

Journal of Central and Inner Asian Dialogue

(Winter 2015)



In Recognition of Uzbekistan's Declaration of 2015 as the "Year of Respect for the Elders," and Dedicated to Elders Everywhere

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The *Journal of Central and Inner Asian Dialogue (JCIAD)* is an annual online peer-reviewed academic journal. Founded in 2011, JCIAD is the only academic journal outside of Central and Inner Asia with emphasis on the important fields of culture, languages and literature. JCIAD is supplemented annually by its newsletter, *JCIAD News*.

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Editor's note

We are happy to present the second volume of the *Journal of Central and Inner Asian Dialogue* (JCIAD). The journal does not have much to boast of strict observance of periodicity. For this we apologize and look forward to publishing the next volume by December 2016. Nevertheless, judging by the manuscripts in the editor's hand and by responses of our readers, the JCIAD has already evoked interest among community members, colleagues and students from beyond Central and Inner Asia.

On December 8, 2014, Uzbekistan declared year 2015 as the "Year of Respect for the Elders." Already, before the announcement was made by the government, JCIAD's editors planned on dedicating a special issue to the topic of elders at some point in the future. Uzbekistan's declaration, however, inspired this volume to pick up the theme and be devoted to the elders of the region.

Discussions about elders are commonly associated with middlebrow conversations as well as with scholarly literature with the phenomena of a tradition whether it be ritual, folklore, etc. By tradition, we also include the knowledge of genealogy (i.e. what the elders store and hand down from generation to generation intact) and the traditions of respect given for these ritual and folklore experts, and above all, the respect for the elders. In fact, it is the main leitmotif of the texts published in this volume of the journal. There is little exaggeration that the elders are often the custodians of unique knowledge, and respect for them—in the form of edification—has clearly been seen in folklore and ethnographic materials collected from various ethnic groups of this vast region for centuries.

At the same time, it should not be left unmentioned that there is a margin of overestimation in this edification. More precisely, over-trust in the articulated "norm" (for different reasons and under different circumstances) together with an apparent lack of attention to cultural details compels us to see reality less varnished

and more lively, more complex, and as a result, more real. “Tradition,” a seemingly simple and generally comprehensible term, is commonly accepted as something that is handed down from generation to generation, adding complexity to an analysis on the topic. A closer look at this phenomenon, however, forces us to accept the point of view of Pascal Boyer, who wrote twenty years ago with obvious sarcasm: “In the anthropological literature the characterisation of tradition is generally considered both self-evident (everyone knows what a tradition is) and immaterial (the way you understand it has no empirical consequences).”¹

The research of Nicholai Pluzhnikov, an early graduate student of mine now a Ph.D. candidate in Anthropology, comes to mind. Initially, I found great difficulty in defending his wish to pursue a dissertation topic about what he first collected as curiosities, as anomalies—namely non-ethnic borrowings evidenced in Siberian shamanism—in front of the Department of the North at the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology of the Russian Academy of Sciences in the mid-1990’s. In the end, it turned out that some of the random samples he gathered compiled a comprehensive set of facts that gave rise to a discussion about them as the norm. These exceptions to the rule were seen to have largely enabled shamanism to maintain itself for centuries. Shamanism is certainly traditional, but the reason why it is still alive, it can be argued, is the fact that the tradition in these cases did not require “ethnic purity.”

Like in all the cultures known to me, Central Asian as well as North Asian shamans—regardless of the presence or absence of any official world religion—enjoyed special respect in society. However, one has only to peer closely to immediately find bright folk narratives that portray a society given to punishing a negligent shaman. It would be wrong to attribute this phenomenon only to Soviet-induced transformations. This is simply because the memories of subjects observed recall a pre-Soviet period at the beginning of the twentieth century, and at times lead away into ancient times. A mythological story, for instance, tries to make reason of

the disappearance of shamans among the Teleut Tumat clan. The head of the clan, Choloy, once beat a shaman—an act strictly prohibited by tradition—resulting, consequently, in a bereft clan forsaken by its shamanic gift.² The narrative's survival and continued transmission indicate that the practice of punishing shamans did in fact exist, and the subsequent stories about such cases only confirm it! Should it not be worthwhile then to investigate how the rules of any tradition relate to and impact people's daily practices?

We often forget that, for example, shamans and storytellers—with an incredible abundance of similar characteristics;³ and clearly visible piety (especially with regard to epic storytellers)⁴—as a rule differed radically in their cosmological ideas and at times did not endure the presence of each other even within the same *ulus* (Altai materials confirm this well).

An important characteristic of any epic storyteller, as well as of any shaman, is his ancestry: At the beginning of the ritual when summoning the spirits, the shaman is required to call the names of several generations of ancestors (or the names of those shamans, whose spirits he received in one way or another). The narrator, at the beginning of the performance, always has to tell from whom he took over this tale, thus, in advance preparing the listeners for the traditionalism and, therefore, for the truth of his words. One of the characteristics used to display (both - emic and etic) traditional Asian cultures is, in general, conveying knowledge of one's own ancestry.

However, there is one important fact that anthropologists have begun to pay attention to only in the past half century. In the case of genealogical beliefs, one should consider several cultural layers at the same time. It is not only the demonstration of their legitimacy expected by society (both of a shaman and a storyteller), but it is also the belief of a particular person in their closeness⁵ and frequently changing social relations in society that inevitably reflect the list of names

in a particular ancestry. In other words, the use of kinship and genealogical lines serve as a socio-economic resource⁶ and at times as a defense mechanism, or vice versa as a conscious act of commemoration, evidencing the proximity of social ties in relation to a specific person.⁷ And finally, genealogy can be considered as a genre of folklore in and of itself, and folklore materials, as we know, must be treated very carefully for they are not sufficient as historical chronicles.

I hope that, as with any discussions on traditions, we take into account the above mentioned approaches, as well as keep in mind that much of what we now mean by traditions, what we consider as such are, in fact, more or less recent inventions. On the same token, we are given to accepting antiquity, as a kind of "mandatory" characteristic of an authentic tradition, not as a rule.⁸ Romantic essentialism, naturally, is easier to understand, but equally its concepts are easier to be used for the manipulation of people. In any case, a detailed analysis for any social phenomenon is much more preferred. I hope that the volume of our journal, presented at the moment, will give all interested readers extensive food for thought about the nature of traditions in general and, in particular, about the phenomenon of traditional respect for the elders.

JCIAD thanks everyone from the various regions of the world who have made this special volume possible. The support and commitment we have received from the Russian, East European and Central Asian Studies Program of the Jackson School of International Studies at the University of Washington and the Department of Ethnology at Moscow State University have allowed *JCIAD* to continue as the only journal in the world devoted exclusively to the literatures, languages, and histories of Central and Inner Asian Turks, Mongols and Tungus.

I hope you will enjoy reading the *Journal of Central and Inner Asian Dialogue*.

Dmitry Funk
Senior Editor

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 2. Elena Batyanova, *Rod i obshina u teleutov v XIX - nachale XXI veka* [Clan and community among the Teleuts from the nineteenth to the beginning of the twenty-first Centuries] (Moscow: Nauka, 2007), 296.
 3. Dmitry Funk, *Miry shamanov i skaziteley (kompleksnoe issledovanie teleutskikh i shorskikh materialov)* [The worlds of shamans and storytellers (a comprehensive study of Teleut and Shor materials)] (Moscow: Nauka, 2005), 7–36.
 4. See e.g. Albert B. Lord, *The Singer of Tales* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 1960); Karl Reichl, *Turkic Oral Epic Poetry: Traditions, Forms, Poetic Structure* (New York: Garland Publications, 1992).
 5. Lawrence Krader perfectly defined it regarding the shamanic ancestry with the term "quasi-inheritance": Lawrence Krader, "Buriat Religion and Society," in *Gods and Rituals: Readings in Religious Beliefs and Practices*, ed. J. Middleton (New York, 1967), 114; Vladimir N. Basilov, *Shamanstvo u narodov Sredney Azii i Kazakhstana* [Shamanism among the peoples of Central Asia and Kazakhstan] (Moscow: Nauka, 1992), 137.
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Contributors

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Stefan Kamola became interested in the nomadic people and Turkic languages of Central Asia during a year as a Watson Fellow in Tuva in 2001-2002. He subsequently received an M.A. in Near Eastern Languages and Civilization (2007) and a Ph.D. in History (2013) from the University of Washington for work on the history and literature of Central Asia and of the Middle East during the Mongol period. Since 2013, he has been a post-doctoral fellow with the Princeton Society of Fellows, where he has been researching the manuscript reception and legacy of the *Jāmi` al-tawārīkh* of Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍl-Allāh Hamadānī. He has recently begun a collaborative project with Elmira Kochumkulova of the University of Central Asia to translate the Kyrgyz epic *Er Töshtük* into English.

Alva Robinson earned his M.A. degree from the University of Washington's Near Eastern Languages and Civilization Department in 2011. After spending a number of years teaching and conducting research in Kyrgyzstan, he has since relocated to Houston, Texas, where he works as an assistant editor for a prominent journal.

Central Asian Turkic Elders

Past and Present*

Ilse Laude-Cirtautas (Seattle)

Qadimdan barcha Markaziy Osiyo Turkiy xalqlari orasida yoshi ulug' kattalar "tirik kitob" bo'lib vazifasini o'tab kelgan. Keksayish, yoki ulg'ayish hamisha ham dono bo'lish demakdir. Shuning uchun kattalardan, ya'ni 50 va undan yuqori yoshdagi kishilardan asrlar osha ularning zimmasiga yuklatilib kelinayotgan majburiyatlarni bajarish kutiladi va ularga O'zbeklar iborasi bilan aytiladigan: "Yuzlaridan nur tomgan nuroniy keksalarimiz" deya ehtirom ko'rgaziladi. Quyidagi fikr-mulohazalar, asosan, Qozoq, Qirg'iz va O'zbek manbalariga tayanilgan holda yuziga keldi, hamda nuroniy keksalarning urf-odat, an'ana va qadriyatlarni yosh avlodga yetkazib berishdek burch va vazifalariga alohida e'tibor qaratildi. Eng muhimi, nuroniy keksalar yoshlarni doimo ajdodlarining ruhi bilan bog'lab turadilar. Shuning bilan birga yoshlar dono va nuroniy qariyalardan diyonatli bo'lishni, kamtarlik va bag'rikenglikni o'rganadilar. Shunisi quvonchliki, odob-axloq namunalarini targ'ib etuvchi misollar esa xalq og'zaki ijodi va yozma adabiyotda ko'plab uchraydi. Ayniqsa, Markaziy Osiyo Turkiy kahramonlik eposlaridagi qahromonlar yoshlar uchun mardlik va bag'ri kengligi namunasiga aylanganlar. Xalq ertaklari insonlarga, hayvonlar va tabiatga nisbatan cheksiz mehr-muhabbatli bo'lishni da'vat etsa, "O'talar So'zi", maqollar nuroniy keksalar pand-nasihatlarining, o'g'itlarining ta'sirchanligini yanada oshiradi. Maqolaning ikkinchi kismi mustaqillikdan keyingi davri bilan bog'likdir va asosan O'zbekistan haqida so'z yuritiladi.

Key Terms: Portrayals of Turkic Elders; Generosity; Oral and Written Literature; Spirits of the Ancestors; Chingiz Aitmatov

* Dedicated to the respected Central Asian Turkic Elders, foremost to Muhammad Ali (1942–), distinguished poet, writer and public servant of Uzbekistan.

Introduction

Common to all Central Asian Turks is the respect for the elders who were the “living books” among their nomadic ancestors. To this day, getting old is “to get wise,” a process that is reflected in a prescribed code of conduct for male and female elders. Accordingly, elders, i.e. those at the age of fifty and beyond, are expected to fulfill the responsibilities placed on them centuries ago and, as a result, are held in high esteem as expressed by the Uzbeks with the phrase *nuroniý keksalarimiz* (our elders with faces shining with light).¹ In the following discussion, based mainly on Kazakh, Kyrgyz and Uzbek sources, special attention will be given to one of the elders’ obligations, namely to transmit values, traditions and customs to the younger generation. Most importantly, the elders connect the young with the spirits of their ancestors, believed to constantly surrounding the living. In addition, the young learn from their wise elders to be honest, modest and generous. Fortunately in teaching the young, the elders can turn to the Central Asian Turkic languages with their rules of politeness, modesty and honesty. Other important teaching materials, mostly created and preserved by elders, are to be found in the oral and written literature, which offer many examples of virtuous conduct. Especially the heroes in the Central Asian Turkic heroic epic songs exemplify generosity. Folktales teach kindness to be extended to fellow human beings, animals and nature. Proverbs, recognized as the “words of the fathers,” *otalar sözü (i)*, aim at strengthening the impact of the elders’ teachings.

Western Impressions of Central Asian Turks

Most Western travelers to the Turkic regions of Central Asia have been impressed by the dignified conduct of the local young in the presence of elders. This was especially observed among Uzbeks. Professor Edward Allworth, Columbia University, traveling in Uzbekistan in the late 1980’s, concluded that the Uzbeks possess

a “formidable value structure.”² He is not the only one who, having been in Uzbekistan for a short or longer time, has been touched by what one can only explain as the unusual appeal of the Uzbeks.³ Uzbeks themselves might explain it as *O‘zbekchilik* (Uzbekness). The term includes not just customs but also attitudes and normatively ordained forms of conduct. Similar rules of proper behavior are found among Uzbekistan's neighbors, the Kazakhs and Kyrgyz. They use the terms (Kaz.) *qazaqtıq*, *qazaqshiliq* and (Kirg.) *qirgizchilik* to describe compliance with their norms of conduct as taught by the elders. These norms have also been noticed by Russians and others serving in the Tsarist colonial administration of the Governor-Generalships of Turkistan and the Steppe Provinces. For example, Count K. K. von Pahlen (1861–1923), a tsarist official, noted in 1908 at his arrival at the railroad station of the city of Turkistan: “We were struck by the natives' great dignity of bearing and gesture, the flowery and picturesque language of the welcoming speeches, the respect and awe of the young for their elders, so obvious in every movement....”⁴ Throughout his stay in the territory of the Governorship of Turkistan, Count von Pahlen tried to get to the source of the dignified behavior which had impressed him so much. He found it in the *maktabs*, the religious primary schools, “where the rules of politeness, based on the respect of the young for the old, were taught almost daily.”⁵ However, many aspects of the code of conduct as well as customs and traditions still practiced today are rooted in the pre-Islamic nomadic Turkic culture, later strengthened by Islam and the Islamic perceptions of *adab* “good behavior.”⁶

The Spirits of the Ancestors

During the Soviet period (1917–1990) any display of attachment to national, ethnic, religious or spiritual values was suspicious, outlawed and even severely punished. Yet the most important aspect of the Turkic value system fortunately

survived: the respect for their elders. This respect also encompasses the deceased elders or, rather, the spirits of the ancestors. To know the names of one's seven forefathers and their tribal affiliation is still an obligation among present-day Kazakhs and Kyrgyz. The Kyrgyz writer Chingiz Aitmatov (1928–2008) presents in his story *The White Ship* (1970) a young Kyrgyz boy who questions a Kazakh's "Kazakhness" because he does not know his seven forefathers: "*Atam aytat, adamdar ata-tegin unutu koyso, buzulup ketet deyt*" (My grandfather says: "if people forget their ancestors, they [the people] will become bad") because they no longer remember them and follow their example.⁷ The respect for the elders and for the spirits of the ancestors is definitely one of the main reasons for the survival of the Turkic peoples' traditions, customs and attitudes despite Soviet policies of relinquishing them.

A few years before independence (1991), but especially since then, all Central Asian Turkic republics have followed cultural and educational policies of reviving and strengthening their ancestral value systems and traditional customs. One of the most ancient, pre-Islamic traditions, observed also as a moral duty among Mongols,⁸ is the obligation to honor the spirits of the ancestors (Uzb. *ruh*, Kaz, *aruaq*, Kyrg. *arbak*). Kazakh and Kyrgyz women would offer the spirits specially prepared dishes.⁹ Epic singers (Kaz. *jırau*, Kyrg. *jomoqchu*, *manaschi*, Uzb. *dostonchi*, *baxshi*) believed that in singing the life story of a hero, i.e. a heroic epic song, they could bring back the hero's spirit to whom the singer could then appeal for help in healing illnesses and delivery from other calamities.¹⁰ The belief in the protection by ancestral spirits has also found its expression in the refrain of the national anthem of independent Uzbekistan: "*Ajdodlar mardona ruhi senga yor!*" (The spirits of [our] brave ancestors are with you [Uzbekistan]!)¹¹ Immediately after gaining its independence, Uzbekistan, despite being in a difficult financial situation, started an extensive program of honoring the spirits of its religious and secular ancestors by renovating and repairing their gravesites, shrines

and mausoleums, which had been neglected during the Soviet period.¹² Kazakhstan had already begun during the late 1980's to honor the spirits of its *batırs* (heroes), who had led uprisings against the Russian colonizers, by offering memorial feasts (*as*) for them. Such feasts (*ash*) are also obligatory among the Kyrgyz, but during Soviet colonial rule Kazakhs and Kyrgyz had not been allowed to conduct them for the spirits of their national heroes.¹³ In 1995 the Kyrgyz celebrated, in the style of a memorial feast (*ash*), "1000 Years of the Epic Manas", essentially, however, paying respect and appealing to the spirit of the hero *Manas*. This was evident from the banners in Bishkek's streets, invoking Manas' spirit: "*Manas arbağı bizdi saqtasın!*" (May the spirit of Manas protect us!). We can also quote the words of then President Akaev who closed several of his addresses during the celebrations with words like these: "*Ar biribizdi Manas atabızdın arbağı koldosun!*" (May the spirit of our ancestor Manas support each of us!).¹⁴ In this context one should also mention the Kyrgyz saying: "*Arbaqtı sıylagandı Kuday sıylayt*" (God honors those who honor the ancestral spirits).¹⁵

Portrayals of Central Asian Turkic Elders

Much is expected of the Central Asian Turkic elders. They cannot raise their voices, cannot show anger, but must present themselves as wise, generous and kind human beings. In paying homage to the spirits of their ancestors, to observe rituals and customs, the young turn to the wisdom and memory of the elders whom they respectfully address with "my father/grandfather" or "my mother/grandmother", depending on the elder's age. The elderly person greets a young or adolescent boy with "my son", a young girl with "my daughter." The young ask the elders for advice, listen to them and follow their wise words, earning in this way the blessings only elders can extend.¹⁶

The German writer Herold Belger (1934 –), who grew up in a Kazakh *aul* (village) where he had been deported in 1941 together with other Volga Germans, gives us a remarkable description of simple Kazakh elders in his story “*Großvater Sergali*” (Grandfather Sergali). He writes:

An inconceivable, astonishingly deep appeal of kindness, wisdom, and humaneness exists in the nature of the Kazakh elders. With their whole life, their kindness, their loving attention they cause to awaken also in our souls something good and beautiful. They just approach you, ask this and that, and at once you become uneasy, you become more serious, grown-up. And the people in your village become more dear and closer to you. ... The elders turn into the criterion of your life. Yes, these elders, they become your conscience. Their blessings one has to earn first, but then don't ever try to destroy their confidence and hope. All your life there will be burning a shame in you, as if you had betrayed your own father.¹⁷

Aspiring young Kazakh writers would say of the revered elderly writer Mukhtar Auezov (1897-1961): “What we especially admired in Auezov was the tender affection with which he invariably treated the young.”¹⁸

