythology in oral epic traditions. For this, initially we need to learn, investigate and research ancient mythological imaginations of our people and their oral narrative traditions, which are the base for art and literature. Oral epic works present the literary history of any nation.

The epic novel *Alpomish* also illustrates the imagination of our progenitors, being the most valuable work sung by epic singers for centuries. It has over forty versions and variations in Uzbek. Each version and variation requires individual research. This novel occupies an exceptional position not only in Uzbek but also in the world's epic novel heritage. Its historical originality and literary qualities make it a great example of an epic novel.

This novel has been studied enough. On the other hand, its position in the

world's folk art, its mythological background and its connection with the nation's history, cultures and traditions must be redetermined.

Let's see how epics illustrate the rituals related to our traditions and how the epic singer (*bakhshi*) followed these traditions. It should be mentioned that the specific qualities of epics, particularly those of the heroic epic novels connected with rituals, have not been fully studied yet. *Alpomish*, as well as other ancient epic novels, demonstrates the great role customs play in the structure of its plot. But it will be too simple to conclude that heroic epics are based entirely on rituals. The ritual is revealed through transformations of epic forms. To research the links between the epic form and rituals is important for the establishment of the deep foundations of epics. In this connection, it is important to mention two points. The first one is the place and functions of epics in rituals. Nowadays, the invitation of an oral epic singer to wedding parties and other ceremonies is an ancient tradition, which still exists in the southern regions of Uzbekistan. The second point is how these rituals are reflected in the plots of epic novels, that is, what role they play there.

Alpomish can be called a *symbol* of ancient rituals, traditions, superstitions and ceremonies of our people, as the novel describes the everyday life of our nation like no other literary work. Different customs and traditions, such as hunting before the birth of a child, the birth of child proper, selecting a name for a baby, driving in a skirt, holding a cradle wedding party, assembling relatives before a wedding party for advice, appointing a herald, holding a circumcision party and others described in *Alpomish* are very important and require special research.

Studying epics and traditions we should use different methods, including the structural, linguistic, poetic and psychoanalytical analyses as well the method of typological comparison. The last one should be used, firstly, to

study rituals and, secondly, to compare them with epics and their principal motifs. The linguistic, poetic and psychoanalytical methods aim primarily to understand epics and ritual semantics. The structural method is highly important, as in this case we can see how the structures of the archaic epics harmonise with each other.

Shamans (shajara), their preferences, protection by good spirits, travel to the other world, fight with evil spirits, taking a different appearance are all attributes of shaman rituals. The archaic elements in *Alpomish*, such as the special stress on the genealogy and birth of *Hakimbek* and his permanent protection by his mentors, the demonstration of heroism, beginning of a journey, fighting against dark forces, seven-year imprisonment, his symbolic resurrection and returning to the world of the living, his reincarnation in *Kultoy's* appearance and other elements show the structural unity with the shaman rituals. Also the epics' genetic characteristics can be understood through studying the structure of the genre.

Speaking about the rituals in epics we should study two characteristics:

a) they occupy a special place in people's everyday life and have an artistic form in epics (birth of a child, naming it, making cradles, engagement at an early age, sending matchmakers, marriages and others); b) rituals that have gone from everyday life but have transferred to the artistic level (hunting before the birth of a child, setting tasks before the bridegroom by the bride's side and others).

Although the birth of a child occupies a small amount of space in the text of *Alpomish*, it plays an important role there. When *Khakimbek*, the main hero of the novel, was seven years old he could shoot from the bow of his grandfather, *Alpinbiy*, which weighted 14 botmons (200 kg), for which he was called *Alpomish*. 'At that time people gathered and said: "Up to this day the world saw 90 minus one alps (strong men). Now let *Alpomish* be

an alp. Since then he was regarded as one of the 90 alps (strongmen)". In ancient ceremonies, particularly in shaman ones, the hero was given a different name. On one hand, the name marked the shaman as a chosen person, who had reached spiritual maturity; on the other hand, it meant that he had gone through reincarnation and magic force. At present, in some of the southern regions of our country people give a newly born male child a false name in order to protect him from evil spirits. If they do not do this, they think the child can get ill. After some time, the child was given a real name, for which a small ceremony was organised. In epics the ceremonies are not fully described; however, their principal elements are reflected in the epic novels. The most important point is that the ritual plays an important part in the construction of the plot and creates an epic character. If we omit the fragment of giving another name to *Khakimbek* in *Alpomish*, the meaning of the novel will change seriously. So the ceremony influences greatly the plot of the epic and at the same time functions as an artistic and aesthetic element. Barchin's division from the people and the putting of a yurt on a high hill are described in the novel in the following way: 'After making this decision, Barchin's yurt was removed from the hill where ten thousand of other yurts were. Barchin had moved there with her 40 kanizes.' At this point two things draw our attention. The first one is the putting of Barchin's yurt on the high hill. Hills and mountains were regarded as sacred places used to hold ceremonies. The second thing is that the yurt was of a mixed white-and-red colour, which expressed ancient theories about two worlds (the place of unity of man and woman). That is why these both colours have a special symbolic meaning in epics and ceremonies. At wedding parties held in the southern regions of Uzbekistan, bride stays in the house of neighbors or relatives, which is away from her own house. The friends of the bride held the ceremony of 'hiding a girl'

by hiding the future bride. The chosen person from the bridegroom's side should find his bride. Only after the *girl hiding* ceremony, the other side is allowed to take the bride. This very ceremony could be found in the novel.

