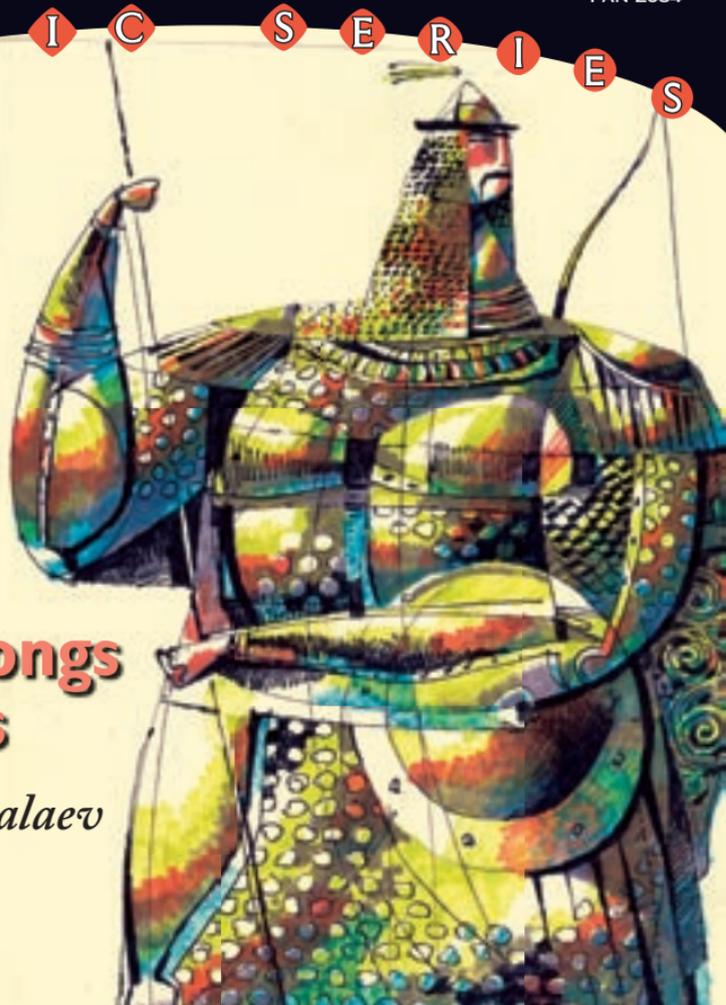


## ETHNIC SERIES



# Heroic songs of Manas

*Saiakbai Karalaev*  
(1894-1971)

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### General information on the Manas epic

In Kyrgyzstan the thousand-year jubilee of the folk epic Manas, the longest and most powerful epic of the world, was celebrated in August 1995. In the second half of the 19th century the well-known Russian Orientalist V. Radlov wrote: "It is to be admired, how the Kyrgyz master their own language. The Kyrgyz always speaks fluently, without stumbling. He can lend a certain beauty to his own speech, because he exposes his own thoughts precisely and clearly, and even in an extremely ordinary discussion a clear rhythmic meter often emerges in the creation of phrases and sentences, so that one sentence follows another in verse- and strophic form to make the impression of a poem." (Radlov 1885, 16).

Among the monuments of Kyrgyz folk poetry, which come from old times and belong to the masterpieces of folk poetry of the world, the poetic legend of the Batyr (hero) Manas and his Kyrk Choros (forty warriors) takes up a special place.

Only the variants that have been noted down by the well-known storyteller Saiakbai Karalaev contain over half a million (500,553) poetic lines. It exceeds the length of the Iliad (15,693 lines) and Odyssey (12,110 lines) combined over twentyfold, and that of the Mahabharata (100,000 double verses) around two-and-a-half times. It is said that six months are necessary for a full presentation of the epic.

At present altogether 65 variants of the three parts of Manas are known. As the world-renowned writer Genghis Aitmatov has said, Manas has become historical folk remembrance, coded forever in poetic words. Manas, according to Aitmatov, is synonymous to the folk themselves. The popularity of Manas is exceptional. In north Kyrgyzstan, where it is particularly popular, hardly a Kyrgyz is found, who cannot recite at least excerpts by heart.

"Such a total mastery of the epic I have only come across with two peoples of Turkic origin, which at present live totally separate from each other: with the Abakan- respectively Minussin-Tatars on the upper run of the Yenisey, and with the Kara-Kyrgyz (...), although these two tribes have lived completely separate from each other already for nine centuries." (Radlov 1885, 18).

There was also reference to the parallels between the epic Manas, that

was common at the upper run of the Yenisey, and the Altai epic 'Alyp Manash', that was brought to Central Asia by the Oguz in the 8th / 9th centuries (Jirmunskij 1961, 152).

### Contents

The description of the heroic acts and campaigns of Manas forms only the first part of the epic, which is considered as the actual Manas. The second part, 'Semetei', is dedicated to Semetei, the son of Manas. The third and last part, 'Seitek', tells about Semetei's son Seitek.

The main topic of Manas is the description of the campaigns of the legendary Kyrgyz Batyr to Afghanistan, Central Asia and China. Its contents apprehend however also all sides of folk life, the way of life and the big events in the destiny of the Kyrgyz. Manas is an encyclopedia of the Kyrgyz people, that reflects the versatility of its life, its morals and customs, its aesthetic conceptions and ethical standards, its medical, geographical, religious conceptions, its trade relations and much more.

Therefore Manas represents the richest source for the study of the history, philosophy, ethnography, word art and psychology of the Kyrgyz. The epic begins with a narrative about how the Kyrgyz—pressed hard by the Chinese—scatter through the world.

Already as a child Manas fights against intruders, the Chinese Khans (actually imperators and great feudal lords).

Beside battle scenes, descriptions also take a special place in the epic: Tojs—weddings, village fairs and plays, funeral parties, etc... Manas researchers often use the technical term "The constant main events of the epic". This means certain groups of traditional episodes, which occur in nearly all variants. To these episodes belong: strange intruders and their expulsion; birth and childhood of the main hero Manas, his first heroic acts; the migration of the Kyrgyz from the Altai in the Ala-Too (Tian Shan Mountains); the events, that refer to Shooruk and Alookey; the marriage of Manas and Kanykei; the events with Köskamänen; the history of Almambet; the commemoration ceremony for Kökötöi; the great campaign; the death of Manas and the establishment of the mausoleum.

The kind of analysis of these "constant main events" and their sequence on

the whole remain stable in most variants.

In the variant of Sagimbai Orozbekov the main events look as follows: the epic begins according to the generally accepted tradition by enumerating the ancestors of Manas and a narration on the subject, that a strange Khanate had conquered the Kyrgyz homeland and had chased away the sons of Nogoi. Also Jakip was chased into the Altaian forests. He had no children until high age.

Finally Jakip's wife begets a son, who is called Manas. The child is disobedient and makes escapades. Out of educating purposes his parents have him work as a farmhand. At the age of nine Manas already proves a large boldness and resists the Kalmyk yoke. The Kyrgyz with Manas in front defeat the Altai Kalmyks and the army of the giant Nesar. Also the clients of Esenkan, that tried to capture Manas, and that were defeated by eleven powerful beings sent by Duu-du (a degree of rank with the Chinese Kalmyks, to be compared more or less with a governor general). The population fears to be shattered by the hostile minded tribes and decides to unite and proclaim Manas as Khan. Manas collects a large army and frees the country.