To fully apprehend the role of the elders one has to view their contributions during the Soviet period and soon after independence. It is they who taught the Turkic peoples to survive as Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, Tatars, Turkmen and Uzbeks, despite the fact that the Soviets pursued a policy of Russification in all spheres of life. For the most part, the elders guided the young quietly. But there are examples of courageous elders who spoke up publicly. It is well known that a group of Kazakh, Uzbek and Kyrgyz writers struggled for years to have the pre-Islamic New Year, (Uzb.) *navro'z*, (Kaz.) *nauriz*, (Kyrg.) *nooruz*, celebrated on the 21st of March, resurrected after the Soviets had outlawed its celebration in 1937.¹⁹ Another example: in 1976 the Kazakh Turkologist Ismet Kenesbaev (1907–1995) organized the Second All-Union Turkological Conference in Almaty, which he opened with the following words: “We no longer will wait fifty years for such an important event for our Turk/Türük people,” referring to the first

conference of this kind, held in Baku in 1926.²⁰ One of his students, Mirzatay Joldasbekov (1937–) connected the Kazakhs with their historical past by translating the famous Orkhon Inscriptions, Kül Tegin and Tonyukuk (see in the following), written in Old Turkic, into Kazakh verses, thus emphasizing that the prose texts had originally been memorial songs. His translation introduced the historical texts to a large segment of the Kazakh population. Thanks to M. Joldasbekov's initiative, the texts are being displayed in the Museum of Kazakh History in Astana on replicas of the eighth-century funeral steles on which the texts were originally inscribed.²¹

Immediately after independence in August 1991, elders in all Turkic regions responded as educators and scholars in an admirable way to the most urgent need, namely producing new school- and textbooks without Soviet/Communist indoctrination.²² At the same time they also published didactic (wisdom) literature.²³ A good example is the Uzbek historian Hamid Ziyoev (1923–), who issued a collection of his own didactic stories.²⁴ He and other historians felt obligated to write about the Russian/Soviet past from the point of view of the colonized, about their uprisings, and reactions against collectivization and man-made starvations, thus challenging the Soviet falsification of historical facts, especially that all non-Russians had voluntarily joined Russia and the Soviet Union.²⁵ The respected elderly scholars also recognized the need to have texts of oral literature republished without the changes or omissions that Soviet censorship had imposed on them.²⁶ Re-publishing the works written by writers and poets who had been condemned and executed as “enemies of the people” was another keenly felt obligation.²⁷ In addition, there was the need to re-acquaint the population with traditions and customs connected with every-day life or life-cycle rituals.²⁸ Brochures and pamphlets on traditional handicrafts and other national skills also started to appear. Looking back at these remarkable activities, one wonders what inspired the elders, scholars and writers among them, to proceed with their work with

such foresight and planning. No doubt, they had not only been thinking about independence, but had been actively preparing themselves and others for the day of freedom to come.²⁹ When that long-awaited day arrived in August 1991, the authors and editors of the above mentioned publications were then able to openly respond to the "wake-up calls" of Chingiz Aitmatov, who, in 1980 at the age of fifty-two, had issued with his image of the *mankurt* the most powerful wake-up call to all Central Asians who had become or were about to become Russianized and Sovietized, and had forgotten their history and who they were.³⁰ The phrase "don't be a *mankurt*" prompted every Central Asian Turk to rediscover his/her national culture and its norms. Nobody wanted to be a *mankurt*! Chingiz Aytmatov's influence on provoking a deep national consciousness among the Central Asian Turks and preparing them for independence and the tasks thereafter deserves a separate study.

Elders Teaching Honesty, Modesty and Generosity

In teaching honesty and modesty, the elders can use first of all the medium of the Turkic languages which are agglutinative languages adding suffixes to unchangeable stems. When relating past actions the speaker has to indicate where he/she was when the event happened: was the speaker an eyewitness or did he/she hear about it. In the latter case, the speaker has to indicate whether his/her source is reliable or doubtful. These distinctions, expressed by using the appropriate suffixes, are important criteria for judging a person's honesty.³¹ Modesty is best displayed by avoiding the pronoun *men*, "I," at the start of a sentence. The first person pronoun should be rendered as a suffix in the verb or noun predicative form at the end of the sentence.³²

The most admired and desired quality among Turkic peoples is generosity as exemplified and taught by the elders. To be generous means essentially to be unselfish and aware of the needs of others. Generosity finds its expression in hospitality and

kindness. A generous person is “open-handed”: (Uzb.) *qoli ochiq*, (Kaz.) *qoli ashïq*, (Kyrg.) *kolu achïk*.³³ Descriptions of generous people can be found in the earliest written Turkic documents of the 8th century, the Orkhon Inscriptions belonging to the second period of the Türik/Türük empire.³⁴ The author of one of these records, Bilgä Kaghan, the Wise Kaghan (d. 734), eloquently eulogizes his younger brother Kül Tegin (d.731) but also gives advice to his people. His words express a high notion of his obligations to them as a Kaghan. For example, he states: “... For the sake of the Türik/Türük people, I did not sleep at night, I did not rest by day.”³⁵ Other lines describe his generosity: "Having made to seat [i.e. been elected as Kaghan],³⁶ I gathered all the poor and destitute people together. I made the poor people wealthy and the few people numerous," and then he humbly adds: "Or, is there any falsehood in these words of mine?"³⁷ Giving the reason for his many campaigns, he states:

In order to nourish the people, I, with great armies, went on campaigns twelve times ... since I had fortune ... may Heaven be gracious!—I brought the people to life who were going to perish, and nourished them, I furnished the naked people with clothes and I made the poor people rich and the few people numerous.³⁸

Bilgä Kaghan’s words (“I furnished the naked with clothes”) describing his care for his people have been repeated over centuries, almost word for word, in later epic songs to the extent that they have become a standard description of generosity not only among Turkic but also Mongolian speakers (see below).

Generosity is the major character trait the Turkic nomads of the 8th century, but also their descendants of later centuries, expected in their leaders and in themselves.³⁹ It is noteworthy that the Mongol Khans, too, had to be generous. Chinghiz/Jenghiz Khan (1167–1227) “personified for the Mongols the ideal ruler—strict, but just and generous.”⁴⁰ Contemporary Mongols said of him: "This prince Temuchin takes off the

clothes he was wearing and gives them away; gets off the horse he was riding and makes a present of it."⁴¹ Babur (1483–1530), a distant descendent of Chinghiz Khan, describes in his memoirs a few people with the outstanding quality of generosity, among them is his father Umar Shaikh Mirza (1456–1494): "He was very generous; in truth, his character rose altogether to the height of generosity."⁴² Amir Temur states in his *Tuzuklari* (Rules of Temur) "that he settled in the hearts of the people on account of his generous deeds."⁴³ He also mentions that he made no decisions without having first consulted with knowledgeable elders.⁴⁴

Examples of Generosity in Oral Literature

Central Asian Turkic elders can proudly direct the younger generation to learn generosity from the heroes of the epic songs, which the elders themselves might have recorded or composed. To be generous is an absolute obligation for the hero of the Central Asian Turkic heroic epics. The Kyrgyz hero Manas has the attribute *ayköl* "generous" (lit.: moon-lake, to be understood as "bright and wide-open"). Whatever the Turkic hero brings back from his campaigns, he distributes it to all his people. This is unheard of in the medieval European epic songs. In the Old English epic song *Beowulf* of the eighth century we hear of a rich king "who ruled lands on all sides: wherever the sea would take them his soldiers sailed, returned with tribute and obedience,"⁴⁵ but not a word is said about what the king did with the booty other than keeping it for himself in his treasury. The Central Asian Turkic-nomadic tradition of generosity leaves us no doubt about a hero's duty: returning from his battles, he hands all what he has gained over to his people. When the Kazakh hero *Qaradöñ* comes back to his tribe:

*bärin de elge beredi,
jarlisin bayğa teñedi*⁴⁶

He gives everything to the people,
He makes the poor equal to the rich."

Similar lines we read at the end of the Kazakh heroic epos *Aysaniñ ulı Axmet* (Axmet, Son of Aysan): the hero, returning with his five companions from a battle engagement, distributes the animals they had taken from the enemy (Kalmuks) to the hungry of their people (Nogays), the orphans and widows, "making the poor equal to the rich."⁴⁷

In addition to distributing the booty to his people, the hero also gives a joyful feast, which can last for days. The home-coming of the hero and the lines mentioning his generous acts constitute the traditional ending of the Central Asian Turkic heroic epic song.⁴⁸ As in the Kül Tegin Inscription, the most common expression used to symbolize generosity in the epic songs and their related genre, the songs of mourning is: "... and he (the hero) gave clothes to those without clothes and horses to those without horses."⁴⁹ In the Uzbek epic *Ravshan*, the singer (*dostonchi*) Ergash Jumanbulbul o'gli (1868–1930) describes the generosity of the hero Hasanxon: "*Endi Hasanxon polvon Qoraxon podshoning xazina-dafinalarini bo'shatib, elni yig'dirib, ochni to'ydirib, yalang'ochni kiydirdi.*" (Now the hero Hasanxon had the treasuries of the Podishah Qoraxon emptied, then he let the people gather, had the hungry fed and clothed those without clothes.)⁵⁰ Similarly, in the Uzbek epic *Nurali*, the hero Go'ro'g'li gives a feast upon the safe return of his comrades: "*Turkmaning yurtiga xabar yuborib / Xaloyiqqa endi obi-osh berdi. / Qancha qo'yu qancha so'qimlar so'ydi / Ochu yalang'ochning barisi to'ydi*" (He informed the Turkmen people: an *osh*/feast will be given now. How many sheep, how many cattle they slaughtered, all hungry were full and all naked were dressed.)⁵¹ Such feasts could go on for several days and as explained above, mentioning them constitutes the traditional ending of a Central Asian Turkic heroic epic song. This is also the case in the Mongolian epics where the returning hero gives a feast for months and years,⁵² meaning that his rule over his people will be like a continuous feast.

Generosity is considered the first mark of any good person, not just a leader or hero. Generosity expresses itself in various ways, as mentioned, in hospitality, unselfishness and kindness. Again, we can find examples of these character traits in all genres of Turkic oral literature. Hospitality as an act of kindness and generosity is often mentioned in the songs about their life, which oral poets/singers would compose in their older years.⁵³ The same songs also emphasize other aspects of exemplary conduct, notably the respect for elders, modesty, honesty, self-control and tolerance.⁵⁴ The elderly singers would also raise the general question of what is good and what is evil. Many of their lines would become proverbs—another medium of re-enforcing traditional values.

As a rule, blessings (*aq bata*) and proverbs referred to as *atalar so'zi* / *atalar sözü* (words of the fathers) should only be pronounced by elders.⁵⁵ If a younger person uses a proverb, he/she has to follow it with the phrase “as the elders say” or “as they (= the elders) say.” Central Asian Turkic folktales, also told by elders, transmit, in addition to generosity, the importance of compassion and kindness. Significantly, the new Uzbek school books for the second grade, published after the country gained its independence in 1991, include folktales under the heading, “*Ertaklar yaxshilikka yetaklar*” (Folktales lead to kindness), understood as kindness not just towards another human being but also to animals and nature.⁵⁶ They also contain chapters on “*Tabiatni asrang, avaylang*” (Protect nature, treat nature with care) and “*Qushlar va hayvanlar—bizning do'stimiz*” (Birds and animals are our friends).⁵⁷

Generosity and Advice in Written Literature

Central Asian Turkic oral and written literature is rich in didactic literature emphasizing good behavior and morality in the form of advice. As mentioned, it was this literature on which Uzbek, Kazakh and Kyrgyz elders relied after independence to

revive and strengthen traditions and honored customs. Among the first works to be republished was the *Qutadgu Bilig* (The knowledge of how to become happy"), written in 1069/1070.⁵⁸ Its author Yusuf Khass Hajib had conceived his work as a dialogue between a ruler and his vizier. It is the ruler himself, a modest and humble person, who initiates the dialogues by asking for advice. A man, called *Aytoldi* ("Full moon"), of "quiet demeanor, intelligent, and wise of heart," resolves to serve the noble king who accepts him as his vizier.⁵⁹ Thus, a close relationship develops between the two. It is the king who asks questions about how to conduct the worldly affairs of governing for the benefit of his people. Among the advice the king receives are descriptions of how a ruler should be and act. Not surprising, the most desirable quality for a Turkic ruler (king, prince or kaghan) is generosity:

The prince should be generous, yet keep a humble and quiet demeanor. It is through generosity that the prince acquires a good name, and it is through his name that the world becomes secure.⁶⁰

At the end of his work, Yusuf Khass Hajib summarizes his thoughts in an address to his readers: "... I have briefly expounded the various modes of proper conduct, so you (who read and understand), may gain a firm foundation for your life."⁶¹ The *Qutadgu Bilig* has been compared to Mir Alisher Nava'i's (1441–1501) *Mahbub-ul-Qulub* (The love of the hearts).⁶² Following an ancient Central Asian Turkic tradition, both authors, Yusuf Khass Hajib and Alisher Nava'i, wrote their words of advice as spiritual testaments at the end of their lives.⁶³ In his afterword Yusuf Khass Hajib laments the fact that the wise men he described in his work have no equal among his contemporaries, and he asks the question whether there will be ever such men again.⁶⁴ We can also detect the same sense of urgency of writing down one's "life's wisdom" as a final offering to all mankind in Alisher Nava'i's work. His language is direct. His criticism is unusually sharp. He is not focusing on the qualities of an ideal ruler, but on

the faults of rulers, administrators, physicians and others lacking the qualities of their professions. His work is divided into three chapters. The third chapter is especially noteworthy, where almost each line of the 124 paragraphs under the heading of “*Tanbihlar*” (Admonitions) presents authoritative advice from an elder in the oral style of proverbs. Indeed, many admonitions were soon accepted as such and are used by Central Asian Turkic elders, as for example: “*Tilga ixtiyorsiz / elga e’tiborsiz*” (Disregard for one’s language, is disrespect for one’s people).⁶⁵ “*Sihhat tilasang ko’p yema / izzat tilasang ko’p dema*” (If you want health, don’t eat much; if you want respect, don’t talk much).⁶⁶

In closing our brief discussion about the elders’ role in Central Asian Turkic society and literature, we would like to cite the second verse from a hymn *Keksalarga* (To the old) written in 1964 by the distinguished Uzbek poet Erkin Vohidov (1936–), when he was twenty-eight years old:

*Keksalik uy doim nurafshon,
Keksalarga jonimiz qurbon.
Uyimizning to’rida bo’ling,
Tashlab ketmang bizni beomon.*⁶⁷

Light fills the home an Elder resides,
For the Old we sacrifice our lives,
Do take the seat of honor in our homes,
Don’t leave us without your care.
* * * * *

Seattle, April 2015

1. See I. Laude-Cirtautas, “Elders in Uzbek Society and Literature: A Contribution to Uzbekistan’s Year of Respect for the Elders 2015,” *Journal of Central and Inner Asian Dialogue* 1 no. 1 (2015).

2. Edward A. Allworth, *The Modern Uzbeks: From the Fourteenth Century to the Present; A Cultural History*. (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1990), 329. See also *ibid.*, 20–23.

3. A good example of the appeal of the Uzbeks is the experience of Wes Uhlman, former mayor of Seattle, who, in 1972, chose from among three mayors from the former Soviet Union, who had visited Seattle in 1971, the “friendly, outgoing and polite” mayor of Tashkent to approach with the offer to join with Seattle in a sister city relationship. This relationship, officially started in January 1973, is still strong and productive, for which a lot of thanks are due to the gracious Uzbeks.

4. K. K. Pahlen, *Mission to Turkestan: Being the Memoirs of Count K. K. Pahlen; 1908–1909*. ed. Richard A. Pierce, trans. N. J. Couriss (London: Oxford University Press 1964), 6. See also Jeff Sahadeo, *Russian Colonial Society in Tashkent: 1865–1923* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007), 154, where the author quotes two Russians who praised “the cultured, industrious, honorable, and peaceful” Central Asians.

5. *Mission to Turkestan*, 20–21.

6. *Adab* (Arab.) means “the noble and humane tendency of the character and its manifestations in human life” (*Encyclopedia of Islam: New Edition*, vol.1, “*adab*”). It is difficult, if not impossible, to draw a line between religious (=Islamic) and secular norms of behavior. There is a saying in Islam that “*adab* equals two third of religion” (*op. cit.*).

7. Chingiz Aitmatov, *Ak keme* (The White Ship), in *5 tomдон турган чигармаларинин жыйнагы* [Collection of his works in 5 volumes] (Bishkek: Sham basmasi, 1999), 2: 348–349. The novella first appeared in January 1970 in *Novyi mir*. About Chingiz Aitmatov see Joseph P. Mozur, Jr., *Parables from the Past: The Prose Fiction of Chingiz Aitmatov* (Pittsburg: University of Pittsburg Press, 1995).

8. For the survival of the worship of the ancestors’ spirits in present-day Mongolia see Simon Wickham-Smith, introduction to *When Humans Become Grass*, by Bavuudorj Tsogdorjin, trans. Simon Wickham-Smith (Ulaanbaatar: Mongolian Academy of Culture and Poetry, 2008), 10.

9. Alma Kunanbaeva, “Food as Culture: The Kazakh Experience,” in: *The Silk Road*, 5 no. 2 (Winter 2008), 52. The information is also based on the author’s personal communication with several Kyrgyz women.

10. Ilse Laude-Cirtautas, “Der Kirgisische Dichter-Sänger Sagımbaj Orozbaquulu (1867–1930) und das Epos Manas” [The Kyrgyz poet-singer Sagımbay Orozbaquulu and the epos Manas], in *Gedanke und Wirkung: Festschrift zum 90. Geburtstag von Nikolaus Poppe*, eds. Walther Heissig and Klaus Sagaster (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1989), 219.

11. The words of the Uzbek national anthem have been written by the Uzbek poet Abdulla Oripov (1941–), who has been honored with the titles “Distinguished Poet of Uzbekistan” and “Hero of Uzbekistan” (*O‘zbekiston Qahramoni*).

12. It should be noted here that Uzbeks consider as their ancestors not only ethnic Uzbeks but also all those who have lived in the territory of present-day Uzbekistan and left behind significant accomplishments. See Ilse Laude-Cirtautas, “Muhammad Ali (1942–): An Uzbek Poet, Writer and Scholar”, *Journal of Central and Inner Asian Dialogue*, 1 no. 1 (Summer 2013), endnote 46.

13. Among Kazakhs and Kyrgyz memorial feasts are to be offered within a year of a person’s death. Before 1917 memorial feasts had been great cultural events, especially if the deceased had been a tribal leader or an outstanding personality (see Ilse Laude-Cirtautas, “Sänger und Feste bei den Kasaken und Kirgisen des 19. Jahrhunderts,” [Singers and feasts among the Kazakh and Kyrgyz of the 19th century] in *Fragen der Mongolischen Heldendichtung Teil IV*, ed. W. Heissig, Asiatische Forschungen 101 (1987), 351–374). Well remembered is the *ash* honoring in 1912 the spirit of the Kyrgyz Shabdan Baatır (1839-1912): Shabdan baatırdın arbagına bagıştalğan ash (The memorial feast dedicated to the spirit of the hero Shabdan) for which 40,000 people had gathered (see S. V. Dmitriev, “Shabdan ashındagı at chabışh” [Horse racing at Shabdan’s memorial feast], in Shabdan Baatır [The hero Shabdan], ed. Kenesh Yusupov (Bishkek: Uchkun, 1992), 123–128). The memorial feasts offered for the spirits of Kazakh heroes shortly before and after independence (1991) all displayed a remarkable revival of traditional customs. Elaborate memorial feasts were offered in 1992 to the spirit of Abilay Xan (1711-1780), the unifier of the three Kazakh *jüz* (tribal confederation), and to the spirit of the oral poet (*aqın*) Maxambet Ötemisüli (1803 ?–1846), one of the leaders of the uprising against the Russians in 1835–1836.