'The ancient ritual was the following. Barchin was hidden in one place... Then she was found'. If we are not informed about such kind of traditions, we can simply think about Barchin's yurt on the high hill. Originally each action in *Alpomish* was done correctly and each had deep logic. The putting of Barchin's yurt on a high hill means the marriage time for the girl on the one hand, and her protection from the external world, on the other hand.

The *girl hiding* ritual that is, separating the future bride from the group is an action which is done in order to protect her from different accidents and dark powers. So the putting of Barchin's yurt on a high hill is an artistic symbol in the novel. The function and poetic power of rituals connected with hair are so great that it is impossible to explain it in one study. While magic actions in ancient ceremonies have a ritual meaning, in epics they become artistic. The ritual of *stroking a lock*, as well as other rites in *Alpomish*, are a good indication of this.

Hair and a horse's mane are symbols of a soul. Having someone's hair or mane was equal to make the person dependent on its owner. Frezer also says that hair played a great role in ancient ceremonies; primitive people thought that by combing, cutting and burning the hair, they could affect the person's nature and soul. The ceremony of plaiting hair is one of the things which meant the time of marriage for girls; it is also one of the rituals that are constantly transforming. The hair magician came from the harvest cult. The ideas of ancient people were illustrated in these 'hair stroking' rituals.

The stick, mirror and rope are objects which are used in ceremonies. The reason why these three things are connected is that they indicate the border between the two worlds. That's why the rope and sticks thrown on the way

of young married couples meant moving from one world to another one. So some of the superstitions, such as the prohibition for a pregnant woman on going over a stick or rope or swimming in a river, looking into the mirror in the evening or cutting her hair still exist in our days.

The mirror is considered an attribute of water; water is also similar to a mirror in its natural qualities. Water is the border between the two worlds. So water plays a special role in all religions and different ceremonies.

The *old woman died* ritual forms a part of a wedding ceremony. In some regions it was held in brides' houses; in others, the bride goes to the bridegroom's house. It was held in Barchin's house in *Alpomish*. N. P. Lyubecheva mentioned that this tradition was seen in all Central Asian Turkic nations. This tradition is also kept until now. In Surkhandarya, Kashkadarya regions, it is still held in a bride's house as it was written in the novel. At the entrance of the room where chimildik was put one old woman stays and behaves like a dog, obstructing the way, when the friends of the bridegroom want to enter the room. This old woman who behaves like a dog should be from a respectful family and have plenty of children and, most important, she should be a close relative of the bride.

After giving the old woman her *share*, the bridegroom enters the room. After this the 'old woman died' ceremony is held. As we know, marriage is always an important connection between birth and death, considered as the beginning of the life-death-life cycle. According to ancient conceptions about live gods, when an old person left the world, they were reincarnated as a *spring*. Without death there is no birth. If winter does not 'die', spring cannot be 'born'. Actually, birth and death are just two aspects of one thing.

The *old woman died* ceremony reflects the same in *Alpomish*, that is, the coming of one season (cycle) in place of another one, the forming of a

new family after the death of an *old woman*, all this expressing the symbolic cycle of eternal life. The representation of seasons in the form of an old-woman can be found in other ceremonies, such as chymomo and Sust xotin.

We know many myths about live gods. The most important feature of myths is that all of them shows the cult of nature and harvest and most of them have a female appearance. Each change of seasons was accompanied by sacrifices and special ceremonies. In ancient Egypt the death and birth of Osiris were shown as spring performances.

In Germany a doll from hay, which symbolised death, was shown to brides. It was thought that, *death* in the form of an old woman could help the bride have a lot of children.

The majority of scientists mention stable conceptions about death's influence on fertility and the number of children in a family. That's why rituals connected with family and seasons must be studied together, as all the aspects of family ceremonies can be understood through studying seasonal rituals.

In conclusion, it should be noted that epics and rituals are closely connected with each other. Studying the historical foundations of rituals we to epic novels, such as *Alpomish*. Only through comparing motives in epics with rituals can we clearly understand the main idea. The talent and intellect of an epic artist can be seen from their works, which can demonstrate how well he followed traditions or how he could add his own part to an ancient novel and make this precious piece of art passed from generation to generation look new and fresh.

Reference

- 1 Alpamysh. Skazitel' Fozil Yuldash ugli. Podgotovlen k pechati Khodi Zarifovym i Tura Mirzayevym.. Tashkent, 1999. p.429.
- 2 Zhirmunskiy V.M., Zarifov Kh.T. Uzbekskiy narodnyy geroicheskiy epos. Moskva, 1947. p.520.
- 3 Lobacheva N.P. Razlichniye obryadoviye kompleksy v svadebnom tseremoniale narodov Sredney Azii i Kazakhstana, Domusulmanskiye verovaniya i obryady v Sredney Azii. Moskva, 1975. pp.302–320.
- 4 Mirzayev T. Epos i skazitel'. Tashkent, 2008. pp.70–160.
- 5 Putilov B. Epos i obryad, Fol'klor i etnografiya. Leningrad, 1974. p.76.
- 6 Sarimakov B. Uzbekskiy obryadovyy fol'klor. Tashkent, 1986. pp.65–119.
- 7 Frezer Dzh. Fol'klor v Vetkhom zavete. Moskva, 1989. pp.263–265.