The population settles in Ala-Too. There Shooruk Khan tries to subject the Kyrgyz. He however suffers a defeat and is forced to make peace with the Kyrgyz. These get Shooruk's daughter Akylai as peace pledge.

The history of Almambet forms an independent part. He is Chinese, converts however to Islam and leaves China. First he serves with the Kazakh Batyr Kokche and thereafter goes into Manas' service.

The next episodes report on the marriage of Manas and Kanykei and the intrigues of the Köskamans, a tribe related to Manas.

Sagimbai Orozbekov performed the 'commemoration ceremony for Kökötöi' as independent episode.

In the variant of Saiakbai Karalaev this history is explained as memory to 'Semetei'. This tradition is also noted down with other Semetei-storytellers. It seems that also Orozbekov had performed the 'commemoration ceremony for Kökötöi' earlier in 'Semetei' because some names are mentioned here, that we find in 'Semetei' before.

The next episode in the variant of Orozbekov is 'Chonchabuu' ('the large advance'). It reports on the victory of the Kyrgyz in a battle against Konurbai and the peace treaty after the presentation of gifts to the victor. Manas and his army return with rich war booty into their homeland. Since Manas still has no child—no son and heir—he feels oppressed and decides to undertake a pilgrimage to Mecca in order to ask there for granting this grace. Incited by Kyrgyz, who was also considered an agitator in former times, Manas goes on his way. Bakai and others near Manas don't approve of this decision. They take any effort to keep Manas from it. They send their people to Manas' women, who determine that Kanykei is

pregnant. Thus the journey loses its sense. But Manas cannot be retuned, since he wants to remain faithful to his intention and his word, and travels to Mecca. In his absence innumerable enemies attack the Kyrgyz. Manas returns in the middle of the war and defeats the enemies.

He however is wounded on the battleground and dies. He is buried in the area of Kum-Aryk, in the Bayan-Talaa steppe and a mausoleum is constructed for him. To his honor this area was later called Manas.

The version of Saiakbai Karalaev is less religious, it is clearer instead and more deeply attached to the original, pure folk version.

It also begins with enumerating the ancestors of Manas. After the death of Karakhan, the Kyrgyz are subjected by the Khans Molto and Alookey and suffer hardship. The sons of Karakhan, who try to accomplish resistance, are banished into different areas.

Jakip, who is banished with forty other Kyrgyz families to the Altai, gets gold there and becomes fabulously rich thereby. However he always complains his fate not to have children.

The fortune-tellers of Khan Esenkan communicate to their lord that among the Buruts (Kyrgyz) a boy, Manas, will be born, who will once ruin him. Esenkan instructs his knights to find and bring the boy to him. The knights find Jarmanas and bring him forth. They believe this boy to be Manas. He is however the son of Choneshen from Samarqand.

At this time Jakip has a dream, which is explained in such a way by the interpreters that his wife will bear him a Batyr. Soon also a boy, who is called Manas, comes into the world. From the first year of his life on,



*Genghis Aitmatov,  
world-renowned writer.*

Manas makes escapades. To harden the son, the father has him pasture lambs together with his shepherd Oshpur, until he is 12 years old.

The first large heroic act of Manas is the victory over a 700 men strong troop of Kalmyks. Esenkhan hears about it from Taglyk who has saved himself from this battle with effort and distress.

Esenkhan thereupon sends ten-thousand warriors against Manas with Dongö and Joloy in the lead.

Manas defeats the army, Joloy however saves himself by fleeing. Manas follows the advice of Akbaltay and goes on search for his people and for the knight Koshoi. They meet in the area of At-Bashi, Manas follows Koshoi's advice and settles in his Ail (village) in the Talas-Talan.

The father scolds Manas because of alleged neglect of cattle, on which the insulted Manas leaves his parental house and goes out into the steppe. There he meets an old man, the sorcerer Babadykan, the protector of the Dekhkane (people of the field). Following his advice, Manas begins to sow corn. For the harvest proceeds Manas buys the horse Ak-Kula.

He also meets the holy prophet Khisr, who gives him six swords fallen from heaven. On search for his relatives Manas meets Bakai, Ajybai and Shuutu, who become his warrior companions (Choros).

Manas returns to his Ail, takes steps against the violent offender Alooqe, defeats him and distributes his wealth among the people.

Manas is selected by the population to be Khan. He defeats Shooruk, the cold cynical Khan, who thereupon gives Manas his daughter Akylai. In the variant of Saiakbai Karalaeu the history of Chubak is told as independent part. Akbaltay had found him in the steppe and adopted him out of grief over not having a son. At the age of six Chubak starts to study in Medina. In a dream Manas once appears to him.

Manas follows the advice of Chubak and Bakai and decides to marry. He courts Kanykei and gives her the greyhound Kumaiuk, which he found on a hunt, so that she can raise and drill it.

In Saiakbai Karalaeu's version then follows the report on the large campaign. During the guest meal with Toshjuk twelve Kyrgyz Khans decide to destroy Manas. Koshoi tries to dissuade them from doing so, but they do not follow his advice.

Standing in front of Manas, they become afraid of him. On his question why they came, the Khans pretend to have had the intention of going into war against Konurbai. Manas decides to begin the campaign. Almambet is selected to be Khan of the army. All take off. The army makes its first rest only after forty days and nights. Bakai and Manas suggest Almambet that he should reconnoiter the area and bring his comrade Syrgak.

Insulted over the fact that he was not brought along for the investigation, Chubak is provoked by Kyrgyl to ride after Almambet and Syrgak. He catches up with Almambet, does not take his reasonable advice, and insults



The photo of Sayakbai Karalaeu comes from Melis Ubukeev's 1966 documentary film "The Great Narrator".

him, by calling him 'stranger'. Manas, informed by Bakai, comes on the right moment, when both already have pulled their swords. He brings them apart and expresses his displeasure over their behavior. Almambet and Chubak ask Manas for pardon and reconcile themselves (**track 1**). Manas, Almambet, Syrgak and Chubak ascend to the summit of Tal-Choku and regard the country of the Chinese through a telescope (**track 5**). On Manas' request, Almambet tells about the situation of the Chinese and about his own biography. (This narration of Almambet 'Almambetyn army' is found further on in these liner notes—**track 3**.)

His father was Aziz-Khan and his mother Altynai, the daughter of Shooruk. Because the Chinese Khans had the intention of killing him, Almambet quarrels with them. He follows the advice of his mother Altynai, who is a Muslim, and converts to Islam, kills his father and leaves his homeland.

For six years he stays with Kokche and serves him. However after Kokche believed slanders and insulted him, Almambet leaves him and undertakes a pilgrimage to Mecca. From there he returns to Bukhara and meets Bakai, who brings him to Manas.