14. Askar Akaev, *Manastan Mamlekettüülökkö karay* [From Manas to statehood] (Bishkek: Uchkun, 1995), 184. Similar words are voiced in an interview in 1995 given by Apas Jumagulov, Kyrgyzstan’s Prime Minister: “*Bardigibizdi Manas atabizdin arbagi koldosun!*” (May the spirit of our ancestor Manas support all of us!) (see Nurjan Kasimbekov and Toktogul Ibragimov, eds. *Kirgizdin Talastagi Uлуу Toyu* [The great feast of the Kyrgyz in Talas] (Bishkek: Akil, 1996), 31).

15. *Kirgizdin Talastagi Uлуу Toyu*, 162.

16. Indeed, the elders among the Central Asian Turks are listened to. Recalling the terrible years of collectivization and starvation (1928–1933), when Kazakhs were ordered around by young, uneducated Russian activists, a Kazakh remarks in his memoirs: “How can a society be run by people who never obeyed their elders nor listened to their wisdom?” Mukhamet Shayakhmetov. *The Silent Steppe: The Memoir of a Kazakh Nomad under Stalin*, trans. Jan Butler (New York: Overbook-Rookery, 2006), 33–34.

17. For the original German text, see Herold Berger, *Möwen über der Steppe* (Almaty: Qazaqstan, 1976), 28-29: "Ein unbegreiflicher, erstaunlich tiefer Reiz von Güte, Weissheit, Menschlichkeit liegt in der Natur der kasachischen Greise. Mit ihrem ganzen Leben, ihrer Milde, ihrer liebevollen Aufmerksamkeit lassen sie auch in unseren Seelen etwas Gutes und Schönes aufkeimen. Sie kommen einfach zu dir, fragen dies und jenes, und schon ist dir beklommen zumute. Du wirst ernster, erwachsener. Und noch teurer und näher werden dir deine Landsleute, dein Aul . . . Zum Kriterium deines Lebens werden sie so, diese Alten, zu deinem Gewissen. Ihren Segen muss man sich erst verdienen. Und dann versuche es mal, ihr Vertrauen, ihre Hoffnung zunichte zu machen. Dein ganzes Leben lang wird eine Schande in dir brennen, als ob du den eigenen Vater verraten hättest."

18. A. Nurpeisov in foreword to Mukhtar Auezov, *Abai* (abridged) (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1975), 7.

19. The celebration of *Navro'z* is believed to have originated during the time of the Sassanids (226–641 CE). In the 1960's unsuccessful attempts were made to have *Navro'z* celebrations re-installed. In 1983 Uzbek writers and intellectuals fought again for an official recognition of the holiday. Their efforts failed. However, in 1988 elders, writers and intellectuals of all five Central Asian republics jointly made another move and this time they succeeded. (Muhammad Ali Akhmedov, Distinguished Writer of Uzbekistan, oral communication). The reasons for banning the traditional New Year celebration are obvious. Not only is it a festivity shared by all Central Asians, but it also emphasizes the spirit of community.

20. The author of this article participated in the Second All-Union Turkological Conference as a guest of the Kazakh Academy of Sciences. At the time of the conference Professor Ismet Kenesbaev, Vice President of the Kazakh Academy of Sciences, was the Director of its Institute of (Kazakh) Language. He was a true Kazakh, sang with a marvelous, strong voice, played the *dutor* and spoke his native language with great care, displaying its richness masterfully. His students, after having received advanced degrees, worked as teachers of Kazakh throughout Kazakhstan. After the country's declaration of independence in December 1991, many of them were elected as deputies of the newly established Kazakh parliament. About Ismet Kenesbaev, see Ilse Laude-Cirtautas, "Ismet Kenesbaev," *Central Asiatic Journal* 21 no. 1 (1977): 1–3. This issue of the journal was dedicated to Ismet Kenesbaev's 70th birthday.

21. M. Joldasbekov is not only a Turkologist but also a statesman. He served in President Nazarbaev's first Cabinet of Ministers as Deputy Prime Minister. From 1993–1996 he was Kazakhstan's ambassador to Iran, and in 1997 he was appointed president of the newly established Diplomatic Academy in Astana. His memoirs, *El Tag'diri –Er tag'diri* [The fate of the people—the fate of man] (Almaty: Sanat, 1997), contains six

chapters describing his life experiences as a scholar, statesman and diplomat. The culmination of his work as a Turkologist is definitely to be seen in the display of the replicas of the 8th-century funeral steles with their Orkhon Turkic inscriptions in Astana's Museum of Kazakh History. Aside from the Kazakhs, no other Turkic people have given such public attention to these important historical monuments being the earliest written manifestations of the common Turkic history.

22. The difference between the new schoolbooks and those from the Soviet period is significant as a comparison of Kazakh and Uzbek textbooks for the first and second classes shows. The Soviet books were printed on paper of low quality, whereas the new schoolbooks are a delight to look at, good quality white paper with colorful pictures. No longer crowded with images of Moscow, Lenin and military parades with Soviet slogans on almost every page, instead drawings of elders (parents, grandparents, and teachers) and animals (horses, birds) surrounded by children. The readings in the new books consist mostly of folktales, stories and many poems/songs and proverbs. The emphasis is on the national culture and heritage, culminating in the proverbial saying (Kaz.) *ülkenge qürmet, kishige mindet*, (Uzb.) *kattaga hurmatda, kichikka izzatda* (b'ol) (respect for the elders—service to the young). See Sh. Äuelbaev, A. Naurizbaeva, et al., *Ana Tili* [Mother tongue]: 1.-*sinibina arnalg'an oquliq*, 3rd ed. (Almaty: Atamura, 2008), 51, 66, 108. Q. Abdullayeva, M. Yusupov, et al., *O'qish Kitobi*, (Tashkent: O'qituvchi, 2003), 60, 62, 130; a reader for the second grade

23. The sheer number of didactic books and pamphlets published in the first years after independence is astounding. Here is a selection of publications in Uzbek, Kazakh and Kyrgyz: Yusuf Hos Hajib, *Qutadg'u Bilig* (The Knowledge of How to Become Happy), introduction and translation into modern Uzbek by Boqijon To'xliiev (Tashkent: Yulduzcha, 1990), selected chapters of the original work of the year 1069/1070 translated in prose and verse lines, intended for young readers; Abdulla Avloniy (1878–1934), *Turkiy Gulistan yahud Axloq* [Turkic flower-garden or morals] (Tashkent: O'qituvchi, 1992), first published in 1913; *Odob—Oltindan Qimmat* [Good behavior is more valuable than gold], proverbs collected by S. Mirzaahmedova (Tashkent: O'zbekiston nashriyoti, 1990). The Kazakhs eagerly published collections of wise and eloquent words (*sheshendik sözder*), generally attributed to elders, but particular to those who served as judges (*biy*) in disputes. See, e.g., B. Adambaev, ed., *Sheshendik sözder* [Wise and Eloquent Words] (Almaty: Otay, 1992); Böltirik Älmenüli (1771–1853), *Sheshendik sözder*, ed. by J. Dedebaev (Almaty: G'ılım, 1993). Amantur Akmataliev, *Baba Salti, Ene Adebii* [The fathers' customs, the mothers' teaching] (Bishkek: Balasagin, 1993). Sovetbek Baygaziev, *Kirgiz Jurtu Obodogu "Bürküttün" Közü menen* [The Kyrgyz yurt with the eyes of the "golden eagle" in the sky] (Bishkek: 1995).

24. Hamid Ziyoev, *Baxt Kaliti* [The key of happiness] (Tashkent: 1990), republished in 2001 (Tashkent: Ma'naviyat). The stories presented in this publication

were chosen particularly for young readers to recover Uzbek traditional norms of conduct. The author is known as one of the most influential Uzbek historians. Soon after independence he started to publish his thoughts and observations about the Russian/Soviet type of colonialism (see note 24). Excerpts of his memoirs also appeared with vivid descriptions of life in Tashkent during the starvation in 1933–1935: “Hayot Yo’lim” [The road of my life] in Hamid Ziyoev, *Tarixning Ochilmagan Sahifalari* [Unopened pages of history]. (Tashkent: Mehnat nashriyoti, 2003), 201–226. See also O. Sharofiddinov, Z. Fayzieva and L. Kravets, *Hamid Ziyoevning Ilmiy-Pedagogig Faoliyati* [Hamid Ziyoev’s scholarly and pedagogical activities] (Tashkent: Abdulla Qodiriy nomidagi xalq nashriyoti, 2003).

25. Among the numerous publications, confronting the Russian/Soviet colonial past, are to be mentioned the new history textbooks for schools, as e.g., H. Bobobekov, J. Rahimov, H. Sodiqov. *O’zbekiston Tarixi*. [History of Uzbekistan] (Tashkent: O’qituvchi, 1994), from the second half of the nineteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth century, recommended for eighth grade students; Ibrohim Karim, *Madaminbek* (Tashkent: Yozuvchi nashriyoti, 1993), Madaminbek [1889–1920] was one of the leaders of the so-called *basmachi* (resistance) movement against the Soviets; Hamid Ziyoev, *Turkistonda Rossiya tajovuzi va hukmronligiga qarshi kurash* [The struggle against russian aggression and rule in Turkistan] (Tashkent: Sharq Nashriyoti, 1998), from the eighteenth till the beginning of the twentieth century; M. Jo’raev, R. Nurillin, S. Kamolov, et al., *O’zbekistonning yangi tarixi* [New history of Uzbekistan] Vol. 2, *O’zbekiston Sovet Mustamlakachiligi Davrida* [Uzbekistan under Soviet colonialism] (Tashkent: Sharq nashriyoti, 2000). Scholars in Kazakhstan were similarly engaged in making the truth known about the colonial past: *Avtorlar kollektivi* [Collective of authors], *Almati 1986–Jeltoqsan* [Almaty, December 1986] (Almaty: Däuir baspası, 1992); S. Äbdirayimov, I. N. Buxonova et al. (compilers), *Qazaq qalay ashtiikka üshiradi: Qasiretti jildar xattari* [How did the Kazakhs encounter starvation? Letters of the tragic years] (Almaty: Qazaq Universiteti, 1991).

26. Soviet censorship did not stop at just changing oral literary texts. In 1951 Stalin began a campaign against the heroic epic songs of the Central Asian Turks. Under attack were the Kyrgyz epic *Manas*, the Kazakh *Alpamis*, the Uzbek *Alpamish* and the Turkmen *Gör-oglı*. These epic songs were declared anti-proletarian. One might say that only Stalin’s death in March 1953 saved the national epic songs of the Central Asian Turks. See Muhammad Ali, “Alpomishning qora kunlari” [The dark days of the epos Alpomish] in *Men ko’rgan Amerika* [The America I saw] by Muhammad Ali (Tashkent: Sharq nashriyoti, 2000), 226–229. See also H. B. Packsoy, *Alpamysh: Central Asian Identity under Russian Rule* (Hartford, Connecticut: Association for the Advancement of Central Asian Research. Monograph Series, 1989), 24–28. About the attacks on the Kyrgyz

national epic *Manas* and its defense by the Kyrgyz, see the detailed article by S. Musaev, “Konferentsiya (1952)” in *Manas Entsiklopediya*, vol. 1 (Bishkek: *Kirgiz Entsiklopediyasining bashki redaksiyasi*, 1995), 305–320.

27. Another issue was the re-publishing of authors who might not have fallen under official restrictions but who had imposed self-censorship on their works. In general one can say all literary works published during the Soviet period suffered from official and self-censorship. Most authors were eager to have new, uncensored editions of their works finally published.

28. Among the many works on every-day customs and rituals, mostly pamphlets and brochures, see e.g., Anvar Abdusamedov, Bo’ston Shermatova, and Asror Samad, *Qo’sha Qaringiz! Kuyov-Kelinlar va Quda-Qudag’aylar Risolasi* [Grow old together! Rules of (=for) son-in-laws, daughter-in-laws and other in-laws] (Tashkent: “Fan” nashriyoti, 1993); R. Saidov and M. Ahmedov, eds. *Oila bir Gulshanki ...* [The family is such a rose garden...] (Tashkent: O’qituvchi, 1996). Also: Seyit Kenjeaxmetov, *Qazaqtin Salt-Dasturleri men Adet-G’uriptari* [Kazakh traditions, customs and manners] (Almaty: Ana Tili, 1994); Baljan Xabdina, compiler, *Üylenü Toyi*, (Wedding feast) (Almaty: Öner, 1992).

29. A good example is the group of distinguished Uzbek elders who approached the author in Tashkent in May 1972 with the request to have a sister-city relationship established between Tashkent and Seattle. What they had in mind was to be able, without much interference by Moscow, to send people to Seattle, i.e. to the West, so that they could gain knowledge about life outside of the Soviet Union as a preparation for independence. Indeed, soon after the signing of the sister-city agreements in January 1973, Tashkent sent one delegation after the other to Seattle. The first Cabinet of Ministers of President Islom Karimov consisted entirely of people who had been in Seattle and at the University of Washington, where the author was greatly honored to receive them in Denny Hall.

30. Chingiz Aitmatov, *The Day Lasts More than a Hundred Years*, trans. John French (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983), 124–146. Aitmatov had already sent out clear messages of “Awakening Calls” in his previous works, for example in his story *The White Ship* (see note 7).

31. A native speaker of Uzbek from Afghanistan told the author shortly after his arrival in the U.S. his despair in hearing Americans making statements of past actions without indicating whether they had been present or not. Still under the influence of his own language/culture, he came to the conclusion that Americans must be either supermen or big liars.

32. Elders would interrupt the young, who, most likely being influenced by the English capitalized “I”, overuse *men* “I” and tell them: “*men-menchilik qilmang!*” (Don’t say *men—men*, meaning “do not be an egoist!”), or they might pronounce a proverb:

(Uzb.) men-menga zavol, kamtarga kamol (To the one saying repeatedly “I” — misery, to the modest—the best!)

33. Other expressions for “generosity” in Uzbek are (Arab.) *saxiylik*, (Arab.) *muruvvat* “compassion, generosity,” (Arab.) *himmat* “generosity, magnanimity;” Kazakh and Kyrgyz use words and phrases of Turkic origin: (Kaz.) *qoli ashıq+tiq* “open handedness”, *köñil+di+lik* “(open) heartedness, generosity;” (Kyrg.) *ayköl* (lit. moon-lake) “generous”, e.g., *ayköl Manas* “the generous hero Manas”, *ayköldük* “generosity”.

34. Information on the history of the first and second Türk Empire (552–630; 680–740) is given in René Grousset, *The Empire of the Steppes: A History of Central Asia*, trans. Naomi Walford. (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1999), 80–114. See also D. Sinor and S. G. Klyashtorny “The Türk Empire”, in *History of Civilizations of Central Asia: The Crossroads of Civilizations; AD 250 to 750*, ed. B. A. Litvinsky, co-eds, Zhang Guang-da and R. Shabani Samghabadi Vol. 3 (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1999), 327–347.

35. For the original text of the Kül Tigin Inscription in Orkhon Turkic, see Talat Tekin, *A Grammar of Orkhon Turkic*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Publications, 1968), 231–238; English translation, 261–272. The citation quoted is to be found on pages 267–268. Please note: the translator, Talat Tekin, being a Turk from Turkey, renders the word *türük* as e.g., in *türük bodun* always as “Turkish”, “Turkish people” (!)

36. *Orkhon Turkic*, 262. Talat Tekin translates here “having succeeded to the throne.” However, the original text (p. 231) states *olurtum* which should be read as *olur-* (“to sit”)-*t-t+um*, “I was made to sit, I was seated.” This expression is connected with the ritual of having the newly elected/selected Kaghan/Khan be seated on a white felt rug which was then lifted up by the people participating in the ceremony. This ritual continued among the nomadic Kazakhs and Kyrgyz. See the description of the hero Manas being “seated and lifted up” as a Kaghan in *Manas: Kirgiz elinin baatirdik eposu*, vol. 1 (Bishkek: “Kirgizstan”, 1995), 398–399; Saginbay Orozbekov’s version. The Uzbek expression *xon ko’tirildi* “The Khan was lifted up,” i.e. “he was installed as Khan” is certainly connected with this ritual. Essentially it has to be understood that the kaghan/leader of the nomadic Turks was elected. Kazakhs consider the election of their historical leaders an essential part of their steppe democracy. The memory about the ruler’s election survived in epic songs and folktales, as, e.g., in the Uzbek epos Murodxon in: *O’zbek Xalq Dostonlari*, 2 vols. (Tashkent: O’zbekiston SSR Fanlar Akademiyasi nashriyoti, 1957), 89; “the people gathered to elect a new Khan: “In older times we did it this way: we let the *davlat qushi* (lit.: state bird: eagle) fly out, and on whose head the bird settles, this person would be made the new *podsha*.” The same method of selecting/electing a Khan is told in the Kyrgyz folktale, “*Akilduu kiz*” (The wise girl) in *Kirgiz El Jomoktoru* (Kyrgyz folktales) (Frunze: “Kirgizstan”, 1978), 177.

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37. *Orkhon Turkic*, 262 (see above note 35)
38. *Ibid.*, 268.
39. See E. A. Allworth, "Generosity and Modesty" in *The Modern Uzbeks: From the Fourteenth Century to the Present; A Cultural History* by E. A. Allworth (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1990), 20–23 for more about generosity.
40. Paul Ratchnevsky, *Genghis Khan: His Life and Legacy*, trans. and ed. Thomas Nivison Haining (Oxford, UK & Cambridge, USA: Blackwell Publishers, 1993), 169.
41. W. Barthold, *Turkestan Down to the Mongol Invasion*, trans. Tatiana Shebunina Minorsky, ed. C. E. Bosworth, 3rd ed. (London: Luzac and Company, 1968), 460.
42. See the *Babur-Nama* (Memoirs of Babur), trans. Annette Susannah Beveridge, Vols. 1 and 2 in one format (New Delhi: Oriental Books Reprint Corporation, 1970), 15; translated from the original Turki text of Zahiru'd-din Muhammad Babur Padishah Ghazi.
43. *Temur Tuzuklari. Institutes of Temur. Les Instituts de Temour*, eds. and trans. Alixon Sog'unii and Habibullo Karomatov. (Tashkent: G'afur G'ulom nomidagi adabiyot va san'at nashriyoti, 1996), 70; translated from the Persian original.
44. *Ibid.*, 25–26.
45. *Beowulf: A New Translation and Introduction*, trans. & ed. Burton Raffel (New York and Toronto: The New American Library of World Literature, Inc., 1963), x, 23.
46. *Batirlar Jiri* [Heroic epic songs], vol. 5, *Qirimniñ Qiriq batiri: Mûrin jiraudan jazilg'an mûralar* [The forty heroes of distant lands. recorded from the legacy of the singer Mûrin] (Almaty: Jazushi, 1989), 196.
47. *Ibid.*, vol. 4 (Almaty: Jazushi, 1990), 209.
48. Some renditions of Kazakh and Uzbek heroic epics end with words of blessing the singer extends to the audience. However, this is a relatively new trend.
49. Compare here a Kazakh mourning song in Thomas G. Winner, *The Oral Art and Literature of the Kazakhs of Russian Central Asia* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1958), 150.
50. *O'zbek Xalq Dostonlari* [Uzbek epics], vol. 1 (Tashkent: O'zbekiston SSR Fanlar Akademiyasining nashriyoti, 1958), 424.
51. K. Imomov, N. Komilov and others, eds., *Nurali: Dostonlar* [Nurali: epic songs] (Tashkent: G'afur G'ulom nomidagi nashriyoti, 1989), 192–193.
52. Nikolaus Poppe. *Mongolische Epen I: Übersetzung der Sammlung B. Rintchen; Folklore Mongol; Livre deuxième*. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1975), 154, 202. Cf. also N. Poppe. *Mongolische Epen V: Übersetzung der Sammlung U. Zagdsüren, Zangaryn Tuul'* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1977), 123. Occasionally the length of the feast is given as sixty days with food served for eighty days, *ibid.*, 26.
53. Oral poets/singers were expected to render advice when they reached the age of sixty. The terms for songs of advice are (Uzb.) *terme*, (Kaz.) *tolgau*, (Kyr.), *terme*,

nasiyat, sanat irlari. Writing poets have continued the tradition of giving advice, mostly in the form of stanzas with four short lines (see Erkin Vohidov's poem, written in 1963: *To'rtlik: She'rning sozi—to'rt satr / To'rt ajoyib—zo'r satr / Shoir odam o'zinini / To'rt satrda ko'rsatur* (Four Lines: The essence of a poem are four lines/ Four marvelous, strong lines/ A [true] poet shows himself in just four lines), *Muhabbat: She'rlar* [Love: poems] (Tashkent: G'afur G'ulom nomidagi . . .nashriyoti, 1976),112.