After this discussion Manas and Chubak stay on the Tal-Choku pass. Almambet and Syrgak go into the area, where Almambet was born, meet there with Karagul the horseherd and drive a large herd of horses away from Konurbai. After Konurbai hears about that, he catches up with the two with a large army. One battle follows another, whereby Almambet and

Syrgak help each other several times.

Manas sees these events in a dream and goes to the battleground with Chubak. All four riders together strike the enemies on the run. But reinforcement troops come to the aid of the enemies, and the battle continues. Finally the hostile troops are beaten. Manas becomes Khan of far Bej-jin. But by treachery and cunning Konurbai succeeds in wounding Manas and the battle begins all over. Many of Manas' companions fall on the battleground. The wounded Manas returns to home country and dies of his injuries. His wife Kanykei constructs a mausoleum in his honor.

## History

The events, which underlie the epic, took place in ancient times and interlaced over time with old sagas, fairy tales, legends and myths. The Manas storytellers say:

"Manas degen zhomogu  
Bir min bir zhuz zhylyk kep." (Variant of Orozbekov)

"The epic designated as Manas  
is a history of one-thousand-and-one-hundred years old."

The epic probably originates from the middle of the 9th century—the time of the 'Great Kyrgyz power' (Bartold)—when the Kyrgyz still settled in the Minussin-Steppe on the banks of the Yenisey. The strong Kyrgyz state under Jaglakar-Khan that came into existence in these times successfully fought against the intruders from the Mongolian steppe. Later Jaglakar-Khan conquered the lands south of the Sayan and Altai Mountains and brought a considerable part of the Kyrgyz into the Tian Shan Mountains.

This hypothesis is proven by the fact that a large part of the epic is dedicated to the description of the passage of Manas' troops on the way to China over the rivers Irtysh and Orkhon. In the Orozbekov variant it begins as follows: "Orkon daryja zheri bar..." ("There is a country at the river Orkhon...") The road to China over the Irtysh and the Orkhon began however in the Minussin-Steppe and not on the territory of today's Kyrgyzstan.

In this connection also the city Manas near Urumchi (south of the Irtysh) and the forests of the same name at the rivers Irtysh and Amudarya must be mentioned. According to Kyrgyz oral tradition these names have been preserved since Manas' times.

The above-mentioned opinion about the time of origin of the epic is not undisputed. To answer this question essentially three hypotheses are posed. The first hypothesis of professors M. Auezov and A. Bernstam: The main events in Manas are connected with the time when the Kyrgyz grappled with the Uighurs. Both scientists come—albeit not quite for the

same reasons—to the below mentioned conclusion:

9th century: the main event of Manas, which probably forms the original core of the epic, is 'the large campaign'. The Kyrgyz under the leadership of Manas carry out the march against a strong eastern state, in which realm the large fortified city Bej-jin was located, that was 40 days—in another version 90 days—distant from the center of the Kyrgyz state. In the meantime it is known that the Kyrgyz subjected an enormous Uighur state and conquered its capital Bej-jin in the year 840. It is known that the conqueror of the Uighur state died in the year 847 (Auezov 1961, 51). The leader is dead, but the people do not want to part from its beloved hero. Thus grow legends from own and neighbouring peoples' history, starting with the 'large campaign' and told up to the rebellion under leadership of Jaanger-Khan (at the beginning of the 19th century) and the heroic acts attributed to Manas. All these stories are inserted between the two cores of the epic: the genealogy of Manas and the 'large campaign'.

Thus the epic gradually gets the form, in which it was noted down for the first time in the second half of the 19th century. (Bernstam 1968, 160).

According to a second hypothesis the epic is connected with the events of the 9th to 11th centuries, when the Kyrgyz fought against the Kidanei (Kara-Chinese). Professor B. Junusaliyev (1958, 9-10) comes to this conclusion due to the analysis of contents of the epic, supported by individual ethnographic and linguistic testimonies.

According to a third hypothesis (V. Jirmunskij 1961), historical events of the 15th to 18th centuries are reflected in Manas, even when older popular life views are retained in the epic. To the age-old elements of the epic belong the shapes of Manas himself and that of the hostile knight Joloy, leftovers of totemism, fetichism and matriarchy. These are found in the outlines of traditional motifs of knightly bridal courtship, in overpowering the virgin knight Saikal, in the marvelous birth of the hero, and others. In the epic the Kyrgyz are designated as Muslims, but it is not specified when, how, and from where this religion was adopted.

Therefore at every turn we experience how the heroes celebrate shamanic rituals. They admire natural phenomena: water, mountains, sky, fire, sun, the color white, milk, and others. They take oaths to heaven and earth before campaigns:

"Ubadadan tajandy  
Töböshü achyk kök ursun!  
Töshü tükütü zher ursun!"

"Who breaks the oath  
May the blue sky punish him!  
The earth covered with vegetation may punish him!"

To the cult objects belong combat weapons dating from later times:

"Akkeltenin ogu ursun!  
Kök keltenin chogu ursun!"

"May the Akkelte-bullet punish (him)!  
May the ignition hole of the fuse punish (him)!"

The spirits of deceased ancestors (Ata-babany arbagy) are particularly strongly admired in the epic. Each important affair begins with bringing a sacrifice to the mare (Ai Tujak—moon-like hoof) and mentioning the death roll of the ancestors.

Among the Choros of Manas the fortune-tellers—to which belong the bone-army (Daly körüütshü) Agyday and the army of small stones (Tolgötshü) Karatölek—take an important place (Musayev 1979, 146). Some episodes of the epic have a fairy-tale central story line, like e.g. the history of Makel-Doo, near Koshoi, the fight of the hunters against the one-eyed Doo, and others.

Folk-lore has embellished the real events that underlie the Kyrgyz epic by and by and has added fairy-tale like elements.

The historical character has gradually lost his original physical characteristics and has turned into the epic shape of the Batyr named Manas.

The name Manas itself is not preserved in the history of the Kyrgyz people. From a linguistic point of view the name Manas either designates a shamanic deity or is related to Manichaeism, which was widespread in Central Asia then. It accommodated the nomads, due to their flexible philosophical system, which linked (their) shamanism with the large religions such as Zoroastrianism, Christianity and Buddhism. At that time to the Kyrgyz in any case religions were known, in which the name Manas—Manisa was adored and where we find the topic Manas since the 9th century. This on the other hand served—indeed only until the 10th century—also as designation of the relic and the cult ranges of the Manichaeists. (Bernstam 1968 A, 190-191).

It may also be that the real name of the hero of those times read differently, but that he later received the name of the deity Manas because of his heroic courage. (Auevov 1961, 51; Bernstam 1968, 162).

Bernstam among others also analyzed one of the most reliable sources of history—the genealogy. He came to the conclusion that the name of the oldest ancestor in Manas' family tree—Tubai-Khan—is the name of the country. Tuba' / 'Dubo' is an ethnographic and topographic name. As a topic it designates the country, where the center of the Kyrgyz territory was found—the upper run of the Yenisey (Minussin land, today's Tuva). The oldest historical central story lines therefore go back to the area Yenisey-Tuba-Altai. (Bernstam 1968, 158-159).

Until the recent past the Manas cult stood over all known cults with the Kyrgyz. It is remarkable that humans were not allowed to carry this name—as opposed to e.g. to the name of Choros, which is quite common with the Kyrgyz.

#### Manaschi - Manas storytellers / narrators

'Manaschi' is the Kyrgyz name for a versifying singer, who has devoted his art to Manas. Manaschi distinguish themselves from all representatives of Kyrgyz oral folk art and from storytellers of other epic works ('Jomokchu') and form a particularly highly honored group among themselves. Their principal activity exists in the recitation of Manas.

The general designation 'Jomokchu' still occurs in Manas, e.g.:

"Jomokchu lar koboso Ujkashtyryp yrday ajtyp..."  
"It seems that Jomokchu have written and recited these verses..."

The Kyrgyz divide the Manaschi into four main groups (Musayev 1985, 37-39):

- 1) A Manaschi apprentice or beginning Manaschi ('Üyrönchük Manaschi') claims possession without title of the secret of narration in the contact with a well-known Manaschi.
- 2) Craftsmen-Manaschi-Rhapsodists ('Chala Manaschi'—literally: 'not genuine Manaschi') mainly recite single broadly known and interesting episodes with insignificant changes and additions.
- 3) On a higher level stand the master storytellers ('Chiniği Manaschi'—'genuine Manaschi'). Narrating Manas is their occupation; therefore they know the epic and create when narrating their own versions.
- 4) On the highest level stand the 'Chong Manaschi' ('great Manaschi'), the creators of variants particularly popular under the population. Their names remain a long time in folk memory.

Manas is a result of collective creation by several generations of Manaschi. Manaschi Sagimbai Orozbekov describes this process as follows:

"Atadan kalyp balaga  
Agadan kalyp inige  
Birinen kalyp birine  
Ajtylyp kelgen ushu söz."

"From the father to the son  
From the oldest brother to the younger  
From one to the other  
This word (oration) was told."

Each Manaschi has brought own, new motifs and episodes into the epic,

in which he tried to respond to contemporary events. In the course of time the song cycle about Batyr Manas changed and enlarged, it became an idiosyncratic encyclopedia of the poetic conceptions of the Kyrgyz people. Since the epic also contains a set of subthemes and deviations from the main theme, as well as inserted episodes, with some Manaschi the inserted episodes grow into a large poem.

In this regard the chapter 'Almambetyn armany' is exemplary in the version of Saikbhai Karalae, which can be heard here (**track 3**).

People remember such names as Yrymandan Yrtshii Uulu, who—according to legend—was the combat companion of Manas, who wrote verse foremost and who had sung of knight Manas in a lament after his death. In the epic he is mentioned under the nickname of Yrtshii ('prince and poet'). From this time the tradition probably originates that everyone, who sings about Manas and his heroic acts, portrays himself as an imaginary combat companion, as—if only symbolically—one of his Choros. In this connection it becomes clear that it is no coincidence, when in each prophetic dream without fail Manas and his Kyrk Choros appear and invite the future narrator to participate in their meal or in a forthcoming campaign. This fact confirms the assumption that the first songs were originally written by an eyewitness, who had participated in Manas' campaigns. The next storytellers had to follow the tradition to appear as apparent participants of the events (Auevov 1961, 53).

It is remarkable, that all Manaschi explain their gift with a prophetic dream, with 'Daaruu' (intuition, illumination). All Manaschi tell that they were called to this role 'from above' and as 'chosen one' to have gotten their knowledge of Manas 'from there'.

The separate laments, which were sung by the folk, so tells history, were collected and incorporated in a 'Jomok' (epic) by the singer Toktogul, who lived 500 years ago. Thus the epic Manas came into existence. About Toktogul is told that during his play on the komuz (a longnecked lute) and during his singing everything around him, even wind, mountains and rivers, grew silent and stopped breathing.

Nooruz (18th century) and Keldybek (who died in the 1880s) are among the Manaschi whose names have remained in folk memory. According to legend the yurts (nomad tent) trembled, when Keldybek sang Manas. In darkness and by noise of uncanny gales the invisible Choros of Manas covered the road as in flight. The land trembled under the riders. It is told that Keldybek was a good enchanter too, something like a shaman (Rachmatullin 1968, 80), who visited patients and women after childbirth, and who possessed the ability to cure illnesses by chanting, commemorating verses from the epic, uplifting Manas to deity. Among Keldybek's successors Balyk, Naimanbai, Tynybek and Chojuke have enjoyed

the largest popularity.

It is interesting how Tynybek (1846-1902) tells his history of Manas enlightenment (Auevov 1961, 22-23). As a referee he had to go to Karakol. There however he was punished and had to spend one week in prison. On the return journey to his Ail he went to rest in the unpopulated area of Tossor. Exhausted from the long way, he laid asleep. In a dream he saw that a large group of riders came to him: Manas on his horse Ak-Kula and the Kyrk Choros. The riders dismounted and took place: Manas alone and the riders separated in four groups. Farmhands brought the meal. Manas instructed to also bring something from the meal for Tynybek. (After a long time, when he had sampled honey for the first time in his life, he said that Manas had treated him to exactly such honey then.) Tynybek heard from the farmhands who were the forty riders and their leader. When he came to himself and wanted to approach the riders, all decamped rapidly and rode away. Tynybek still chased them for a long time, but unsuccessfully. Still in the dream he began to sing of Manas. When he awoke however, he felt—unexpectedly to himself—that his whole soul was filled with the most beautiful songs about Manas' heroic acts.

The Homer of the 20th century, Saikbhai Karalae (1894-1971), Chojuke's pupil, is considered as one of the most outstanding Manaschi of recent time. Saikbhai was born in Semi-Bel (Jety-Ogzyz district at the Issyk-Kul Lake) in the family of a poor cattle breeder and a Berkuchi (king eagle hunter) in the tribe of Bugu. As a boy he worked as a farmhand with a Russian Kulak. In the year 1916 he participated in a rebellion against the czar's part and then emigrated with many other participants in the rebellion to China. At the end of 1917 he returned again to the homeland. In the same year he performed as Manaschi for the first time. From 1918 to 1922 he served in the army. After his return home he was chairman of the village soviet for many years. In 1930 Saikbhai was invited into the Kyrgyz capital of Frunze, in order to recite Manas publicly. In 1935 he was accepted into the Kyrgyz Philharmonic organization. In 1939 he was awarded the honorific 'People's Artist of Kyrgyzstan'.

The recordings of Karalae's version of Manas altogether took twelve years (starting in 1935 and completed in 1947). It includes over 500,000 poem lines and with that it is the most complete of the conserved variants. In 1968 Karalae recorded 11 music cassettes (17,948 verse lines with three parts of the epic). According to another version these recordings were already made in 1956, but transcribed into print only in 1969. Saikbhai Karalae died in the year 1971 in the Kyrgyz capital of Frunze (renamed Bishkek in 1991).

Sagimbai Orozbekov (1867—1930) belongs to the great Manaschi of recent time next to Karalae. His father Orozbek was a surnai (shawm, a

wind instrument) player with the well-known Kyrgyz Khan Ormon. After the death of the Khan Orozbak moved to Kabyrga, where also his son Sagimbai was born. Sagimbai spent nearly his whole life in Kochkorke. For one year, after the 1916 rebellion, he went to China, however returned soon.