54. These characteristics, together with generosity and hospitality, are most often cited among Uzbeks, when they describe true Uzbeks, see, e.g. Ozod Sharafiddinov's description of the poet/writer G'afur G'ulom (1903-1966) in Ozod Sharafiddinov, *Ijodni anglash baxti* [The happiness to understand creativity] (Tashkent: Sharq nashriyoti, 2004), 262: "*G'afur G'ulom to'g'risida gapirganda, uning tom ma'nodagi o'zbek bo'lganini alohida ta'kidlash kerak*" (When one speaks of Gafur Gulom, one should especially stress that he has been an Uzbek in the full meaning), i.e. "he was generous, hospitable, kind, devoted to children and family, courageous, and honest," *ibid.*

55. Turkic proverbs consist mostly of two lines, connected with rhyme, e.g. (Uzb.) *bersang—olasan, eksang—o'rasan* (When you give, you will receive; when you sow, you will harvest).

56. See, e.g., Q. Abdullayeva, M. Yusupov, M. Mahmudova, S. Rahmonbekova. *O'qish kitobi*. 2-sinf uchun darslik, 6-nashri [Reader for the Second Class, 6th ed.] (Tashkent: O'qituvchi nashriyoti, 2003), 139–173. The folktales selected for this reader give remarkable examples of the compassionate actions and reactions of the heroes, whether human beings or animals. E.g., in the story *Ko'ngilchan O'tinchi* (The kind woodcutter) we learn about a woodcutter who listens to the pleading of the trees and does not cut them down (pp.147–148). The teaching of kindness to man and nature through the medium of the folktale starts already in Uzbek kindergartens, see the guidelines for pre-school instructions in: Jo'ra Yo'ldoshev, *Ta'limimizning istiqloli yo'lida* [On the road of our education's independence] (Tashkent: Sharq nashriyoti, 1996), 186.

57. *Ibid.*, *O'qish kitobi*, pp. 130, 175.

58. Yusuf Khass Hajib, *Wisdom of Royal Glory (Kutadgu Bilig): A Turko-Islamic Mirror for Princes*, trans. Robert Dankoff (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press), 1983; with an introduction and notes.

59. *Ibid.*, 58.

60. *Ibid.*, 107. See also *Ibid.*, 140: "The prince who is open-handed [=generous] will gain a place of honor in both worlds. It was a wise man who said that a prince cannot govern if he is miserly. These two are incompatible: virtuous men all flee from a miser, while they flock to embrace a generous man."

61. *Ibid.*, 252.

62. Alisher Navoiy (Nava'i), *Mahbubul-Qulub* [The Love of the hearts], vol. 13 of *Asarlar*, 15 vols. (Tashkent: G'afur G'ulom Nashriyoti, 1966), 7–84.

63. The last words spoken by an elder approaching death are especially honored and obeyed. In Kyrgyz these words are called *kereez*. They would contain advice and wishes, which by all means have to be carried out. Here are some of the words (in translation) of Alimbek datka (1800–1863) spoken on his deathbed to his son: “My son, listen to my words! Don’t become infected by wealth. What you have, give to the people, look after the poor, the widows and orphans.” *Ala-Too* (Bishkek, 1994: 2), 257.

64. *Wisdom of Royal Glory*, 250–252 (see note 58).

65. *Mahbubul-Qulub*, 59 (Tanbih 48)

66. *Ibid.*, 79 (Tanbih 113).

67. *Muhabbat: She'rlar*, 128.

Elders in Uzbek Society and Literature

A Contribution to Uzbekistan's Year of Respect for the Elders 2015[†]

Ilse Laude-Cirtautas (Seattle)

Orta Asiyadag'i Türikter kārileriden danalıq jäne qolı ashıqtıqtı üyrengeñ ediler. Qazirgi kezde de kārileri turalı mınau eshitu mümkin: "kārilerimiz tiri kitaptarımız. Sondıqtan ölkenderimizdi qürmet körsetip sıylaymız."

Key Terms: Elders in Uzbek society and literature; Status and obligations of elders; Memoirs; Respect for elders; Elders and proverbs; Elders in Western societies

Introduction

It has become an annual tradition in independent Uzbekistan to announce on December 8, the Day of the Constitution, the goals and aspirations for the coming year. In December 2014, Uzbekistan declared 2015 as the "Year of Respect for the Elders" (*Keksalarni e'zozlash yili*).¹ This action should be viewed as an additional opportunity for expressing respect and gratitude to the elders. Uzbeks are extremely fond of their elders. No negative attribute can be used to describe an elderly person. English

[†] This article is based on a forthcoming study on "Central Asian Turkic Elders: Past and Present." Inspired by Uzbekistan's unique act to declare 2015 as "The Year of Respect for the Elders," the author decided to respond with a separate study on the role of the elders among Uzbeks and to look comparatively at the elders' place in western societies. It is hoped that the world will finally recognize the strength and uniqueness of the Uzbek culture, based on the respect for the elders.

expressions such as “silly old woman” are unheard of. In Uzbek folktales old women are not depicted as witches, living somewhere alone.² A common attribute used in conjunction with elders is *nuroniý keksalarimiz* (our elders [with faces] shining with light).³ Regardless of the political environment, Uzbeks always maintained their respect for the elders. In the early 1980’s, discussions took place among Uzbeks about “what communism means to us.” The answer, as published in local Uzbek newspapers, was “Communism means to us the respect for the elders.”⁴ Moscow seemed to be satisfied, because at that time the average age of the members of the Politburo was about seventy.⁵

Fortunately the regard for the elders, which also includes the respect for the spirits of the deceased forefathers,⁶ has remained strong in Uzbekistan, despite the fact that western, particularly American customs and attitudes, did influence some younger Uzbeks.⁷ Listening to Americans either in America or in Uzbekistan, they learned that respect for the elders is not a virtue recognized everywhere. However, young Uzbeks did not abandon their elder respect. Above all the western custom of placing elders in “Old People’s Homes” (German: *Altersheime*) has not been accepted. There are no such homes for elderly Uzbeks, but there seem to exist some facilities in Tashkent for elderly non-Uzbeks.⁸ Uzbek elders are taken care of by their children, particularly by the youngest son, who according to an ancient Turkic nomadic tradition, also known among Mongols, has the obligation to be the caretaker of his parents whose home and place he inherits.⁹

Elders in Uzbek Society

There are few societies that honor and respect their elders to the high degree as is the tradition among the Central Asian Turkic peoples. Western scholars have taken note of the elders’ status among Koreans and Chinese and compared it with the elders’ role

in western societies, especially in the United States. Regrettably, none of the few studies on the treatment of elders in non-western societies mentions the elders' uniquely distinctive role among the Central Asian Turks.¹⁰ For our current discussion, we singled out the Uzbek Turks in Uzbekistan who, as mentioned above, made the extraordinary and most admirable decision to declare 2015 as the "Year of the Respect for the Elders." Uzbek newspapers announced the declaration with the words of Islom Karimov, President of Uzbekistan: "... *mo'tabar bobolarimiz va momolarimizni, otalarimizni rozi qilish, ularning duosini olish—dunyodagi eng ulug', eng savobli ish desam, o'ylamanki, barchangizning fikringizni ifoda etgan bo'laman.*"¹¹ (... stating that pleasing our respected grandparents and parents and receiving their blessings is the most important and rewarding task on earth, I think, I did express the thoughts of all of you).¹²

Uzbek children not only grow up with the respect for their own parents and grandparents but for all elders. As soon as they learn to speak, they are instructed to talk to and about elders in a respectful way, by adding the honorific plural suffix *+lar* to every noun or verb referring to the elder.¹³ This usage, uncommon in other Turkic languages, has earned Uzbek the recognition as a "polite language" among native Turkic speakers.

Uzbeks also express their high regard for elders with numerous proverbial sayings, e.g., *boshlarida qor —ko'ngillarida bahor* (On their heads is snow (meaning their hair is grey) – [but] in their hearts is spring), *qari bilganini pari bilmas* (What elders know, fairies do not know). Traditionally, proverbs should only be pronounced by elders. Uzbeks, like other Central Asian Turkic speakers, refer to their proverbs as *otalar so'zi*, (word(s) of the father(s)). If a younger person quotes a proverb, he/she is obliged to add, after the proverb, "*deb aytadilar* (as they [=the elders] say)." Elders are also the only ones who can express blessings. Generally they add them when thanking a younger

person for his/her service as e.g.: *Rahmat senga, bolajonim, qollaring dard ko'rmasin!* (Thank you, my dear child, may your hands not experience pain).¹⁴ Uzbek elders, like Kazakh elders, are also appreciated for the terms of endearments they use when addressing children.¹⁵ As this author has observed, children would run up to elders to talk to them, to serve them and to hear their warmly rendered phrases of gratitude and blessings, accompanied by a patting of their heads. In short, there is no separation of the generations among Central Asian Turks.

Elders in Western Society and Literature

The following discussion is based primarily on Germany where the portrayal of elders in society and literature is significantly different from their depiction in Central Asian Turkic oral and written literature. As mentioned, Uzbek folktales do not depict old women as witches, as we find them in German folktales collected and published by the Brothers Grimm.¹⁶ It is astonishing that generations of German educators, parents included, either did not object at all or expressed rather late their objections against the negative role of elderly women in German folktales. Having grown up in Germany, the author recalls the frightening impressions not just the stories about female witches but also their drawings had made on her as a child. Generally German children, particularly in the former parts of Germany west of the river Weichsel, would keep a distance from unknown elders, especially women. However, this did not prevent their physical mistreatment. There are even recent cases known where groups of boys targeted women living alone.¹⁷ The attitude towards elders in East Prussia (Ostpreußen), east of the river Weichsel, where this author grew up, had been different. Here children used to address elders with kinship terms: "*Onkel, Tante*" (uncle, aunt).¹⁸ However, when these children came as refugees to West Germany towards the end of World War II, they were immediately told by their West German teachers to stop such

forms of address, because the elders could take advantage of them!¹⁹ This was shocking news to the refugee children. Teachers even asked police officers to come to the school classes attended by refugee children to instruct them to stay away from unknown grown-ups as has been and still is the custom not only in West Germany, but throughout the western world. Such attitudes have doubtlessly contributed to the separation between generations in western societies.

In August 2009 the German weekly newspaper *Die Zeit* published articles and readers' responses about the status and role of the elderly in Germany. The conclusion was that elders in Germany constitute a "separate race" with no connection to the younger generation.²⁰ This is also confirmed by the depiction of elders in German short stories: here the elder, if mentioned at all, mostly leads a lonely life. He/she is cut off from the younger generation, even from his/her own children! For example, in Siegfried Lenz' (1926–2014) story, "Ein Haus aus lauter Liebe" (A house full of love), the father of a wealthy industrialist is shut off in his room whenever guests appear. The son is ashamed of his old father.²¹ In Luise Rinser's (1911–2002) story, "Ein alter Mann stirbt" (An old Man dies), the funeral of an old man is described. Many of his friends attended and wept. They did not weep so much about the death of the old man but about their own fate which resembled that of the deceased: "sie alle fühlten sich betrogen vom Leben, und als sie den alten Mann begruben, dessen Schicksal sie kannten, da waren sie alle selbst dieser alte Mann, dem das Leben so viel schuldig geblieben war" (All of them felt disappointed with their lives and when they buried the old man whose fate they knew well, they themselves turned into the old man whose life had so much neglected him ...).²² In Karl Heinrich Waggerl's (1897–1973) story, "Ein Mensch namens Adam," (A human being named Adam) elders are called "*Finsterlinge*" (ignorants).²³ Similar terms are used in contemporary American literature. For example, in J. D.

Salinger's (1919–2010) novel, *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951), we find the following expressions “little, old funny looking parents” and “a grandmother who does not have all her marbles anymore.”²⁴ Elders in America commonly formulate their role in society with words like the following: “We became a throwaway population.”²⁵ More quotations could be cited, but it is hoped that these examples will suffice to ascertain that in western literature and society elders are most often depicted as a separate, neglected class.

Uzbek Elders (continued)

In contrast to western societies, elders occupy an important place among Uzbeks. They fully deserve the respect extended to them. To get old, means to get wise.²⁶ Elders are the teachers to be listened to. This demands that they have constantly to prove and improve themselves. The Uzbek poet/writer Shukrullo (1921–) published his first major work entitled *Chollar* (Elders) in 1948. As he explains, “I was completely absorbed by the elders’ language, their wise words, their character and psychology.”²⁷ Many elders can be found in the stories of the Uzbek poet/writer Shuhrat (1918–1995). In one of his stories, titled “Qodir Ota” (Father Qodir), he describes the main qualities expected of an elder: generosity, wisdom and kindness. The story also emphasizes the way Uzbek elders are expected to speak: calmly and distinctively.²⁸

As is the custom among Uzbeks and all other Central Asian Turkic speakers, elders like anyone else are addressed with kinship terms according to their age and gender. The Uzbek terms of address for a male elder are *ota* “father” or *aka* “older brother.” Female elders are addressed with *opa* (older sister; mother), or depending on their age with *buvi* or *momo* (grandmother).²⁹ The elders respond with *o’g’lim* (my son) or *qizim* (my daughter). As a rule, kinship terms are only used to address native Turkic speakers. If a foreigner is able to communicate well in a Turkic language, he/she might

also be addressed with a kinship term and thus being received into the “large Turkic family.”

Uzbek Elders’ Obligations

One of the major obligations of the Central Asian Turkic elders is to convey their experiences and wisdom to the young.³⁰ Significantly, after independence in 1991, Uzbek elders responded to the request of the younger generation to tell them about their lives during the harsh times of the Soviet regime. Many elders wrote down their memoirs, even though recalling the hardships they had gone through was painful for them.³¹ Among those who left us their memoirs are the poets/writers Said Ahmad (1920–2007) and Shukrullo.³² Also noteworthy are the memoirs of the well-known historian Hamid Ziyoev (1920–2003), written in 2000 when he was 80 years old.³³ Five years before, in June 1995 he had sent a long letter to President Bill Clinton in which he stated:

This year I am 75 years old. However, of these years I spent 69 years under the Soviet slave system. My life past for nothing in a country surrounded by an iron curtain. Because a life deprived of independence, of political and human rights, private property and access to religion is worth nothing. It is true, in the Soviet period many scholars, engineers, agronomists, physicians and other people with secondary and higher education had been educated. But the tragedy consists of the following: these people were only literate and educated slaves! Finally, on August 31, 1991 as one of the first republics Uzbekistan declared its independence and tore apart colonialism and the chains of tyranny. Exactly on this day I was born anew as a free human being. It is now a little less than five years since this historical event, since the day I reached out to freedom.³⁴

In his memoirs, *Hayot yo’lim* (The road of my life), Hamid Ziyoev describes in more detail what life was like for him and other Uzbeks under Soviet/Russian rule. In doing so, he succeeded as one of the first Uzbek writers to depict the harsh but true

facts about Russian/Soviet colonialism. For example, he portrays the years of the tragic famine in Uzbekistan (1933–1935), induced by Stalin: *1933 yilgi ocharchilik menda juda ham dahshatli taassurot qoldirgan* (The starvation in 1933 left me with the most terrible impression), and he goes on to write about the countless corpses of people who had died from hunger lying in the streets of Tashkent. Among them were also Kazakhs who had tried to escape the even more severe starvation in their own region by moving south. As we learn from Hamid Ziyoev, Uzbeks tried to help them and saved many Kazakhs, especially children whom they took into their families.³⁵ He also mentions that the gardens with fruit trees and vegetables which many Uzbeks owned, including his own family, and which could have helped many to survive the starvation, were confiscated in 1934 by the Soviet government! There were even taxes placed on fruit trees!³⁶

In writing their memoirs, Uzbek poets/writers and intellectuals follow a tradition practiced among Central Asian Turkic oral poets/singers who composed their life-songs after the age of sixty.³⁷ This tradition was continued in written form, but was less honored during the Soviet period. However, soon after independence (1991) Uzbek elders, like Hamid Ziyoev, returned to writing their memoirs and having them published in fulfillment of their obligations to the younger generation. If someone was not able to leave behind his “life song”, his/her memoirs would be written by their children. For example, in 1998 Holida Ahrorova, daughter of the writer and diplomat Muhammad Said Ahroriy (1895–1931), published her memories about her father in the series *Istiqlol Fidoyilari* (Those who sacrificed their lives for Independence).³⁸ The son of the well-known writer Abdulla Qodiriy (1894–1938), Habibulla Qodiriy (1918–?), published the first editions of his memories about his father in 1974 and 1983, but only in 2005, in the third edition, he openly states that his father had been shot by the Soviets in 1938 as an “enemy of the people.”³⁹

Finally, independence in 1991 brought to the elders the joy and satisfaction of freely fulfilling their obligations to the younger generation, which most importantly include the transmission of their memoirs. As a matter of fact, Uzbek literature since 1991 is largely comprised of the elders' memoirs. They are not only extremely rich in information, but they are also testaments to a time that should never return! The elders' memoirs helped all Uzbeks to separate themselves as quickly as possible from the Soviet past with its policies of russification, changes in behavioral customs, e.g., lack of compassion, informing on others, etc., and to redeem their own Uzbek identity. The services the elders provided in this process are impressive. My own response of gratitude will be to continue to write about individual Uzbek elders and to translate selections of their memoirs into English. As an elder myself, I would like to close with a prayer: "May God help the Uzbek elders to continue to teach the young generosity and kindness to man and nature and to guide them to grow up as wise and responsible elders!"

1. The previous year 2014 had been declared the "Year of the Healthy Generation (*Sog'lom Avlod Yili*)". The year 2004 was proclaimed as the "Year of Love and Compassion (*Mehr va Muruvvat Yili*)" and 2005 as the "Year of Health (*Sihat-Salomatlik Yili*)". Together with the announcement of the following year's theme, Uzbekistan's president also outlines the steps to be taken in order to achieve the goal set for the coming year. See, e.g., *Xalq So'zi*, December 8, 2005, 1–2.

2. The difference between Uzbek and western folktales, as e.g. German folktales, is substantial. Uzbeks can truly headline the genre of their folktales with the phrase, "*ertaklar[imiz] yaxshilikka yetaklar* (Our folktales lead to kindness)", see Q. Abdullayeva, M. Yusupov, et als. *O'qish kitabi: 2-sinf uchun darslik* [Reader for the 2. Grade] (Tashkent: O'qituvchi, 2003), 139. According to Uzbek standards, Grimm's folktales could be labeled as "Introductions to Cruelty." Here we meet old women depicted as witches not only in the well-known folktale "Hänsel and Gretel" but also in many other stories,

such as “The Old Woman in the Wood” and “The Iron Stove”. See *Grimm’s Fairy Tales, Complete Edition* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1948, reprint 1959), 92–100, 564–566, 577–583. It should be noted that the witches’ purpose is to entice children to come to their places in order “to kill them, cook them and eat them.” (*op. cit.*, p. 97). We do meet in Uzbek folktales old women who have some skills in witchcraft, called *Yalmog’iz*. However, they do not live alone nor do they kill and eat children. They might have at their service forty giants, as we learn from the folktale *Zar kokilli yigit* (The young man with golden braids): *O’zbek xalq ijodi: Oltin beshik: Ertaklar* [Uzbek folk literature: The golden cradle: folktales] (Tashkent: G’afur G’ulom nashriyoti, 1985), 114–119. It needs to be emphasized that elders, male or female, generally play a positive role in Uzbek folktales as in everyday life, see Ilse Laude-Cirtautas, *Märchen der Usbeken* [Uzbek folktales] (Köln: Diederichs, 1984), 235–236. An exception seems to be the figure of the stepmother in her relationship to her stepdaughter(s). See for example the folktale “Podachining qizi [The shepherd’s daughter],” in *Zumrad va Qimmat: Uzbek Folk Tales*, ed. by Komil Imomov (Tashkent: G’afur G’ulom nomidagi Adabiyot va san’at nashriyoti, 1988), 129–134.