Sagimbai began to recite Manas at the age of 15-16 years. The first teacher of the future Manaschi was Chonbashi (Narmantai). Like other colleagues Sagimbai also explained his creation with a prophetic dream. He had gotten his first knowledge of Manas from his older brother Alisher, who at that time was considered a good Manaschi. Already as a child Sagimbai showed poetic talent. He was a good connoisseur of folk songs and of many aspects of Kyrgyz folklore. Later, as a famous Manaschi, he also wrote his own works. In the summer of 1922 K. Miftachov began noting down Sagimbai's variants of Manas. I. Abdyrachmanov later continued his work. Noting down the first part of Manas took until August 1926. Because of Sagimbai's illness this work was however broken off. The manuscript of his version of Manas, recorded in Arab writing, has 5,505 pages (180,378 verse lines).

It is told that Sagimbai particularly gladly and successfully performed "Semetei", because he regarded Semetei as his guardian, who in a dream inspired him to the recitation of Manas. Jirmunskij wrote "One accepts as the classic way of reading Manas the one from Sagimbai Orozbakov, which is complete and distinctive". Various scientists emphasized on the other hand that the historical reliability of events described in the version of Orozbakov seems to be less



The memorial statue of Manas is located in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

convincing (Bernstam 1968 A, 178). These two—Karalaeu and Orozbakov—depict two diametrically opposite versions from all known respectively fixed versions of Manas. That reflects itself not only in the central story line and in the pattern of portrayal, but also in a different point of view towards the used material. Lastly, both are outstanding exponents of different Manaschi schools: the Naryn school (Orozbakov) and the Karakol school (Karalaeu) (Auevov 1961, 22).

### Written tradition - research

The first reports on Manas, according to literary data, date from end of the 15th / beginning of the 16th century. It concerns the manuscript of Saif-ad-din, the son of Shah Abbas of Akhshkent, which is written in Persian and known under the name of 'Madshmu-at-Tawarikh' (collection of histories). The events, which are described in the epic, and the epic heroes are represented here as real (Musaev, 187-188).

The first written rendering of excerpts of Manas dates from the 1850s from the Kazakh interpreter and outstanding Orientalist, the grandchild of Valikhan (one the last Kazakh Khans) and friend of Fedor Dostoevsky, Chokan Valikhanov (1837-1865). An officer of the Russian army, with a perfect mastery of Kyrgyz, he translated part of the written down excerpts for Valikhanov into Russian. His translation was published in the year 1904, forty years after his death.

The next attempt to write down Manas was undertaken by the Russian Turkologist V.V. Radlov. In the 1860s he had heard a shortened variant of the epic (9,449 verse lines, excluding 'Semetei' and 'Seitek') from the mouth of an unknown Manaschi, had written it down and published it in the German language in own translation. The Kyrgyz text was also published in a Russian transliteration. Due to the materials published by Radlov, P. Falev (1922) analyzed the artistic characteristics of the texts of Manas and came to the conclusion that they are related to the inscriptions on the well-known Yenisey tomb in honor of Kül-Tegin.

### Characterization of the acting persons

In the characterization of the acting persons, the name, which the hero gets at birth, is already of great importance. The name of humans in the traditional view is closely connected with his inner characteristics and self-confidence. According to tradition large attention is given in the epic to the description of the hero's appearance—from clothes via weapons to horse's harness.

According to general tradition Manas possesses characteristics, which are

typical for the main hero of a heroic folk epic. "He is a powerful human, a fearless knight, a generous and fair human being. He is also a leader, who releases and unites the subjugated and scattered Kyrgyz, and gives them back the lost homeland. In the epic Manas is called Khan, but he is portrayed as a simple warrior, who always fights in the forefront. He has attacked enemies together with a spotted leopard at one side and a short-tailed lion, ready for jumping, at the other side. In front he had a long dragon of sixty arms length and on top the fairy-tale like giant bird Alp-Kara-Kush. His strength was like the strength of a thousand powerful knights. If he became furious, "his eyes spat flames; smoke ascended in clouds from the mouth and his body hairs broke through the armor." "If someone had dared stare at him, he would drop dead." Large attention is also given in the epic to his character traits. Manas is generous, modest and honest. These characteristics helped him to collect "the vultures and to transform them into falcons." He says about himself:

"Ak maral bagyij kyldym  
Kurama zhyjnap el kyldym."

"The white Siberian deer I transformed into a cow  
The disorder of the tribes I transformed into a nation."

The fact must be mentioned that his guard—the Kyrk Choros—came from different areas.

His horse, his clothes correspond to the ideal image of a folk hero:

"He is fused from gold and silver.  
He is created from the support of the earth and the sky.  
He is created from the sun and the moon.  
The earth carries him, because it is dense.  
He is created from the sunbeams and the moonlight.  
He is born from the waves and the sea.  
He is created from the coolness of the clouds in the sky."

Manas becomes a crystallization point for the national idea. It's accentuated ever more clearly in the epic: Manas is a ruler, chosen by and bound to the population, who unites the Kyrgyz tribes and who announces a battle against national dissipation.

The nearest companions of Manas, Kanykei and Bakai, take a special place in the epic.

Kanykei, Manas' wife, his nearest advisor, is represented traditionally: she possesses all positive characteristics of the faithful wife of a knight: she is intelligent, far-sighted and kind hearted. Even the wise Bakai and Koshoi respect her opinion. In differences of opinion Kanykei is always put in the right, e.g. with the estimate of the enemy strength before the "large campaign".

She is also a masterful craftswoman, who has sown all things for her man, including the Akolpok. Before the campaign she makes presents for each of the forty Choros: everyday and festive dress, winter and summer clothes, miraculous medicaments, a large supply of nourishment, ammunition, and many others. No special attention is given to her looks. It is only emphasized in Karalaeu's version that she was:

"Kara surdun suluusu,  
Musulmandyn nurduusu."

"The beauty among those with brown face color,  
The bright shining among the female Muslims."

which could also refer to her inner qualities. Taken into account the fact that at the time, of which the epic reports, girls not even possessed right of inheritance, the role of Kanykei in Manas is relatively large. Again and again she is respectfully called "kalk enesi Kanykei" (mother of the people). At every turn she supports Manas. In Karalaeu's version her assistance with his activity is described as follows:

"Sajyp zhueruup bak kylgan,  
Salyp zhueruup tam kylkan"

"Planted as twigs, she made from it a garden.  
Blacked on brick, she made from it a house."

Kanykei embodies the ideal Kyrgyz conception of a woman.

Bakai is a relative of Manas from the paternal side, his councilor and educator. He embodies the conceptions of the Kyrgyz on wisdom, justice, reason and cordiality of human beings.

"Kapillete söz tapkan  
Karaggyda köz tapkan."

"He finds the eyes (i.e. the way) in the darkness  
And the right word (i.e. the decision) in a hopeless situation."