3. This is exactly the impression this author gained during her first visit to Uzbekistan in May 1972. Immediately the idea came to her mind to have as many photos of Uzbek elders taken as possible and have an exhibition organized in Seattle on “Faces of Uzbek Elders - Reflection of Uzbek Culture.” The term *nuroniylar*, “those shining with light,” is now often used as a synonym for *keksalar*, “elder(s)”. For example, an Uzbek organization dedicated to the elders has the name *Nuroniylar*, see *Xalq So’zi* [People’s voice], June 9, 1998, 1. Cf. also *O’zbekiston Adabiyoti va San’ati* [Uzbekistan’s literature and art], September 4, 2009, 1.

4. Based on notes recorded by the author while in Tashkent during the late 1970’s and early 1980’s.

5. About the average age of members of the Politburo in the early 1980’s see, e.g., the article “Wer bestimmt den Kreml-Kurs? [Who determines the course of the Kreml?],” *Der Spiegel*, February 11, 1980, 120–129. Brezhnev’s (1964–1982) successors as First Party Secretary Yuri Andropov (1914–1984) and Konstantin Chernenko (1911–1985) were 68 and resp. 73 years old when they obtained their high positions in 1982 and 1984.

6. On the respect for the spirits of deceased elders, see I. Laude-Cirtautas, “Central Asian Turkic Elders: Past and Present,” *Journal of Central and Inner Asian Dialogue* 2 (Winter 2015): 1–24. This article has already been published in Uzbek in Tashkent with a significant change of its title: “Ajdodlar ruhini shod etib [Honoring the spirits of the ancestors],” *Kitob Dunyosi*, March 27, 2013, 1, 2.

7. Western, notably American influences were strongest in the early years of Uzbekistan’s independence (1991). However, in recent years the trend has been to look

critically at imitations of the West, including fashion styles and clothes, see e.g., Hushnida Beknazarova, “*Qadrning qimmat* [The value of [self] esteem],” *Hurriyat*, Dec. 17, 2014, 6.

8. As this author was told, public or commercial homes for Uzbek elders are not needed in Uzbekistan. But Uzbekistan’s government had to provide accommodations for Russian male elders soon after independence in 1991, when young Russians left for work in Russia, leaving their elderly fathers and/or mothers behind. They were confident that their mothers would be well taken care of by their Uzbek female neighbors who, however, could not extend the same kindness to their Russian male neighbors. This author met several Russian women living and working in Germany who told her that their mothers preferred to continue to live in Uzbekistan, being certain that Uzbek neighbor women will always look after them. This assurance was more important to them than the financial support of the German Social Services (*Sozialhilfe*) they would receive if they choose to live with family members in Germany.

9. About the role of the youngest son in Mongolian society, cf. the position of Tolui, the youngest son of Chinghiz Khan (1162–1227) who inherited his father’s home territory. It should be added here that respect for the elders is also a characteristic of Mongolian culture, see Caroline Humphrey and Urgunge Onon, *Shamans and Elders: Experience, Knowledge, and Power among the Daur Mongols* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 23, 25, 35.

10. One of the first studies on Central Asian Turkic elders about to be published is this article. An earlier article was written by M. Nazif Shahrani, a native Kirghiz from Afghanistan: “Growing in Respect: Aging among the Kirghiz of Afghanistan”, in *Other Ways of Growing Old: Anthropological Perspectives* by Pamela T. Amoss & Stevan Harrell (Stanford, CA.: Stanford University Press, 1981), 177–191.

11. *Hurriyat* (newspaper, published in Tashkent), December 17, 2014, 1.

12. Following this announcement, Uzbekistan’s Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare has been working together with several community groups and foundations to develop the year’s program benefiting elders. See Uz.Daily.com/articles-id-30860.htm. The program’s goals for the year 2015 can be summarized as follows: to improve and perfect the already existing social and medical services for the elders. See: <http://www.press-service.uz/uz/news/5088/>.

13. See the following example: “*Oyimlar o’zlari yurgizib tursalar ham, qaramaydilar* (Even though my respected mother herself, winds them [=the watches] regularly, she does not look at them).” O’lmas Umarbekov, *Tanlangan asarlar*, vol. 1 (Tashkent: Sharq, 2002), 108.

14. Other expressions of the elders’ blessings are: *Yo’lingiz oq bo’lsin!* (lit.: may your road be white, meaning: have a safe journey!), *Xudo xayr bersin!* (May God bestow

kindness!), *dasturxoningiz mo'l bo'lsin!* (May your tablecloth (=the food you prepare for guests) always be plentiful). Similar blessings are also pronounced by Kazakh and Kyrgyz elders. See I. Laude-Cirtautas, "Blessings and Curses in Kazakh and Kyrgyz," *Central Asiatic Journal* 18 no. 3 (1974): 149–158.

15. On the use of endearment terms by Turkic elders, see I. Laude-Cirtautas, "Terms of Endearment in the Speech of Kazakh Elders," *Central Asiatic Journal* 23 no. 1 (1979): 84–95. Notable is also the way in which the young respond, see the author's article "Wie die Kasaken und Kirgisen ihre Alten anreden" (How the Kazakh and Kyrgyz address their elders), *Central Asiatic Journal* 25 no(s). 3–4 (1981): 246–259.

16. The role and depiction of elderly women as ugly witches in Brother Grimms' folktales have raised many questions among Central Asian Turks about the assumed superiority of western culture. Uzbeks rightly introduce their folktales with the words *Ertaklar yaxshilikka yetaklar* (Folktales lead to Kindness), see note 2). Sadly, concerns about the negative impact of elderly women depicted as witches started to be raised rather late in the 1950's in Germany. Certainly, a connection between the criminal behavior towards an elderly woman (see note 17) and the folktales collected by the Grimm Brothers can and should be made. See also W. Kudsus, *Terrors of Childhood in Grimms' Fairy Tales* (New York: Peter Lang, 2005) and Jack Zipes, *The Struggle for the Grimms' Throne: The Legacy of the Grimm's Tales in the FRG and the GDR Since 1945* (New York: Peter Lang, 2005).

17. In 2007, July 30 an article appeared in the *Hamburger Abendblatt* (Hamburg's Evening Paper, p. 28) with the headline "Kinderbande tyrannisierte 80-Jährige" (A band of children tyrannized an eighty year old woman). Living alone in a ground-floor apartment in Mönchengladbach (North Rhine Westphalia), the woman endured for weeks the criminal acts of a group of eight boys, the oldest of them thirteen years old. They repeatedly hit the woman, stole her money and other valuables. The woman was afraid to call the police, because she feared she would be moved into a home for the elderly.

18. As observed by the author, her relatives and acquaintances.

19. As told to the author by refugee children in Hamburg, Germany, September/October 1945.

20. See *Die Zeit* (published in Hamburg), August 20, 2009, 38.

21. Erna Kritsch, Alice Schlimbach, eds., *Moderne Erzählungen* (New York: Meredith Publishing Company, 1964), 56.

22. Willi Fehse, ed., *Deutsche Erzähler der Gegenwart. Eine Anthologie*. (Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam, 1966), 242–250 (248).

23. Karl Heinrich Waggerl, "Ein Mensch namens Adam" in *Moderne Erzählungen*, eds. Erna Kritsch and Alice Schlimbach (see above note 21), 168.

24. J. D. Salinger, *The Catcher in the Rye* (New York: A Bantam Book, 1966), 14, 52. Here one could add the statement in Ernest Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1952), 11: "... many of the fishermen made fun of the old man. ..." To make fun of an elder is an unacceptable behavior among the Turkic peoples of Central Asia.

25. *The Daily of the University of Washington*, February 18, 2015, 1.

26. See the introduction to this article.

27. Cited from Laziz Qayumov, ed. *Adabiyotimiz avtobiografiyasi*. (Tashkent: G'afur G'ulom nomidagi adabiyot va san'at nashriyoti, 1973), 327.

28. Shuhrat, *Quduq* [Water well]: *Hikoyalar va Qissa* (Tashkent: Yosh Gvardiya nashriyoti, 1973), 27-31. In his story "Qodir ota" (Father Qodir), Shuhrat describes the life of the elder Qodir who originally was a carpenter. He did his work responsibly without resting (*o'zi tinib tinchimaydigan duradgor*). Later in his life he distinguished himself by organizing the establishment of a school in his *mahalla* (neighborhood).

29. Most speakers would add to the kinship terms the endearment form + *jon* (<Pers.) "soul," meaning "dear": *ota+jon* "dear father," *ona+jon* "dear mother." Cf. also I. Laude-Cirtautas, "Wie die Kasaken und Kirgisen ihre Alten anreden" (How the Kazakhs and Kirghiz address their Elders), *Central Asiatic Journal* 25 no(s). 3-4 (1981): 246-259.

30. See I. Laude-Cirtautas, "Central Asian Turkic Elders: Past and Present" (forthcoming), where the elders' role as carriers and promoters of traditional values and norms will be discussed.

31. The mental and physical pain of writing down one's experiences of the Soviet years has been well expressed by the poet and writer Shukrullo (1921-). When asked to write his memoirs, he hesitated: *Ammo qamoqlarda tilka-pora bo'lgan bu yurak, qaqshagan bu asablar tuhmat va haqoratlar azobini qayta xotirlashga endi bardosh beraolarmikanlar?* (But will this heart which has been smashed into pieces in the prisons, these cracked nerves will they now be able to endure the remembrance of pains of insult and slander?), cited from Shukrullo's memoirs: *Kafansiz ko'milganlar* (Those buried without a shroud), (Tashkent: Mehnat, 1991), 4.

32. About Said Ahmad's life and work see this author's forthcoming article "Central Asian Turkic Elders: Past and Present." Shukrullo's memoirs (see above note 31) have been translated into German: Shukrullo, *Die ohne Leichentuch Begrabenen: Erinnerungen und Gedanken eines verfolgten Dichters*. Translated by Ingeborg Baldauf (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2005). For an English translation of the first chapter of Shukrullo's memoirs see William Dirks, *World Literature Today* 70 (1996), 627-632.

33. See Hamid Ziyoev, *Tarixning ochilmagan sahifalari* (Unopened Pages of History). (Tashkent: Mehnat, 2003), 201-230). H. Ziyoev is also known as author of

didactic stories in which he portrays desirable character traits, meant to teach adolescent readers, see H. Ziyoev, *Baxt Kaliti* (The Key of Happiness), (Tashkent: Ma'naviyat, 2001). Hamid Ziyoev's memoirs (see note 35) are first on this author's list of Uzbek elders' recollections to be translated into English.

34. The letter has been published in A. Sharofiddinov, Z. Fayzieva and L. Kravets. *Hamid Ziyoevning Ilmiy-Pedagogik Faoliyati, 1946–2003* [The scholarly-pedagogical activities of Hamid Ziyoev, 1946–2003] (Tashkent: Abdulla Qodiriy nomidagi xalq merosi nashriyoti, 2003), 33–38.

35. Hamid Ziyoev, "Hayot Yo'lim [The road of my life]," in *Tarixning ochilmagan sahifalari* by H. Ziyoev (see note 33), 209.

36. Ibid., 210. Not much has been published about the Soviet-made starvation in Uzbekistan (1933–1935). More is known about Kazakhstan's tragic famine (1931–1933), induced by Soviet policies of genocide, when close to 49 % of the Kazakh people perished. See Nazira Nurtazina, "Great Famine of 1931–1933 in Kazakhstan: A Contemporary's Reminiscences" (Website: 06Nurtazina.pdf), also in *Acta Slavica Iaponica*, Tomus 32, 105–129.

37. On the tradition of oral poets/singers to compose songs about their life see I. Laude-Cirtautas, "Central Asian Turkic Elders: Past and Present," see endnote 6.

38. Holida Ahrorova wrote two booklets about her father's life and the circumstances of his death: *Izlarini Izlayman* (I am searching for his traces), Tashkent: Sharq nashriyot-matbaa kontserni, 1998 and *O'tgani yurakdan o'tdi* [What one experienced, passed through the heart] (Tashkent: Ijod dunyosi nashriyot uyi, 2003). In addition, she also published her own life story: *Sumbul isi* [The Fragrance of the Hyacinth] (Tashkent: Sharq, 2000). In 1930, as a young child, she observed how her father, the well-known journalist, poet and diplomat Muhammad Said Ahroriy (1895–1931), was taken from their home, never to return nor to be heard from again. Only sixty years later in 1990, after searching through many records, did his daughter learn that he had been shot in 1931. Holida Ahrorova's memoirs (written when she was over seventy years old) inform us not only about her father but also about many other victims of the Stalin era, cf. her chapter "Qizil Terror Qurbonlari" (Victims of the Red Terror) in *O'tgani yurakdan o'tdi* (see above), 6–15. The information the reader receives from Holida Ahrorova's works is invaluable. For example, we learn what it meant during the Soviet years to be called "child of an enemy of the people."

39. Habibulla Qodiriy, *Otam haqida: Xotiralar* [About my father: memories] (Tashkent: G'afur G'ulom nashriyoti, 1974), 232. Here the son had to state that his father passed away in his home in Tashkent on August 26, 1939. Finally, in 2005 he was able to tell the truth: his father was shot by the Soviets on October 5, 1938, see H. Qodiriy, *Otamdan Xotira* [Memoirs about my father] (Tashkent: Yangi asr avlodi, 2005),

404. He also wrote a lengthy article, “Qodiriyning so’nggi kunlari (The last days of Qodiriy),” published in the journal *Yoshlik*, 1989, no(s). 5–8.

The following manuscript prefaces the *Journal of Central and Inner Asian Dialogue* (JCIAD)'s new section, "Words of Wisdom and Advice." This new addition to the journal's three existing sections (Articles, Translations and Book Reviews) brings attention to a Central and Inner Asian Turkic literary genre that is little-studied yet deserving of more focus. With this second volume of the JCIAD being thematically inspired by Uzbekistan's declaration of 2015 as the "Year of Respect for the Elders," and dedicated to Central and Inner Asian elders in general, the editors deemed it an appropriate time to introduce the section. Already, the JCIAD News, the journal's supplementary newsletter, has given focus to the topic with Ilse Laude-Cirtautas's "Uzbekistan Declares 2015 the 'Year of the Elders'" and Azamat Sadykov's "Wisdom Words of the Forefathers".¹ The JCIAD continues its efforts in acknowledging, honoring and preserving the traditions earlier set forth by the ancestors of Central and Inner Asian Turks.

A crucial element in the JCIAD's endeavor is to shift focus towards different aspects of Turkic, Mongolic and Tungus literatures, languages and histories—in this case, towards a particular genre of literature by inviting elders to dispense words of wisdom and advice on a particular topic. A wisdom expression, therefore, will be asked to be shared and expounded on for younger audiences. Although the preface at hand extends 6,000 words, contributions from our elders will be asked not to exceed 1,500–3,000. The first contribution to the new section will coincide with the theme of

the next volume: “25 Years of Independence: Developments in Central/Inner Asian Post-Soviet Literature and Culture.”

Limits on word count and findings from conducted research by the author on the topic warrant the preface to be divided into three parts. The first part will help readers identify the potency of “words” within Turkic traditions while introducing some of the variant sub-genres and overlapping structures of wisdom expressions.

1. See Ilse Laude-Cirtautas, Uzbekistan Declares 2015 the ‘Year of the Elders’,” and Azamat Sadykov’s “Wisdom Words of the Fathers,” *JCIAD News*, Academic Year 2014/2015, 14; 15–16.

A Historical Overview of Turkic Wisdom Words^{‡§}

Alva Robinson (Houston)

Ортолук жана ички Азия Түрктөрдүн көбүнчө ата-бабаларынын салтарына коңул бурушат. Илгертен, көчмөн жашоо сүргөн кезде, бул элдер жүгүнө жүк кошуп тарых жана моралдык баалуулуктарды сактоо үчүн деп жанында китеп ташып жүрүшчү эмес, мунун ордуна карыялар алардын жандуу китептери болгон. Ошондуктан, улуу мурасын бир муундан экинчи муунга оозеки түрдө өткөрүп берген ата-бабаларыбыздын салымы өтө зор.

Key Words: Elders and Wisdom Words; Orkhon Inscriptions; Central and Inner Asian Turks; Tonyukuk, Kül Tegin; *Kutadgu Bilig*

Central and Inner Asian Turks place especial emphasis on the oral traditions of their forefathers. Ilse Laude-Cirtautas reminds us the purpose can be quite practical. Historically, as nomads, these groups did not burden their loads by carrying from place to place books to store their histories and moral compasses; rather, the elders became their people's living books.¹ In this way, the elders made conscious efforts to orally transmit the knowledge they acquired, passing it from one generation to the next.

Amongst today's Turks of Central and Inner Asia, furthermore, traditions connected with ancestral spirits still prevail. This stems from a predominant belief that

‡ Due to space limitations, the article has been divided into three parts. The conversation continues with the next journal volume with a focus on elders as transmitters and concludes with obligations of receivers of wisdom words.

§ Although this article focuses on Turkic traditions of wisdom words, it should be noted that other Central and Inner Asian nomadic groups, like those of Mongolic and Tungus groups, place a high priority on the preservation and transmission of such words.

the spirits of the forefathers continue to surround the living. Core to these convictions are the elders and their wisdom words—age-old chains linking the living with the ancestors through unbroken oral rituals. At the same time, wisdom words, through the influence and incorporation of foreign elements, demonstrate an ease at which Turks have been able to adapt to outside conditions. There is no doubt that, as Ilse Laude-Cirtautas has already pointed out in her article, “Central Asian Turkic Elders: Past and Present,” the elders and their words had played significant parts in preserving their cultural identity during the Soviet era while also preparing younger generations for independence. To accomplish a clearer understanding of the cultural weight of Turkic word expressions, we start with an examination of Turkic terms for “word” and “wisdom expressions.”

Identifying Words

The earliest recorded mention of the term, “word” can be found on the stele memorial stones of the eighth century in Northern Mongolia. These stones are referred to as the Orkhon Inscriptions because of the area they are found in. The oldest of these, the Tonyukuk Inscription, was erected for and composed by the seventh/eighth-century elderly advisor, Tonyukuk (646–716? CE). Dating back to 720 CE, the inscription is engraved on two stones, constituting thirty-five strings with sixteen uses of the word *sab*, an Old Turkic term for “word”.² Sir Gerard Clausen points out that the term *sab* connotes a broader meaning beyond simply, “word”. Rather, it is recognized as a process of reciting an all-out “speech, a narrative or story.”³ Yusuf Khass Hajib’s eleventh-century *Kutadgu Bilig*, renders *sab*, often transliterated as *saw* or *sav*, as “counsel” or “advice”: “*bağır sak kişiniñ sözi tut sawı / bu söz saw saña bolğa devlet awı* (Heed (Keep) the good word and counsel of a compassionate man / May this word and counsel be the nexus of governance for you)”.⁴ Indeed, *sab*, in the context of Tonyukuk,

signifies an explanation, message or advice depending on the specific situation from which it arises.