Almambet, owing to his knowledge and his heroic courage, has no equal with regards to physical power among the positive heroes of the epic. The son of a well-known Chinese Khan, he is the nearest companion of Manas, his milk brother:

"Sakaly kysyl seçselip  
Sarala at minip teşselip  
Altyn kember kurts hanyyp  
Ajday betin nur tshalypp..."

"His red beard blows in the wind  
He rocks on a red motley horse

He carries a gold-knitted belt  
Like the moon shines his face."

Almambet experienced a tragic fate. He was forced to leave his folk and live as a poor, homeless refugee without support of his tribe. Therefore—also when the Kyrgyz revere him—he often bemoans his fate of a homeless person, by saying:

"Eldüünün baary er eken  
Ne degen sözü em eken."

"Those, that have their own tribe, seem to be courageous  
All their words seem to be in place."

Even when faithfully serving the Kyrgyz folk, he never forgot his homeland.

Koshoi is regarded as a holy man by the folk because of his wisdom. He is estimated as a human, whose  
"Benediction enriches the folk."  
"Batasy zhurttu bajytkan."

Even Manas' son Semetei was born owing to his benediction. Only he possesses the right to judge Manas' faults and to abash him for his failure.

"His ears are like the shield,  
And the eyes sparkle like the Venus."

"Aj kulagy kalkandi,  
Alaagar közü tsholpondoj."

"He is the head of the tribe recognized by all."  
"Walk atasy—er Koshoi." "Father of the nation—hero Koshoi."

When the Kyrgyz were shattered and scattered, he did not have his tribe enslaved by the enemies and continued to fight, until the Kyrgyz with Manas in the lead returned.

In the epic the knight Chubak is characterized as a more confidential, more naive, more honest and calmer human being, whom "nobody can master; even the teeth of the lion cannot bite him."

"Adamdyn aly zhetpegen,  
Arstandyn üshü ötpögön."

In addition "his clothes from blue rep, he rides on a grey motley runner":

"Kök yrypas ton kijip,  
Kök ala tulpar at minip..."

"Sometimes Chubak however is rough and hot tempered."

The young knight Syrgak is the favorite of the whole nation. He

distinguishes himself from the other knights by humanity, politeness, good-naturedness, integrity and the depth of his feelings.

"Atka zheçil, taiga tshak,  
Ujkusu zhok, zholgo sak,  
Zhekeni belge kurtshegan,  
Zheti tümön kol kelse,  
Zhelbej kirip kol salgan."

"It is easy for the horse,  
Does not drowse, is awake on the way,  
It carries a jeke-belt,

When the enemy comes that is seventy-thousand men strong,  
It attacks them unbuttoned."

Among the positive acting persons of the epic the following are yet to be mentioned: the leader of the Kyrk Choros Kyrgyz and the astute Serek, who can give "sixty reasonable pieces of advice, until the fallen horse stands up"; the eloquent Ajybai, who  
"Altymysh uruu til bilgen tilge zhujruk"  
"Mastered sixty different languages and always was quick witted" and Tshotok, whom even Manas admired and called "Töro" (Lord).

In the epic all negative characteristics impersonate in the 'kan zhyttangan' (smelling after blood) Chinese Konurbai:

"He has a straight nose; the eyes are blood-shot,  
The chest is broad and the hands are powerful.  
The eye sockets are deep; the speeches are terrible.  
He is high of stature. Like that is the Khan,  
That is called Konurbai."

Ugly features and infamous acts also distinguish the second most powerful knight after Konurbai in the camp of the enemies, the Kalmyk 'dan zhyttangan' (smelling after grain, i.e. gluttonous) Khan Joloy.

### Language and style

Manas contains all poetic means and genres of Kyrgyz folk poetry, like large poems, small lyric songs, proverbs and expressions. Ritual songs take a large space in the epic—laments over the deceased (Koshok), laments over fate (Arman), legacies in song form (Kerees), instructional songs (Sanat Nasijat), and the description of different customs (wedding celebration, banquet, commemoration ceremony, bridal courtship, celebrations in honor of wandering relatives that move in and out of new pasture grounds).

Because of its depth and its extent the epic is denoted an 'ocean of poetry'. Over 20 melodies are known and retained, that are used in the

recitation of Manas. V. Vinogradov has divided all Manas melodies into four groups and described these in musical detail (Vinogradov 1984; notes also on p. 500-509).

Since no music instruments are used in the recitation, mimic, gesturing and intonation play a large role apart from vocal art. Each movement and attitude of an experienced Manaschi is not chosen at will, but purposeful and corresponding to the contents of the text. It is customary in the recitation of Manas to give a 'short repetition' of the contents and the events of the preceding episodes. The range of the "short repetition" depends on how familiar the listeners are with the episodes already recited.

The beginning or continuation of the recitation after a break or the transition from one action to another is fulfilled by particular verse lines standing firm, that are almost never changed. Only certain names are added:

"Any tashtap salycar,  
Manastan kabar alycar."

"Leave it (temporarily),  
Hear (rather) the report on Manas."

Or:

"Any myndaj tashtajly  
Bajagy arstan erdin kyrk choro,  
Kyrk choro emes, kyrk zhoro,  
Oshondon kabar bashtajly." (Rhyme scheme: abba)

"Let us leave that aside,  
About that (formerly mentioned) lion, hero, Kyrk Choros  
Not Kyrk Choros, but forty comrades,  
About that we begin the oration."

The slightly changed form occurs more rarely:

"Munu kojo salycar,  
Manastan kabar alycar."

"Leave that,  
Hear (rather) the report on Manas."

Or:

"Munu myndaj tashtajly,  
Manastan kabar bashtajly."

"Leaving that aside,  
We begin the oration about Manas."

The Manas verses usually consist of seven or eight syllables. That is the

typical meter for Kyrgyz folk poetry. With the eight syllable verses a caesura follows after the fifth, with the seven syllable verses after the fourth syllable:

"Kazaka chygar / tycynan  
Beldeshken zhoogo / demüüdon."

Or:

"Elemandy / Er Töshtük  
Al chygardy / bir zhigit  
Eshktekterdin / zhamgyrtshy  
Al chygardy / bir zhigit  
Kazaktardan / kökhösü."

The metric principle is foreign to Kyrgyz poetic art. Therefore those syllables with long vowels, which are written with two letters, e.g. 'zhoo' or 'düü' are counted just like syllables with short vowels. Sometimes in ante-song and final chord verses occur, that consist only of six, five or even four syllables, however their number in the whole epic is relatively small:

- "Okugan ojondor  
Chygarsyn maanisin." (6 syllables)
- "Tuusun ashtady  
Zholdu bashtady." (5 syllables)
- "Manas baatyr  
Kazak kökhö  
Kalmak Sanzhy." (4 syllables)

Often four and five syllable verses come successively:

"Agysh, Kozhosh,  
Akbaj, Mambet  
Kök-Kojon Sultan,  
Körgön—ukkan  
Azija kalky",

where the third and fifth verse consist of five and the others of four syllables (Polivanov 1968, 57-58).

It should be remarked here that these verses also have another recitation melody than Manas itself and rather belong to the Orozbakov-variant (Musaeu 1979, 195).

Manas verses are coined/shaped by the variety of ways of rhyme: identical rhymes, rhymeless rows, crossed and enclosed rhymes, internal rhymes and rhymes of two consecutive words or syllables in the same sentence, triplets (aaa) and paired rhymes. These are not subordinated however to any defined system, but carry a loose character.

Alliteration still competes with end rhyme, which is not yet completely canonized. On the whole the rhyme system in Manas is close to the

supposed output form of rhyme in the Turkic languages (Jirmunskij 1961, 87).

In Manas most frequently paired rhymes (aa, bb, cc) and half-broken ('attamak') rhymes (ba, ca, da) are found:

- a) "Zhana tokulum sonun tüş körüp,  
Üjündö eki kush körüp,  
Booru kara, mojnü kez,  
Bolot teköör, boosu zhez,  
Kashytka tur zhajlaptur,  
Katynym eköön baylaptyr."
- b) "Altymysh kulatsh zhibek boo  
Ajagyna tagypmyn.  
Aj munaryn zhem kolyp  
Ajabaj syjlap bagypmyn."

More rarely we find crossed rhymes (abab cdcd) or enclosed rhymes (abba, see p. 17).

Manas does not have strict strophic structuring. The strophic groups, that contain a certain idea and that are restricted by the number of rhymed lines, resemble declamation poems. The verses can have from two to twenty syllables, sometimes also more. The verse groups consist not only of the even paired lines typical for Kyrgyz folk poetry (two, four, six paired lines), but also of an uneven number of verse lines (three, five, seven, etc. paired lines). Also in the latter case the rhyme is not to be assigned to a certain system. In some of the verses consisting of three lines, the first and third line are rhymed, the second line remains unrhymed. These three- and four-line verses occur however sporadically and nearly always belong to a particular declamation group.

The verse form that is typical for Kyrgyz and Kazakh epic poetry ('jira') and that does not know regularity in rhyme arrangement, dominates by and large in Manas. Sometimes the same rhyme (successively or alternating with others) is repeated in six or seven, also however in ten or twelve lines. Rather typical for Manas is also the so-called 'tautological rhyme', in which the same word is repeated at the end of several verses.

"Uluktun baary kep kyldyç,  
Uzaktan beri kek kyldyç,  
Ubadacıy bek kyldyç,  
Urushun körböj shek kyldyç,  
Kandyñ baary kep kyldyç,  
Kazattyn sözüñ ep kyldyç,  
Kan Manasty chet kyldyç."

Here the verb 'kyldyç' (you have done)—both singular and plural) is

repeated several times (Polivanov 1968, 60). The tautological rhyme is occasionally combined with a phonetic anaphora:

"Kökötöidün ashy bolup  
Kök zhal Manas zhakshy bolup  
Kary Koshoi bashy bolup  
Kan Kökötöi ashy bolup  
Kamalyp korko bergendej."

In the last case we see how in Manas with large technical skill also that special rhyme is used, by which the same word is repeated at the end of two or more lines, and only the second last words of these lines are rhymed. The so-called 'tautological rhyme' is known in Kazakh folklore under the concept of 'Jeldirme', which could be translated as 'trotting race', in contrast to other rhymes, which allegedly have the verses 'ride resignedly'. The Manaschi uses 'Jeldirme' with the intention of accelerating speed in the description of scenes rich in passion (Aueзов 1961, 73-74). In Manas—typical for Turkic languages—as a rule only male rhyme is valid. Regularly also internal rhyme, assonance, as well as beginning rhyme and alliteration occur, which play a rather large role in the melodiousness and the expressiveness of Manas verses:

"Kan kylygn dedim kimiçdi,  
Kaaladyñ, keldim, deniçdi."

"Whom from you have I asked to choose me to be Khan?  
I wanted your faith, there I (myself) came."

A further characteristic of Manas verses, which occurs still more frequently, is the so-called vertical phonetic anaphora. A set of verse lines (sometimes ten to thirteen) begins with the same syllable or the same sound:

"Erdi kalıç, közü ünkür  
Er münözü körünöt."

"The thick lips, the deep-set eyes,  
The Batyr mood is to be seen (directly)."

or in the excerpt quoted above:

"Kandyñ baary kep kyldyç  
Kazattyn sözüñ ep kyldyç  
Kan Manasty teshet kyldyç  
Kamalyp korko bergendej.."

Or:

"Al badirek kankordun  
Ajyly bizden arbyñby!!"

Adamy bizden baatyryby?!"

Frequently phonetic anaphoras play a dominating and rhyme a secondary role in the phonetic verse structure.

The meaning of phonetic anaphoras in Kyrgyz epic poetry is difficult to estimate without consideration of the characteristics of Manas recitation. As is commonly known Kyrgyz belongs to the languages with emphasis on the end of a phrase. The extraordinary prevalence of phonetic anaphoras in the Kyrgyz epic seems to be little effective. In recitation however Manaschi always sharply accentuate the first syllable of each verse line. In doing so they create an artificial emphasis. A less relevant, but rather remarkable voice accentuation falls on the first syllable of the second half verse, i.e., on the fifth syllable in seven syllable verses, which are particularly typical for Manas. This fifth syllable in the verse is often the first syllable in a three-syllable word.

The possibility to read Kyrgyz epic poetry so as to show metrical structure after the first syllables explains itself probably from the fact that polysyllabic Kyrgyz words have two emphases: the last syllable is strongly sounding, the first ancillary. Often the rhythmic emphases agree with the second (ancillary) emphasis. Thus alliteration and phonetic anaphoras do not remain unnoticed in the recitation of Manas. On the contrary, they are emphasized clearly, since they have a particularly favorable place in the verse structure.

Sometimes also all means of melodiousness (phonetic anaphoras, alliteration and end rhyme) are used:

"Kanatyn kajra kakkylap  
Kujrugun kumba chapkylap.."

Different addresses and calls take an important place in Manas, e.g. a speech of Manas in front of his army, a speech of Kanykei addressed to Manas, a speech of Manas addressed to Chubak, and many others. This variety of speeches, monologues and dialogues, which suppress and delay the continuation of the narration, is a substantial peculiarity in the style of Manas. The central story line thereby develops itself mainly with the assistance of short, halfprosaical explanations (Jorgo söz), in which alliteration and end rhyme are usually kept, but almost never the meter. Monologues and dialogues are kept in verse form.

The fact that no great importance is given to the continuation of the action in the Kyrgyz epic, but that contrariwise the different kinds of addresses and the recitation art of the Kyrgyz are highly assessed, was already noticed one hundred years ago (Radlov 1885).

Later the opinion was expressed, that this could be explained by the fact that this form of epic poetry presupposes a recitation by two or more singers (Falev 1922, 55).

It is also to be mentioned that sometimes in the epic the rightness of grammatical and syntactic structure is sacrificed in favor of meter and rhyme (the so-called anacoluthon), which is quite characteristic for large verbal works (Junusaliyev 1968, 230).

Various tropes are used in Manas as a way of presentation in the depiction of persons: comparisons, epithets, hyperboles and metaphors. As main comparison appearances and objects are used, that are connected with the nomadic life of the Kyrgyz. Therefore a girl is compared with a Maral (a white Siberian deer), her eyes with the large languid eyes of a camel cow, her teeth with glass beads and the waist with a grape vine.