Although the term's original form has since fallen out of use and had been replaced by the term *söz* by the fourteenth century,⁵ there is evidence that a transition may have already emerged as early as the eleventh century.⁶ Variations of the original *sab/sav* are in use today: *söyle-* (Turkish), *süylösh-* (Kyrgyz), both meaning to recite or to speak, and *savodli* (Uzbek) (<arab.), meaning "literate and knowledgeable", to name a few. Although *söz* does not appear in the Tonyukuk Inscription, it does occur once within the Kül Tegin Inscription: "*Inim Kül Tigin birlä sözläşdimiz* (I and Prince Kül, my younger brother, consulted together)."⁷

The "word," moreover, reflects an undisputable sacredness, as evidenced in the three Orkhon Inscriptions of Bilgä Qagan, Kül Tegin and Tonyukuk. The most famous of these inscriptions, the Kül Tegin Inscription, substantiates this notion when we consider how the first line serves as an epithet that doubles as an invocation to God:

*Tängri tög Tängridä bolmiş Türük Bilgä Qayan bu ödkä olurtum.*⁸

I, the Heaven-like and Heaven-born Turkish [sic] Bilgä Kagan, succeeded to the throne [sic]⁹ at this time.¹⁰

The line opens with, "*Tängri*," the highest spirit deity of the ancient Turkic belief system. As shown in the translation, it connotes the sky (Heaven), *kök*, a sacred symbol of God and His good fortune. In the first line of the east side of the same inscription, both terms are compounded together ("*üzä kök Tängri asra* (When the blue sky above)")—confirming the pair's cosubstantiality.¹¹ Expounding on the divine nature of the sky and recognizing its integrality with *Tängri* allows for a clearer understanding of how Turks associate "words." Recent literary works from Central and Inner Asian Turks over the last fifty years have revealed some key aspects of the sky's divinity. *Ak*

Keme (The White Ship), a novel first published in the early seventies by Kyrgyz writer Chingiz Aitmatov (1928–2008), for example, attributes the sky as being everlasting: “Your life was like a flash of lightening that gleamed once and went out. And lightening is born of the sky. And the sky is eternal. And that is my consolation.”¹² The sky is also revered “as a cosmic consciousness regulating the destinies of all beings,”¹³ a concept shared among Mongolians as well as Turks. It was not uncommon, as such, for wise men to look towards the sky as a rite of divination or a presage of what was to come. This still holds true today. The first line of the Kazakh national anthem, “*Altın kün aspanı* (The sky of the golden sun),”¹⁴ for example, alludes to the open blue sky as God’s favor towards the future of the people. Tied to the symbolic connection between *Tängri* and sky, additionally, is an idea that anything of the sky is infallible and of utmost authority. *The Blue Sky* by Tuvan poet and author Galsan Tschinag (1944–) resounds this. In chapter two of the work, the protagonist of the story, a young Dshurukuwaa, explains how Grandmother “had been sent to me by the sky ... [and] when the sky was involved, we were not allowed to lie.”¹⁵ Referring back to the first line of the Kül Tegin Inscription, the placement of, “*sabïmin tükäti äšidgil* (Hear my words from beginning to end (entirely)),”¹⁶ directly after *Tängri*, emphasizes the inviolability of “words” as eternal, fortune-filled and infallible.¹⁷

According to Turkic and Mongolian beliefs, “words” denote more than just divinity. They also form living spirits. It is quite common, therefore, to find within wisdom expressions “words” with life-like qualities. A Mongolian proverb, for example, juxtaposes a “word” with a “horse”. The effect establishes them as animate, living creatures that, when released, are impossible to take back.

Alt aldval bar’j boldog
am aldbal bar’j boldogguy

A horse released can be caught,
A word released cannot be caught¹⁸

Susan A. Crate further adduces from the Sakha that the spoken word verges on spirituality, manifesting itself as an intangible being of the natural and metaphysical worlds.

Spoken words turn into a prophetic bird that flies according to the meaning of words uttered and retells the original words. The act of speaking words gives them the power to fulfill meaning.¹⁹

The characterization of words as animate, divine spirits has influenced the attention of Turks towards promises and the practice of wisely using words. This stands in direct contrast to the views of the West, where people are given to speaking fast and loud and often do not keep their words.

Identifying Words of Wisdom

These sacred word expressions are in essence delivered as short eloquent phrases and aphorisms of advice and guidance orally handed down and preserved through the elders as forms of wisdom literature. It is in accordance with this same practice of passing along wisdom words of the ancestors that Mahmud al-Kashgari (1005–1102 CE) compiled his *Divan-i-Lugat-i-Turk*. An eleventh-century compendium of explanations of phrases and words used across the Turkic world, the anthology contains over 290 wisdom words.²⁰ Al-Kashgari justifies the basis of his compilation: “According to the ways of wisdom ... and which are handed down from speaker to transmitter,” he recorded the oral traditions of the Turks with “the utmost of excellence, and the extreme of refinement.”²¹ His commentary establishes his commitment in purposefully adhering to the standards set forth by his Turkic ancestors where wisdom words are concerned.

Nearly twenty-years before the *Divan-i-Lugat-i-Turk* was completed, Yusuf Khas Hajib (1019/1020–1085 CE), a contemporary of Al-Kashgari, had just finished his literary masterpiece, *Kutadgu Bilig*. The *Kutadgu Bilig* reveals the literary and social significance of wisdom words, establishing them early on as the authority from which he based his work.

Bezenmiş ağırlıq biligler bile

*kamuğ barçasına bügüler sözi*²²

It is ordered with wise sayings most precious

Words of the sages for one and all²³

A close reading shows that Hajib identifies wisdom words through various terms. Some of those elaborated on or mentioned are *küsemiş sözi* (expression of well-wishes),²⁴ *kéçki söz* (short expression),²⁵ *kumaru söz* (legacy expression),²⁶ *biliglig sözi* (expression of wisdom),²⁷ *bilgä sözi* (expression of the wise)²⁸ *könli sözi* (expression of the mind),²⁹ and *atası söz* (expression of his father).³⁰ The enumeration of variant terms for word expressions signifies the overall emphasis Turks had placed in transmitting wisdom and advice.

Generally, these word expressions constitute what in the English language would be adages, aphorisms, expressions, maxims and or proverbs. In the Turkic languages, these wisdom words are distinguished by function and originating source.

- Wise words (Kyrgyz: *nakıl* (from Arabic) *sözdörü* Kazakh: *naqıl sözderi*, *qanattı sözderi* Salar: *meşlik sözleri*³¹). These are generally quotes or expressions that have stood the test of time. Generally, these wise words contain undisputed truths.

- Words of wisdom and advice (Kyrgyz: *akılmanduu sözdörü, nakıl-nasiyat sözdörü*, Kazakh: *naqıl sözderi*). These, likewise, are words of undisputed generalizations in the form of direct quotes but used for the purpose of giving advice and are didactic in nature.
- Sacred words (Kyrgyz: *iyik sözdörü*,³² Kazakh: *hikmet*³³). “Sacred” can refer to expressions religious in nature or those recited from the ancestors.
- Traditions of the elders (Kyrgyz: *karinın kebi, ata-enelerin sözdörü* Kazakh: *aqsaqaldardıń sözderi*).
- Words [that have remained] of the ancestors (*ata-babalardin [kalgan] sözdörü, ata-enelerin sözdörü* Kazakh: *ata-babalarımız sözderi, atalar sözi*, Salar: *urux sözi*,³⁴ Tatar: *babaylar söze*, Turkmen: *ata sözleri*³⁵).
- Exemplary sayings (Altai,³⁶ Khakas and Shor: *ülger sös*³⁷).

The list above—while hardly exhaustive—demonstrates that wisdom words, those passed from one generation to the next and originating from the ancestors or some source of similar authority, have many correlating terms. The most widespread term in use among the Central Asian Muslim Turks is *maqal*. According to Safo Matjon and Sharofjon Sariyev, the term derives from Arabic and means “expression” or “saying”.³⁸ For Uzbeks, these expressions originate from direct quotes of wise men and life experiences, and are delivered as short phrases of exact and complete meanings, equivalent to Kazakh and Kyrgyz renderings for *naqıl sözdörü* (Kyrgyz, wise words).³⁹ Quite often, these single lines can be found paired with *matal*s (Uzbek, Kazakh: *mätel*), phrases allegorical in nature,⁴⁰ and often mistranslated as riddles by Kyrgyz, Turkmen and Kazakhs.⁴¹

It is precisely because of their sacrosanctity, and also for practical reasons, that Turks have placed great importance on the esthetics of delivery. Namely, word expressions are governed by eloquence and conciseness, as we see in a Kazakh verse:

Atalar sözi — aqildin közi
Sözdiñ körki — maqal
*Babalar sözi — danaliq közi.*⁴²

The words of the forefathers are the essence of the mind
The beauty of words is the *maqal*
The words of the ancestors are the essence of intellect (wisdom).

The same words are also dispensed among Uzbeks:

*Otalar sozi-aqlning ko'zi.*⁴³

The words of the forefathers are the essence of the mind.

*So'z ko'rki-maqol.*⁴⁴

The beauty of words is the *maqal*.

Eloquence is measured by precision and delicateness of language. In essence, a Turkic speaker of word expressions must command oratory skills in order to convey messages with well-thought out meanings. This requires the usage of a vast reservoir of literary techniques: rhythm, assonance, alliteration and metaphorical illustrations. Mukhamet Shayakhmetov, author of the auto-biographical *The Silent Steppe*, privileges readers with witnessing an assemblage of elders reciting wisdom counsel in the midst of collectivization during the early Soviet era: “And anyone with a sensitive ear,” he declares, “and curious mind could certainly learn a great deal from their eloquence ... by their [elders’] brilliant figures of speech, their astute comparisons ... from memory.”⁴⁵ Historically, the nomadic Turks of Central and Inner Asia have demonstrated a longstanding proclivity for poetic eloquence in delivering messages, advice and admonitions. A prime example can be taken from Ibn Sina (980–1037 CE), a philosopher who was most likely of Turkic origin⁴⁶ and who wrote a canon on medicine

in poetic style. According to Ibn Sina, “The art of healing cures the body, but the art of poetry cures the soul.”⁴⁷

The earliest surviving record of Turkic wisdoms, the Tonyukuk Inscription, corroborates the Turkic use of artful rhetoric while speaking wisdom expressions. Advising his qagan, Ilteris, to preemptively strike their enemies, Tonyukuk reflects upon a wisdom expression for guidance that is musical as well as it is stentorian.

*Yuyqa ärkli toplayalı uçuz ämis,
Yinçgä ärklig üzgäli uçuz;
Yuyqa qalın bolsar toplayuluq alp ärmis,
Yinçgä yoyun bolsar üzgölük alp ärmis.*

That which is thin is easy to bend, they say;
That which is tender is easy to break.
If thin becomes thick, it is hard to bend it, they say;
And if tender becomes tough, it is hard to break it, they say.⁴⁸

The harmonic qualities of the lines are pointed out by John R. Krueger, who identified its initial alliteration and assonance with the alternating “Yu”-“yin” coupling. The lines additionally possess mid-line alliteration and assonance (*toplayalı/üzgäli* and repeating *bolsar*), and end rhymes.⁴⁹ Robert Dankoff furthers that the typical Turkic wisdom expression also exhibits syntactic parallelism, a characteristic Arienne Dwyer appraises as “largely metaphorical ... setting up relations between entities.”⁵⁰ As for Tonyukuk’s lines, the breakage of what are thin and tender in one verse is paralleled to the sinew of what are thick and tough in the next.⁵¹ Pitting together contrasting ideas laterally magnifies the urgency of the general truth. The *Kutadgu Bilig*, however, abandons the strict standard of alliteration demonstrated in the early inscription. Skipping over the initial alliteration found in most Turkic wisdom words—although a few of his verses do benefit from its use—Hajip largely relies on assonance and end rhymes.

Kimi sevsə aybı kör erdem bolur,

*kimi sevmese erdem ökte bolur*⁵²

When someone loves someone, he/she becomes blind to his/her flaws
When the man loves no one, he/she (his/her character) becomes proud

A recently recorded surviving wisdom expression of the Salars, however, demonstrates the richness of alliteration in all three places, coupled with sound assonance.

*Bih dagh baxinde bulut ilenner,
hən kix baxinde gaqi ilenner.*

Clouds wind around a high mountain top
Words wind around a great man.⁵³

As also seen in the Tonyukuk Inscription, the above referenced Salar wisdom words also exhibit parallelism. The Salar expression reveals a general truth by establishing dynamic relationships between the two clauses on either side of the comma: “clouds” and “mountain top” with “words” and “a great man”. A similar parallel structure is evidenced among the Western Yugur with the following:

Man grows old but not his heart,
the tree grows old but not its root.⁵⁴

While it is quite typical of Turkic wisdom words to exhibit parallelism of some kind, “a minority are characterized by ellipsis, where an element is omitted,” as Arienne Dwyer shows us.⁵⁵ This is shown in a Kazakh wisdom word, “*Käriniñ sözi—däri* (The words of the elders are (like) medicine).”⁵⁶

Aside from eloquence, another salient characteristic of wisdom words are their conciseness. According to T. Mirzayev, A. Musoqulov and B. Sarimsoqov, “*Chin so’z—mo’tabar, yaxshi so’z qisqa-muxtasar* (True words are trustworthy, and good words are

short and concise).⁵⁷ Staying true to the philosophy that brevity is king, wisdom expressions are generally measured by seven or eleven syllables, and even those that are not, such as those from the Khakas, consist of only its elemental parts: “a metaphor and its application ... or of two parallel statements.”⁵⁸

Breviloquence, as Azamat Sadykov, author of “Wisdom Words of the Forefathers,” reminds us, inspires and impresses words to heart.⁵⁹ The usage of long, over-drawn words is not only intimidating, but distracts from the urgency of the message. Dankoff even hypothesized that the typical Turkic wisdom expression “has its origin in ... highly charged speech.”⁶⁰ The most compelling message, therefore, is more effective as a brief word. A succinctly worded message—laconic and eloquent in presentation—allows for easy memorization and recalling, necessities for nomadic groups steeped in oral traditions.

Turkic propensity for terseness points to an underlying sentiment that someone of good morals and upbringing is modest in speaking. Turkmens, for example, frown upon loquacity.⁶¹ From a young age, for example, Turkmen young are taught to “Listen twice, speak once.” In sum, proper behavior dictates one to follow the sons of Oguz Khan in speaking “succinctly like a prince.”⁶² This view is not confined only to Turkmens, but is cultivated across the Turkic world. The *Kutadgu Bilig*, for example, directs audiences on the subject with the following words:

*üküş sözleme söz birer sözle az
tümen söz tügenin bu bir sözde yaz*⁶³

Do not speak much, speak little with words one by one,
Write in one word instead of a clutter (=knots) of many words

An Uzbek version of the lines included within a textbook for school children similarly instructs, “*So’zni kop so’zlamay, sizlab ayt, oz-oz / / Tuman so’z tugunin shu bir so’zda yoz*

(Do not speak much, speak with respect (with the respected “siz”), little-little // Write in one word instead of a clutter (=knots) of many words).⁶⁴ We can even find comparable teachings amongst the Kyrgyz, who qualify a wise man as listening much and speaking very little (*alar köp süilöböit, köp ugat*).⁶⁵

1. Ilse Laude-Cirtautas, “Central Asian Turkic Elders: Past and Present,” *Journal of Central and Inner Asian Dialogue* 2 (Winter 2015): 1. www.jciadinfo.org

2. Talat Tekin, *A Grammar of Orkhon Turkic* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University, 1968), 10, 249–253.

3. Sir Gerard Clauson, *An Etymological Dictionary of Pre-Thirteenth-Century Turkish* (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1972), 782. Clauson’s details on *sa:v* (*sab*) are quite valuable. He distinguishes between the early meanings of the word from *sö:z* (*söz*). See also Denis Sinor, “Samoyed and Ugric Elements in Old Turkic,” *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 3 no. 4 (1979): 769.

4. Yusuf Hass Hajib, *Kutadğu Bilig*, ed. Mustafa S. Kaçalin (T. C. Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Kütüphaneler ve Yayımlar Genel Müdürlüğü e-kitap), <http://ekitap.kulturturizm.gov.tr/Eklenti/10716,yusufhashacibkutadgubiligmustafakacalinpdf.pdf>. See page 78, line 1358.

5. Ibid., 782.

6. Yusuf Hass Hajib, *Kutadğu Bilig*, *Sab* appears far fewer times than *söz*, which seems to be the most iterated word in the text with 1300 uses in one form or another.

7. Tekin, *A Grammar of Orkhon Turkic*, 235, 267, east side, line 26.

8. Ibid., 231, 263, south side, line 1.

9. The translator seems to have augmented the meaning of the original Old Turkic text for stylistic reasons. There is nothing in the original text meaning or even referring to a “throne.”

10. Ibid., 263. Turkish should read as “Türük” or “Türk”.

11. Ibid., 232, 263, east side line 1.

12. Chingiz Aitmatov, *The White Ship*, trans. Mirra Ginsburg (New York: Crown Publishers, 1972), 160.

13. Caroline Humphrey and Altanhuu Hürelbaatar, “Regret as a Political Intervention: An Essay in the Historical Anthropology of the Early Mongols,” *Past and Present* no. 186 (Feb. 2005): 9.

14. Kazakh national anthem

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15. Galsan Tschinag, *The Blue Sky*, trans. Katharina Rout (Minneapolis, MN: Milkweed Editions, 2007), 11.
16. Talat Tekin, *A Grammar of Orkhon Turkic* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University, 1968), 233, 261. See also a translation of the Kül Tegin Inscription in E. Denison Ross and Vilhelm Thomsen, "The Orkhon Inscriptions: Being a Translation of Professor Vilhelm Thomsen's Final Danish Rendering," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies, University of London* 5 no. 4 (1930): 862.
17. It should also be noted that from the verb stem, *sab/sav/saw* comes *sabči/savči/sawči*, meaning prophet, or messenger, and used to represent the Prophet Muhammad, a divine messenger of Islam. The term is used in both *Kutadgu Bilig* and the *Divan-i-Lugat-i-Turk*.
18. Janice Raymond, *Mongolian Proverbs: A Window Into Their World*, trans. Otgonjargal Oidovdorj (Eugene, Oregon: Resource Publications, 2014), 8.
19. Susan A. Crate, "Ohuokhai: Sakha's Unique Integration of Social Meaning and Movement," *Journal of American Folklore* 119 no. 472 (Spring 2006): 168.
20. Claudia Römer, "The Fox in Turkic Proverbs," in *Der Fuchs in Kultur, Religion und Folklore Zentral – und Ostasiens*, ed. Harmut Walravens. Vol 1 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2001), 181. Robert Dankoff counts the inclusion of 270 wise sayings. See Robert Dankoff, "Inner Asian Wisdom Traditions in the Pre-Mongol Period," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 101 no. 1 (Jan-Mar. 1981): 87.
21. Robert Dankoff, "Qarakhanid Literature and the Beginnings of Turco-Islamic Culture," ed. H. B. Paksoy, Eurasia Research Center, accessed November 25, 2015, <http://eurasia-research.com/erc/004cam.htm>.
22. Yusuf Hass Hajib, *Kutadgu Bilig*, 4, lines 10–11.
23. Robert Dankoff, "Inner Asian Wisdom Traditions in the Pre-Mongol Period," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 101 no. 1 (Jan-Mar. 1981): 94.
24. Yusuf Hass Hajib, *Kutadgu Bilig*, 34, line 510.
25. Ibid., 14, line 110.
26. Ibid., 22, line 270.
27. Ibid., 36, line 555.
28. Ibid., 62, line 1048.
29. Ibid., 34, line 503.
30. Ibid., 64, line 1184.
31. Arienne Dwyer "Uprooted and Replanted: Recontextualizing a Genre," KU Scholar Works, University of Kansas. Accessed November 25, 2015, <http://www.temoa.info/node/159873>.
32. *İyik sözdörü* refers to sacred words borrowed from *hadiths*, Quranic verses and the ancestors (*ata-babalardin [kalgan] sözdörü*).
33. Claudia Römer, "The Fox in Turkic Proverbs," 180.
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34. Dwyer, "Uprooted and Replanted," 7. *Urux Sozi* actually refers to the Salar wedding speech that literally translates, "words of the ancestors." A unique feature of these versed-rhythmic speeches is the tendency to include words of wisdom that have passed from one generation to the next.

35. Ibid., 7.

36. Römer, "The Fox in Turkic Proverbs," 180.

37. Martin Roos, Hans Nugteren and Zinaida Waibel, "Khakas and Shor Proverbs and Proverbial Sayings," in *Exploring the Eastern Frontiers of Turkic*, eds. Marcel Erdal and Irina Nevskaya (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2006, 158–159).

38. Safo Matjon and Sharofjon Sariyev, *O'zbek Adabiyot* (Tashkent: O'rta maktab, akademik litsey va kasb-hunar kollejarining o'quvchilari hamd oliy o'quv yurtiga kuruvchi abituriyentlar uchun qo'llanma, 2009), 10.

39. Ibid., 10. See also Qidirali Sattarov, *Ortaliq Aziya Qazaqtariniñ Maqal-mätelderi*, vol. 6 (Almaty: Tanbaly Baspasy, 2010), 17.

40. Ibid., 10. See also Qidirali Sattarov, *Ortaliq Aziya Qazaqtariniñ Maqal-mätelderi*, where *maqals* and *matalis* seem to be viewed as as two complimentary parts of a whole.

41. Based on conversations with friends and students of Central Asia.

42. "Atalar sözi-Aqildin közi [The words of the forefathers are the essence of the mind], Tarbie.KZ: Qazaqstandin Pedagogikalıq Jurnalı, accessed December 2015, <http://www.tarbie.kz/7171>.

43. T. Mirzev B. Sarimsoqov, et al. *O'zbek Xalq Maqollari* [Uzbek national *maqols*] (Tashkent: G'afur G'ulom Nomidagi Adabiyot va Sanat Nashriyoti, 1989), ???

44. T. Mirzayev, A. Musoqulov and B. Sarimsoqov, *O'zbek Halq Maqollari* [Uzbek national *maqols*] (Sharq Nashriyot-Matbaa Aksiyadorlik Kompaniyasi Bosh Tahririyati, 2005), 83.

45. Mukhamet Shayakmetov, *The Silent Steppe: The Memoir of a Kazakh Nomad under Stalin*, trans. Jan Butler (New York: Overlook/Rooker, 2006), 22.

46. See Aydin M. Sayili, "Was Ibni Sina an Iranian or A Turk," *Isis* 31 no. 1 (Nov., 1939). The article traces the ethnological origin of Ibn Sina. See also, Ibn Sina, *Avicenna on Theology*, trans. Arthur J. Arberry (London: Butler & Tanner Ltd., 1951). The short publication provides an auto-biography, wherein Ibn Sina gives the place of his father's birth: Balkh. Balkh was a predominantly a Turkic city within what is now Northern Afghanistan. The city's name derives from Khan and Baliq, both Turkic terms. The philosopher's composition, "Poem of the Soul," p.77, should also be noted. In it he mentions of a woman separated by her homeland and "the tents where once she dwelt." The poem reads as a type of *koşok*, a traditional mourning genre also sung by

other Turkic groups, like the Kazakhs, as observed by Thomas G. Winner in *The Oral Art and Literature of the Kazakhs of Russian Central Asia*.

47. Muhamad Asimov, "Poetic and Socio-ethic Views of Ibn Sina," *Indian Journal of History of Science* 21 no. 3 (1986): 258.

48. Tekin, *A Grammar of Orkhon Turkic*, 250, 284, south side, lines 6 and 7.

49. John R. Krueger, "The Earliest Turkic Poem," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 82 no. 4 (Oct-Dec 1962): 557.

50. Dwyer, "Uprooted and Replanted," 1.

51. Dankoff, "Inner Asian Wisdom Traditions," 89.

52. Yusuf Hass Hajib, *Kutadğu Bilig*, 34, line 534.

53. Ma Wei, Ma Jianzhong and Kevin Stuart, *The Folklore of China's Islamic Salar Nationality* (Lewiston, New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2001), 169.

54. "Proverbs," The Western Yugur Steppe, accessed November 2015, <http://members.home.nl/marcmarti/yugur/proverb/proverb.htm>.

55. Dwyer, "Uprooted and Replanted," 2.

56. *Qazaqtıñ maqal-matelderi* [Proverbs and sayings of the Kazakh] (Almaty: Köshpendiler Baspası, 2002), 28.

57. Mirzayev, Musoqulov and Sarimsoqov, *O'zbek Halq Maqollari*, 62.

58. Roos, Nugteren and Waibel, "Khakas and Shor Proverbs," 159.

59. In conversation with the author.

60. Dankoff. "Inner Asian Wisdom Traditions," 89.

61. Based on the author's observations.

62. Saparmyrat Turkmenbashy, *Ruhnama: Reflections on the Spiritual Values of the Turkmen*, (Ashgabat: Printing Center of Turkmenistan, 2003), 81. The example arises from a genealogical tree the former president of Turkmenistan included in his work. A descendent of Oguz Khan, the author explains, Begdill's name translates one who "speaks succinctly like a prince," and as a son from the line of the Turkmen forefather, he is an exemplary model for Turkmen to emulate.

63. Yusuf Hass Hajib, *Kutadğu Bilig*, 17, line 172.

64. Abduroziq Rafiyev and Nazira G'ulomova, *Ona Tili Va Adabiyot* [The mother tongue and literature] (Tashkent: Sharq Nashriyot-Matbaa Aksiyadorlik Kompaniyasi Bosh Tahriryati, 2009), 61.

65. "Akilduulardın 10 özgöçölügü [Ten peculiarities of a wise person]," Formula KG, accessed December 20, 2015, <http://formula.kg/akyilduulardyn-10-zg-ch-l-g>.

Translations

“STRONGMAN CURLY-BLACK, SON-OF-A-BEAR”^{**}

A Tuvan Folktale

Translated from the Tuvan Original by Stefan Kamola (Princeton, NJ)

Адыг оглу ыйгылак кара мөге деп тоолда адыг адалыг куйда төрүттүнгөн бир кончуг күштүг маадыр үч аза-биле тулушуп олардан үч кадай кижээ хосталга бээр. Бир дугаар удурланыкчы боду-биле авазыны куйга тудуп хоругдаан адаздыр. Оон кажапкааш ийи эш-өөр-биле таныжыпкааш, Адыг оглу алдыы орандан келген шулбусту алдыы оранга ойладып өлүрер. Ынчалза-даа үстүү оранга дедир келип шыдавас. Адыг оглунуң база бир албыс-шулбусту өлүргениниң соонда, Хаан-Херети куш ону дузалап үстүү оранга чедирип беер. Чуртунга келип ава-биле кадайын тып чурттап чоруй барып-тыр оо.

Key Words: Tuva; Folk-tales; Translations of Tuvan folklore into English

Introductionary Remarks

Adig oglu iygilak-kara möge (Stongman Curly-Black, Son-of-a Bear) is a Tuvan reflex of a folktale pattern widely shared among the Turkic peoples of Inner Asia. The story of the hairy hero, accompanied by two or more assistants, who undergoes an underground test of enclosure and escape while associating with maternal spirits and their daughters is found also in the Kyrgyz epic *Er Töshtük*, and is thoroughly treated in its role as a story of communal origin by Devin DeWeese in his discussion of Baba

^{**} Due to space limitations, the original text of “Strongman Curly-Black, Son-of-a-Bear” in Tuvan could not be included with the translation. The original in its entirety is available at the University of Washington Suzzallo & Allen Libraries. See Z. B. Samdan, *Tuvinskie narodnye skazki* (Novosibirsk: VO “Nauka”, 1994), 226–246. Alternatively, the folktale in its original Tuvan is available upon email request to info@jciadinform.org.

Tükles.¹ Without embarking on a full comparison of mythological themes, it is worth noting some features of the Tuvan version, which is notably different from the account of Baba Tükles treated by DeWeese. The most evident of these differences is apparent already in the name of the story. The Tuvan hero is the son of a human mother and a father bear, and he shares physical and character traits with both species. Tuvan tales tend to retain a higher degree of animistic and zoomorphic elements than the tales of the Turkic Muslims farther to the south and west. This animism appears in the figure of the hero and his companions, who are associated in act and in name (and in ultimate fate, in the case of poor Long-Blond) with certain features of the natural world. The various spirits and demons Son-of-a-Bear encounters on his semi-shamanic journey likewise reflect the magical cosmology still just barely apparent behind the human and Muslim perspectives of the Baba Tükles account.

Another curious element of the Son-of-a-Bear story is how it repeats one folk motif in three different forms. This motif is the intercession by the hero to free a female spirit and her children from the ravages of a demon. In the framing narrative of the story, Son-of-a-Bear frees his mother from his own oppressive father and then provides for her needs himself. How he comes by the resources to do this is the matter of the inner narrative, in which he replays the motif two other times. First, he kills the demon Bearish-Black, whom he has chased into the underworld. Later, after freeing the camp of his new wife and mother-in-law from the oppression of Bearish-Black, Son-of-a-Bear must kill a fifteen-headed serpent as it threatens to eat the hatchlings of the Khan-Hereti bird. In the first case, all the characters involved are portrayed as more-or-less human (though one seemingly idiomatic turn of phrase ascribes tails to the underworld women); in the second reflection of the storyline, the mother, daughters, and demon are all much more beastly. In this way, the two parallel underworld feats of Son-of-a-Bear reflect the hero's own hybrid pedigree.

In translating this tale, I have tried to stay as faithful to the Tuvan text as possible, perhaps at the occasional expense of perfectly readable English. A quick glance at the story reveals a series of unusual phrases and exclamations, particularly in wrapping up short narrative units. These correspond to a rich set of discursive particles, phrases, and sentences that constitute an important aspect of the language of Tuvan folklore. Where I have not been able to preserve the exact meaning of these tags (often they have no definite meaning), I have tried at least to maintain a sense of their lexical or syntactic structure. This I have done not for the sake of literal translation so much as to give an impression of the strange and artificial nature of the language of folklore.

In a number of episodes of high action, particularly in the wrestling scenes between Son-of-a-Bear or his companions and Bearish-Black, the Tuvan text is unclear about who is doing what to whom. I have preserved this ambiguity—and hopefully some of the sense of fervid activity that it imparts—rather than disrupt the text with inordinate insertions. In performance, the storyteller likely would have distinguished characters by gesture and voice, which cannot be reproduced in text. I can only offer the clue that, in scenes of hand-to-hand combat, actions of grasping, spinning, throwing, and smashing are typically performed by Son-of-a-Bear or his companions, while their opponents do most of the complaining, escaping, and running away.

I have tried as much as possible to preserve parallel and formulaic speech, an essential element of effective storytelling in any tradition. The most notable examples of broader formulaic patterns are the story's opening and closing lines. The story begins with a type of introduction widely familiar to Turkic and Mongolian stories. It sets the story in a mythic past, and may represent an archaic formal invocation relating the creation of the world.² The ending includes a narrative denouement found in other

Tuvan tales. I have tried to preserve the literal sense of the final phrases, though even in Tuvan the sense is obscure and plays a secondary role to the rhythmic patterning of this prolonged “happily ever after.”³ The storyteller’s final utterance returns him, and us, from the semi-magical world of the tale to the real world at the time of performance.

“Strongman Curly-Black, Son-of-a-Bear”

So then, at the nape of early times, at the nose of former times, back when flat things flew around and round things rolled, when Milk Lake⁴ was a wormy puddle and Mount Sümbür was just a hill, there lived a bad woman, oh yes there did. That woman went to a rich khan and asked for work. Didn’t she become a servant, tending the kettle, and taking the name Servant Wife.

So then, what’s more, that rich khan was living in a place near a forest. In the evening, when that same Servant Wife went for water, a bear snuck up on her and, grabbing the woman, he held her tight and ran away, oh yes he did.

So then. There he went; and he took her to his den; and he made her his wife, then he went and he took her to a big cave. When he left during the day for food, he shut up its mouth with a black stone as big as a three-year-old cow. On the next day when he went, he shut up the mouth of the cave with a black stone big as a four-year-old cow. She learned to eat raw the meat the bear killed and brought back, and didn’t they live together for a certain amount of time.

So then, what’s more, she got pregnant. Then she gave birth; a boy child was born. The boy who was born was such a fast growing thing that after one day he could say, “I’m one year old;” after two days he could say, “I’m two years old;” after three days he could say, “I’m three years old.” Wasn’t it so.

So then. The boy started to play and to walk. They lived for another certain amount of time. The boy grew sad. One day he asked his mother. When he said, “Why do we sit in a dark place, Mother? Why is it that the mouth of this cave we live in is shut, Mother?” and she said, “Your father thinks we’ll leave, he shuts it up,” and when he said, “Where does he think we’ll go, that he shuts it, Mother?” didn’t she say, “I’m a person who eats cooked food; your sire, a fang-toothed bear-beast, grabbed me and brought me here and made me his wife—so it is, my son.”

So then. The boy ran out; and he took hold of the black stone big as a four-year-old cow; and he threw it as if he had taken hold of a knucklebone; and he played and played outside and then came in.⁵

When he said, “Why don’t you play outside or go out, Mother?” didn’t she say “It’s forbidden, my son. If your father the bear sees that we’ve gone outside, he’ll take us both and eat us. Bring your stone back and shut it, my son.”

So then, what’s more, he brought it back and shut it. In the evening the bear came and, tremendously angry, he said, “Who moved and shifted the stone at the mouth of the cave? Did you move it? Now, if you move the cave door tomorrow, I will kill you both and I will eat your meat,” he said, and skulked about.

His wife said, “How now—we’re not that strong—could we move and shift it. The land, the cliff-rock is rotting; that’s what set it moving and shifting,” she answered.

The next day again he shut up the mouth of the cave with a black stone big as a four-year-old cow and he went away. The boy sat there and didn’t he say, “Why is there such an angry bear man, being angry? He goes out and around splendidly with fresh air where the light is good, Mother. Let’s go to your home camp, Mother.”

So then, what's more. "It's forbidden, my son, he'll find us out and he'll eat us up."

He said, "What's all that, how can he be as strong as I? Let's go."

"If that's so, how can you go among people without boots or clothes? I'll make you boots and clothes," she said, and when the bear came she said, "Bring the skins of the animals you are killing," and when he brought them, she prepared them and sewed a coat, boots, and clothes, oh yes she did indeed.

So then, what's more, once when the bear went hunting, he said, "Hey, let's go, Mother," and he grabbed the black stone big as a four-year-old cow and he threw it and he grabbed his mother and they went away, oh yes they did indeed.

So then, what's more, while the two of them were walking together, the bear found them out and ran after them, tracking them, and caught up with them. The mother grew afraid and said, "Didn't I say so, now there's trouble, now it is we're to be killed."

"Why do you fear, Mother?" he said and he dashed off and he grabbed the bear's two ears and he spun him and spun him and he said, "Now don't come after us this way," and he threw him into the forest. The bear ran away, oh yes he did indeed.

So then, what's more, there they went and they came near a camp with people. Didn't he say, "Hey, Mother, when going among people, one's father should have a name, one's horse should have hair. What is my name that I can be called, Mother?"

So then, what's more, she said, "That's true, my son," and she said, "may your name be Strongman Curly-Black, Son-of-a-Bear, my son."

“So it is, Mother,” he said. The woman spoke to her son; when she said, “There is no person as good and brave, as strong and powerful, as beautiful and sweet as you. Going among people, there is only one awkward thing,” he said, “What thing is that, Mother?”

Didn’t she say, “Your ears are like the ears of a bear.”

So then, what’s more. Didn’t he say, “If that’s the case, you stay here, you won’t starve, you won’t thirst, Mother. I’ll go away and find a friend and a pal, an older and a younger brother and I’ll get rich with meat and herds and I’ll come and get you, Mother.”

“How do you think you’ll do this, my son?” she said.

“It is so, Mother,” he said and when he ran around her, she turned into a stone statue, oh yes she did indeed.⁶

So then, he went away and when he came to a wooded forest place with trees and rocks, a tall blond man was lifting up a larch and he planted the larch into the ground. Strongman Curly-Black, Son-of-a-Bear came up to the man who was lifting up larches and when he said, “What are you doing here, my friend, lifting larches?” didn’t he say, “Since nobody is as strong as I, and since I asked the people what a strong thing to do was and they said it was hard to lift up larches, I’m a guy who lifts up larches. It’s not hard, it’s easy.”

So then, what’s more, when he said, “You try to lift one up, my friend,” Strongman Curly-Black, Son-of-a-Bear grabbed a larch and he lifted up an entire grove at once, and he planted it to make an entire forest; wasn’t he a hundred times stronger than the tall blond man who had been lifting larches.

So then, what's more, he spoke, saying, "What do we do when two bold men show up together in one place?"

Strongman Curly-Black, Son-of-a-Bear sat and he said, "Let's be like two brothers born from one mother," and they became brothers and didn't they go on along.

So then, what's more, they went along and when they came to a place a big thick man was lifting up a cliff and he set the cliff down in its place, lifted another cliff, and one by one was setting up cliffs. They came up and when they asked, "Why are you rooting up these rocks and cliffs?" didn't he say, "As for me, my strength is intense, the strength of the people doesn't match it, how strong; when I asked the people what a hard thing to do was since they said it was hard to lift cliffs, I'm a guy who lifts up cliffs. It's not hard, it's easy."

So then, what's more. Didn't he say, "How strong are you two? Try to lift a cliff."

So then, what's more. The Larch-lifter grabbed hold, and couldn't lift the cliff. Strongman Curly-Black, Son-of-a-Bear grabbed hold and he lifted up a massive cliff and he set the cliff down in its place.

So then, what's more. Didn't Strongman Curly-Black, Son-of-a-Bear speak, saying, "Three bold men, what'll we do?"

So then, what's more, when his two friends said, "What'll we do indeed," Strongman Curly-Black, Son-of-a-Bear sat and when he said, "What to do, shall we be three brothers born from one mother," they said, "Why not, let's be three brothers indeed," and they took an oath and they became three brothers born from a mother, oh yes they did indeed.

So then, what else happened: they talked together and spoke together and asked “What are our names and our nicknames?” and they took names: the biggest of them was Strongman Curly-Black, Son-of-a-Bear, smaller than him was Strongman Long-Blond the Larch, and the smallest was Strongman Thick-Black the Cliff, and didn’t they go on along.

So then, what’s more, when they went along, there was a great river. At the river stood a great white yurt; the smoke of that yurt was billowing out. When they arrived, the yurt was empty—there was no one there. Food was ready. When they searched inside and outside the yurt, there was nothing. When they searched the area, there was no person and no animals there. They ate the food and they fell asleep. There was no noise. Then in the morning they got up and said, “Now where will we go?”

Strongman Curly-Black, Son-of-a-Bear sat and said, “There is no need to leave here; we’ll live in this yurt, find the owner of this yurt, and if need be, two people will go hunting all day, and one person will tend the yurt. Who of us will tend the yurt?”

Strongman Long-Blond the Larch said, “I,” and stayed to tend the yurt.

Two men went off hunting.

As Strongman Long-Blond sat there, something outside rang out and then a fire started to blaze, crackling. When he ran outside, there was nothing there, but a fire had been set, the fire was going. When he looked here and there, there was nothing there. Someone was walking around in the yurt. When he ran inside the yurt, there was nothing there, but outside there was some noise. When he slowly peeked out from the base of the yurt wall, a great big man with a copper nose and copper nails sat heating his copper nose and copper nails in the fire.