For a concise and exact characterization constantly used epithets are of great significance that not only characterize humans and their actions, but also special features, the value of a weapon, the equipment, the horse and its harness: arstan (Manas)—lion; kabylan (Manas)—leopard; syrطان (Manas)—hyaena; syr najza—smooth lance; ach albars—sharp sword; kök zhal (Manas)—who has a black-grey mane. In the last case (kök zhal) the word is meant (kök zhal börü), which is known to a large extent in epic and folklore of the Turkic peoples as a totemic animal (Jirmunskij 1961, 122).

Most epithets however can also be used for the characterization of other heroes (e.g. arstan Chubak), even for women, e.g. Kanykei, Manas' wife: "Arstan zheçej Kanyket", "Kök zhal zheçej oshondo". The only epithet, which exclusively characterizes Manas, is 'ajköl' (the generous).

The other heroes also have constant epithets: alykman (Bakaj)—wise; kajran enem (Kanykei)—wise mother; also negative epithets occur: kankor (Konur)—bloodthirsty.

## The repertoire

1) **Almambet Menen Chubaktyn Jol Talashkany**  
(The fight on the way between Almanbet and Chubak).  
Recitation: Saikabai Karaljev.

2) **Jayboodo.**  
Jayboodo is a topographic name.  
Composed and performed by Shaken Jorobekov on the Kyrgyz wooden Jew's harp jygach ooz-komuz. Shaken Jorobekov is a singer and instrumentalist from the region of Osh, who revived the rare the jygach ooz-komuz after a long period of neglect.

3) **Almambettin Army (Almanbet's night dream).**  
Translated from Kyrgyz into Russian by Malika Abdualjaliev.  
Recitation: Saikabai Karaljev.

First the splendor of the Kyrgyz Dastorkon and the hospitality of the Kyrgyz are praised and then the healing characteristics of kumys

(fermented mare's milk) and cooked meat are narrated. 'Arslan' Manas asks 'aziz Chorusu' (the dear Choro) Almambet after his affairs. Affectionately Manas calls him 'Anake', which causes envy with some Choros. 'Ajköl' Manas stresses his friendly feelings for Almambet, by saying that genuine friends also share horses and cattle.

*"Dos bolgondan kijin,  
Aty birge;  
Talgoon koroo  
Maly birge".*

Manas asks Almambet, how he feels after yesterday's fight with the Kalmyk Batyr kyz (girl-hero) Saikal.

Manas continues to ask Almambet after his past: whose son he is, from which tribe he comes—Manchu, Solon, or Kytai (Chinese). With whom and as what he formerly served? Almambet answers these questions of Manas. He tells that his father Aziz Chan was called Aziz-Khan, etc. (see above, under "contents") His story ends with the following words:

*"Ak maraldan bolsam de  
Elimdi tashtap keldim."*

*"If ever I come from the tribe of the white deer,  
I have yet left my tribe and come to you."*

Manas nevertheless wants to test Almambet and with this intention sends him on reconnaissance, since he fears an assault of the Chinese Khan Konurbai on the Kyrgyz. Konurbai had already taken prisoner several Kyrgyz. Manas in addition gives Almambet his horse Sarala and Syrgak, one of his Choros. Manas says to Almambet:

*"Bir Ala-Too az kyrgyzga kyzmat kylyp ber,  
Tuugandyñ künün basyñ ber, dushmandyñ kanyñ chachyp ber..."*

*"Achieve now the service of one of the small peoples of the Ala-Too, the Kyrgyz;*

*Calm the soul of friends, leave the blood of enemies (to flow)..."*

Karagul, who was known as an intelligent and courageous warrior and clairvoyant, stood guard for the Chinese: ("Karagul kozu aчык..." "Karagul's eyes are open, i.e. see everything").

Karagul stops both Choros, asks who they be and where they go. Almambet answers him in his (and his own) native language and thereby mentions the name of his father. Karagul does not believe him however, because he recognizes the combat horse of Manas under Almambet (only the Kyrgyz possessed this horse breed). Almambet begins to act smartly and accuses Konurbai that he does not adhere to the etiquette of hospitality.

But Karagul remains unyielding, continues his interrogation and asks whether Almambet's road companion were not Burute (Kyrgyz).

Almambet replies that his comrade is deaf and dumb. But Karagul does not believe him this time either. Almambet is forced to confess that he received his battle horse from Manas. Whereupon Karagul goes on his way to communicate to his lord that 'unexpected' guests have come. He hurries there on his horse:

*"Men baatyrga kabar berein...  
Toru aigyrý baskanda...  
Zher durkurop ketkende..."*  
*"I must give message to my Batyr,  
When his battlehorse rode,  
The soil trembled..."*

#### 4) **Boz Uydo (In the yurt).**

Composed and performed by Shaken Jorobekov on the Kyrgyz wooden Jew's harp *ygach ooz-komuz*. In Kyrgyzstan the *komuz* is still widely played by women and children.

#### 5) **Tel Chokunuk Körünushu. Almambetin Armyan.**

(The sight from the Chokunuk mountain. Almbanbet's night dream.)  
Recitation: Saiakbai Karaliev.

#### 6) **Min Kyjal (A thousand thoughts).**

Composed by Toktogul Satylganov (1864-1933). This piece belongs to a genre known as *küü*. *Küü* refers to (instrumental) music composed for a particular instrument, as well as to individual pieces within this repertory. The literal meaning of *küü* is mood, state, or temperament. *Küü* are thought to be descriptive or narrative. Performed by Samarbubu Toktakunova (b. 1945), who is a distinguished *komuz* player. The *komuz* is the fretless, three-stringed, long-necked lute of the Kyrgyz, made from apricot, nut, or juniper wood. Playing techniques are plucking, strumming, and striking strings with the fingernails.

#### 7) **Taytorunun Chabyshy (Horseman of Taytorun).**

Recitation: Saiakbai Karaliev.

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## Glossary

- Akolpok: white harness of Manas, manufactured by his wife Kanykei.
- Akyn: popular poet and singer.
- Arman: unfulfilled dream and the longing thereafter; as genre of Kyrgyz folklore: laments over fate.
- Ash: commemoration.
- Aul, Ai: village.
- Batyr: hero.
- Choro: warrior.
- Dastorkon: tablecloth; metaphorical: feeding.
- Doo: cyclops.
- Duu-du: civil servant.
- Jeke: belt, which Batyrs applied if they intended to fight man against man.
- Kerees: legacy in song shape.
- Köskaman: nickname for Manas' kinsman.
- Koshok: lament about the deceased.
- Kyrk: forty; epic number in the folklore of the Turkic peoples.
- Kumaiuk: according to legend a greyhound, that no animal escapes from, born from a bird of prey (the Snatch). For a while it remains a dog, then it transforms into a bird. If one finds a Kumaiuk at the time it is still a dog, it remains a greyhound, that can catch any animal.
- Sanat-nasijat: instructional songs.
- Toj: wedding, feast.

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