“Man has invaded his yurt; man should be food—swindlers devoured. One is left in the yurt, left to tend the yurt, when my nose gets to burning, I’ll skewer him and kill him,” he sat threatening.

While he sat watching, his nose and nails began to burn, he jumped up and coming into the yurt he caught him by the two wrists. When he tried to stab him with his nose, he grabbed him without being stabbed and spinning and spinning, when he was about to throw him down he broke loose and ran away. When he ran after him, he ran into a cave.

In the evening, when they showed up, the two friends showed up with fortune, having killed some game.

When they asked, “So, what’s to know?” didn’t he say, “There’s nothing to know.”

So then, they ate the food and fell asleep. In the morning, Strongman Thick-Black the Cliff was left to tend the yurt. The two friends went hunting. As Strongman Thick-Black sat in the yurt, someone walked around outside and then a fire started to blaze, crackling. When he went outside, there was nothing there, but a dry fire was going. When he looked here and there, someone was walking around in the yurt. When he ran inside the yurt, there was nothing there, but outside there was some noise. When he slowly peeked out from the base of the yurt wall, a great big person with a copper nose and copper nails sat heating his copper nose.

“What things are these? Man has invaded his yurt; man should be food – swindlers devoured. One is left in the yurt to sit and tend the yurt. At least there’s this; what is a single person? I’ll get my nose to burning and I’ll run him through and eat him,” he sat threatening.

When his nose started burning, and when he entered the yurt, he grabbed him by the two wrists and held him. Spinning and spinning, when he was about to throw him down he broke loose and ran away. When he ran after him, he ran into a cave.

In the evening, the two friends show up with fortune and bounty, having killed some game.

When they asked, “So, what’s to know?” didn’t he say “There’s nothing to know.”

So then, what’s more, they ate the meat and they went to sleep and in the morning Strongman Curly-Black, Son-of-a-Bear was left to tend the yurt. The two friends went hunting. While Strongman Curly-Black sat in the yurt, someone walked around outside and then a fire started to burn, crackling. When he went outside, there was nothing there, but a fire was going. Looking here and there, he said, “Where’s he gone off to?” and while he was looking, there was some noise in the yurt. When he came into the yurt, there was nothing; outside there was some noise. When he slowly peeked out from the base of the yurt wall, a great big person with a copper nose and copper nails sat heating his copper nose in the fire outside.

“Man has invaded his yurt—man is food, terrible swindlers devoured. Even now I will run through the one left behind in the yurt with my nose and eat him, just wait. The ones left behind yesterday and the day before—strength failed,” he sat threatening angrily.

When his nose started burning, and when he was walking into the yurt, what did the man hiding behind the door do but he grabbed his two little feet and he dragged him outside, and twirling him and twirling him when he was about to smash him on the ground, when he was about to get away, he didn’t let him go but he tore off his two

feet, and without feet he ran away, and when he chased after him, he went into a cave without being caught. When he went in after him, there was an entryway to the lower world. He entered the lower world, and didn't he go down.

So then, what's more, in the evening his friends arrived. They also arrived with bounty, having killed some game. Strongman Curly-Black, Son-of-a-Bear scolded his two younger brothers. He said, "What good is it that we are like three brothers born from a mother, if your intentions are bad? Why did you conceal the demon, saying it was nothing?" sitting angrily, oh yes he was.

So then, what's more, he spoke to his two brothers, saying, "We need a lot of rope right away." He cut the skin of the dead game and didn't he stand there making a lot of rope.

So then, what's more, he tied all the rope together and Strongman Curly-Black, Son-of-a-Bear spoke to his brothers.

"OK, I will go down into the lower world. When I go in, won't I tie the end of the rope to the ground where I land in the lower world. You also tie down the end here, and when I am to come up, and when I shake the rope, you will pull me up. If I find a lot of treasure, first won't I send up the treasure," he commanded them and he took hold of the rope and didn't he go down into the lower world.

So then, what's more, he landed in the lower world and he tied down the rope and when he went walking, there was a single large white yurt with herds around it. When he entered the yurt, there sat a mother and three marvelously beautiful girls. The oldest girl sat combing her hair, welcoming the guest, and crying quietly. Weren't the tears pouring from her eyes.

So then, what's more, Strongman Curly-Black, Son-of-a-Bear spoke, and didn't he ask, "You have very many grown animals, and you yourselves are three sisters, what do you people fear that you sit like this crying?"

So then, what's more, the wife spoke, and didn't she say, "I am a person who gives birth every year; there was a demon named Bearish-Black with copper nose and copper nails living in the lower world, and I am to pay tribute to that demon. Every year he says of one of my daughters, "I will make her my wife, bring her to me," and when I bring her to him, he's such that he kills her and eats her so indeed. He is such that he has gone up into the upper world. We were very happy, and we lived freely. Yesterday that demon came, and he complained that his back and his feet hurt. He showed up groaning and he ordered me to bring him my oldest daughter tomorrow, and he left. Because we are to bring this girl to him we are people who sit here crying and weeping."

So then, what's more, she asked, "Where did you come from, my son?"

Didn't he say, "I came from the upper world. I came after the demon that you just spoke of. Where is that demon? I shall go and kill him, then what will you give me, woman?"

So then, what's more, didn't she say, "If you conquer that demon, you will have this my daughter; you will need supplies and herds, you will take them all, if she goes on living instead of being fed to the demon, life will be so, my son."

So then, what's more, she said, "Inside that river there is a gray house, he is such that he lives there, my son," and she feasted and fed him with honor.

So then, he went, and when he came to the big gray house in the river inside there was groaning. When he ran in, and when he who had been groaning lying on the

bed jumped up, he grabbed him, and smashing him against the wall of the house he killed him, oh yes he did.

So then, what's more, he tore down the walls of the house and he burned them and didn't he come to the woman's camp.

So then, what's more, the woman inquired, and when she said, "What happened, my son," and when he said, "I killed him and I burned the house along with all its outbuildings and I came here," how to describe the happiness of the woman and of the girls, but wasn't it like they stood pounding their little tail to the ground.⁷

So then, what's more, she said, "My Son, who has conquered my demon-monster," and she killed a ram and honored him, feeding him and giving him tea.

Didn't she say, "OK, my Son, which of my daughters will you take, my Son, take the one you want, my Son."

So then, what's more, when he said, "I shall take your youngest daughter. We are three brothers, we are; how would it be if you also gave your oldest and middle daughters, Mother-in-law?" didn't she say, "Well that's something that could be; when three brothers take three sisters, life will be good, my Son; it shall be, it shall come true."

So then, he took her youngest daughter to make her his wife. He made a new yurt and also built yurts for the two daughters. They stayed in that place, living on, and then one morning he spoke to his mother-in-law. When he said, "In my homeland I am a person with an older and a younger brother. I shall return," she said, "How can you not return, my Son," and she went among her herds of sheep and cows and she divided them between her daughters, and she sent them on their way, oh yes she did.

So then, what's more, they went on their way and they came to the rope and he disassembled their gear and first he tied and sent up the gear of the oldest daughter, then he sent up her herds, and after that he sent up the oldest daughter.

He sent her up, saying, "You will be wife for Strongman Thick-Black the Cliff."

After that, he sent up the gear and the herds of the middle daughter, and then he sent up the middle daughter. He sent her up, saying, "You will be wife for Strongman Long-Blond the Larch," and he sent her up, and he sent up his own gear and herds, and after them, having first sent up his wife, he was to go up himself after her.

After the first two daughters to come up, an exceedingly pretty girl came up.

"Who is there left?" they asked.

When she said, "There is still my husband, Strongman Curly-Black, Son-of-a-Bear," and when Strongman Long-Blond the Larch said, "I shall take the last person's beauty for myself, also her herds for myself, gather them up, and make her my wife," and though Strongman Thick-Black the Cliff forbade it, he cut the rope.

It fell back into the lower world, and when there was no way out and not finding an exit, he went off walking. Didn't he come to his mother-in-law's camp.

So then, what's more, when she said, "Where are your people, why have you come back, my Son?" didn't he say, "My people, our herds, and all our gear went up. I grabbed the rope and it fell down and I came back, not finding a way out, Mother-in-law."

So then, what's more, his mother-in-law spoke, and didn't she say, "Now how to get out, my Son? Rest here, and tomorrow when you head due south there is a lake; at the edge of the lake have grown three iron birch trees; in the very middle one of those

trees the Khan-Hereti bird gives birth every year; from the lake a voracious fifteen-headed snake comes out and I've heard it is such that every year it eats so as not to leave any young. Now this is the time for birthing, if you kill that snake, maybe that Khan-Hereti bird can take you up to the upper world. They say that if the bird wants, it is a bird able to carry off even a stallion with its herd, my Son."

So then, what's more, he listened and spent the night, and on the morning when he was about to go, his mother-in-law gave him a bow with a winged arrow. He hung the bow with the winged arrow on his belt and didn't he head off.

So then, what's more, there he went and when he arrived at the edge of the lake, on the edge of the lake there had grown three iron birch trees. In the middle iron birch tree there was a nest as big as the enclosure of a camp. Upwards on that birch tree a voracious fifteen-headed snake was creeping up. Pulling and pulling the bow, when he severed the joint of its fifteen heads, as it tossed and turned and tumbled down, it caused the lake to wave and the ground to quake, oh yes it did.

So then, what's more, it fell down and it went into the lake. The lake turned into red blood. Then when he climbed up the iron birch, there were three terribly large hatchlings. The lowest one down sat there crying. The one above it sat there laughing; the one beyond that sat there singing.

"Why do you sit here, one of you crying, one of you laughing, and one of you singing?" he asked.

Didn't they say, "Below us a voracious fifteen-headed snake came up from the lake, it was to eat us, on the day after tomorrow it was to eat the one of us who sits crying."

So then, what's more, when he said, "I have killed the voracious fifteen-headed snake who was coming up about to eat you," they all three laughed together and said, "Indeed there was a terribly great noise. Our dear brother, may your way be white. Where are you going, brother."

Didn't he say, "I am a person whose home is in the upper world; I came down from there and I failed to return, and I go along not finding a way out."

So then, what's more, they said, "If that's so, brother, wait here, maybe our Mother will bring you up."

While he sat waiting, gradually a wind started to blow.

He said, "What wind is that, Girls?"

They said, "It is the draught of our Mother's wings."

Gradually it started to rain.

He said, "What rain is that, Girls?"

Didn't they say, "It is the tears of our Mother's eyes, thinking that maybe one of us has been eaten."

So then, what's more, they said, "When our Mother is happy, she is bad at heart," and they said, "At first, don't be seen, Brother."

They hid him under their wing. Soon their mother arrived and she landed, causing the iron birch tree to shake. She said, "How are you all here and well? How has your lake turned into red blood?"

When they said, "A person named Strongman Curly-Black, Son-of-a-Bear came from the upper world and he went and killed the voracious fifteen-headed snake," she asked, "Why did this person come? Where did he go?"

When they said, "He started to return up to the upper world, and he said 'I'll go this way,' and that way he went. We don't know where he's gone," she took off flying, causing the iron birch tree to shake.

Soon she came back. Didn't she say, "He's not in the lower land, where could he have gone? We would bring back the one who helped us, to set things right."

So then, what's more, they said, "If that's so, here he is," and when they lifted up their wing, there sat Strongman Curly-Black, Son-of-a-Bear.

"Oh my," she said and she accidentally swallowed him.

When the girls said, "What have you done? He's not an evil person, not our enemy; he won new life for us, he killed our enemy," and when she threw up, didn't he appear as a person even more beautiful and stronger than before.

So then, what's more, they sat asking each other's health and conversing. When she said, "From where have you thus come," didn't he say, "In the upper world I am a person called Strongman Curly-Black, Son-of-a-Bear. A demon who was in the upper world was defeated and fled to the lower world. I came chasing him and I killed him and when I was to go up, they cut my rope, and I go around as a person not finding a way out."

So then, what's more, she said, "Every year I give birth in this iron birch tree. Every year a voracious fifteen-headed snake eats them up. When I begin to build a nest in another tree, there is no tree that can hold me, you are brave to kill this snake. Let us

be allies. If something from the upper world attacks me, you will know; and if something from the lower world attacks you, I shall know,” and they took an oath.

Didn’t she say, “I shall deliver you to the upper world, I can carry people as well, but while flying to the upper world, I am such that I will get hungry. There are many ducks sunning themselves on the edge of the lake, go and bring some of them.”

Strongman Curly-Black, Son-of-a-Bear went and he killed more than ten ducks and he returned.

Khan-Hereti spoke, she said, “While I am flying, you sit and whenever I open my mouth at you, you toss in one of the ducks,” and seating him at the base of her two wings, didn’t she take off flying.

So then, what’s more, she went off flying, and he sat there and whenever she opened her mouth he tossed in one of his ducks. Finally he ran out of ducks. When she again opened her mouth, not finding a solution, he tossed in his hat.

What’s more, they came flying up to the upper world, and when she landed she spoke, didn’t she say, “What was that very last nasty smelly thing you tossed in my mouth?”

Didn’t he say, “I ran out of ducks, and when your opened you mouth, not finding a solution, I tossed in my hat.”

So then, what’s more, she threw up his hat. Strongman-Curly-Black, Son-of-a-Bear spoke, he said, “Now my camp’s not far, head over there,” and he drove his Khan-Hereti bird on, and he stepped off of her, and he arrived at his camp.

Strongman Thick-Black the Cliff lived there, having taken the oldest daughter as his wife. Didn’t Strongman Long-Blond the Larch live there with two wives, having

taken Strongman Curly-Black, Son-of-a-Bear's wife as a mate and also having taken the middle daughter as his wife.

When he asked them, "Who cut the rope?" they spoke, didn't they say, "Strongman Thick-Black the Cliff forbade it; Strongman Long-Blond the Larch here said, 'I will take all the herds for myself, and I will also take the girl's beauty for myself, noxious fool,' and cut the rope."

He said, "When we first met we were like two brothers born from one mother, then we were like three brothers born from one mother, what's more we swore a pledge. When you betray a pledge, it is an attack on the blood sharper than a knife." He said, "Such is your betrayal. Strongman Thick-Black the Cliff respected the pledge, he is my birth brother," and he grabbed Strongman Long-Blond and he dragged him away and he said, "Larches are fools," and he killed him, smashing him against a larch.

What's more, he took his wife and he went away and he came to his mother. He said, "Why are you a stone statue, Mother," and when he ran around her, she became herself. He took his mother along and he brought her to his camp and he built her a special yurt and he settled her there, oh yes he did.

So then, what's more. No water flowed between the two brothers;⁸ herding their herds, ruling the roost, ripping the rifts, forging the gorges, didn't they go on living there, oh!

That has gone, I have come.

1. Devin DeWeese, *Islamization and native religion in the Golden Horde: Baba Tükles and conversion to Islam in historical and epic tradition* (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994).

2. See Ilse Laude-Cirtautas, "Zu den Einleitungsformeln in den Märchen und epen der Mongolen und der Türkvölker Zentralasiens," *Central Asiatic Journal* 27 (1983): 211-248.

3. For a modified use of this language, see the poem by Galsan Tschinag I translated for a recent issue of *JCIAD's* newsletter (Stefan Kamola, trans., "Untitled," by Galsan Tschinag, *JCIAD News*, Academic Year 2014-2015, 21. www.jciadinfo.org).

4. Süt Höl, located in the administrative district of the same name in western Tuva.

5. Knucklebones are a common source of play across Inner Asia. Games vary – in some the bones are rolled like dice, in others they are thrown like marbles. In most knucklebone games, success is in part determined by how the bones land; each of the six possible facings is assigned a name. In Tuva, each facing is given the name of a camp animal: sheep, goat, cow, horse, dog, and camel.

6. The nomadic peoples of Inner Asia have a long history of erecting anthropomorphic stone statues (*Közhee* in Tuvan, *balbal* in Kyrgyz, Kazakh, Uzbek and Old Turkic).

7. An admittedly awkward phrase to translate, here rendered literally. The sense is one of utter joy; the zoomorphic expression (cf. the hero's bear ears) may point to an origin for this episode involving animal spirits. Compare Son-of-a-Bear's interaction with the Khan-Hereti bird (below), or the Kyrgyz Moldojash's marriage to the daughter of the goat spirit, Sur Echki: <http://depts.washington.edu/silkroad/culture/epic/kojojash/kojojash14.html>.

8. This idiom is born from the socio-economic world of pastoral nomadism and implies that the two were on good enough terms to camp and drive their herds in very close proximity.

Book Reviews

TARİXTİN AKTAY BARAKTARİ [THE BLANK PAGES OF HISTORY]

BY ROZA TÖRÖKULOVNA AITMATOVA. EDITED BY T. SHAYDULLAEVA AND N. JEENALIEVA. BISHKEK: UCHKUN, 2013. 216 PAGES. (IN KYRGYZ).

A new book on Törökul Aitmatov, his life journey and his era

The history of the Kyrgyz and their leaders during the first half of the twentieth century has only been objectively studied since the fall of the Soviet Union. A great deal of work today, however, remains to be done as some archived materials still have yet to be taken out of boxes and properly assessed.

Younger Kyrgyz generations, born during the last years of the Soviet Union and since independence, do not sufficiently understand the level of censorship that was present during Soviet Communist rule. Part of this is our lack of understanding of the power-chains that limited scholars to only positively express aspects of the Soviet era and the ideology of the one party-regime. Despite the statement “we have built a proletarian dictatorship,” the reality is that what was built was a self-serving apparatus of Communist leaders and their Soviet bureaucratic supporters, while the rights of common citizens and workers were disregarded.

This era has yet to be thoroughly weighed and investigated. By studying the lives of the non-Russian ethnic leaders and people of this period, one can determine the significance of this epoch. While there are multiple studies on the Kyrgyz writer, thinker and social activist Chingiz Törökul-uulu Aitmatov (1928–2008), little attention has been given to his father. The previously mentioned censorship of the

Stalinist regime and the closed access to archived materials of topics deemed prohibited made it impossible for such matters to be openly discussed.¹

The year 2013, more than two decades after Kyrgyzstan proclaimed independence, marks the 110th anniversary of the birth of one of the great Kyrgyz national leaders—the social activist and prominent statesman, Törökul Aitmatov (1903-1938). Coinciding with the centennial, a reprint of an earlier released work of the same name, entitled *The Blank Pages of History*, written by his youngest daughter, professor and publicist Roza Törökul-kızı Aitmatova, was published, augmenting the 2007 first print with noteworthy material. Along with this new edition, a translated version of the book was also published and distributed in the same year.²

Professor Roza Aitmatova's book consists of an introduction, seven chapters, a conclusion and appendices of photos, including a photocopy of a hand written autobiography penned by Törökul Aitmatov, pictures of him and his close associates, as well as a family tree of Aitmat and Hamza, the grandfathers of Roza from her father's and mother's sides.

The prologue of the book serves as an exposition on Stalinist repressions during the 1930's and details how mass graves south-east of Bishkek, in Chong-Tash village, were discovered for the first time in 1991, with the verification that the author's father, Törökul Aitmatov, was one of those shot dead and buried in that secret grave. The author warrants, "I wanted to write about everything. The young generation must know about the horrible stories of the past."

The chapter on "Ata Beyit, *Atalar mazarı*" (Ata Beyit, the memorial complex of the fathers, pages 5–34), covers the events leading up to November 1938. It was at that time that 137 Kyrgyz citizens of different ethnic backgrounds (the identity of the 138th body, apparently belonged to a woman who was supposed to have been an accidental witness of the secret burial, is still unknown) were secretly killed between

the fifth and eighth of November 1938, and buried on the latter date, after the celebration of the twenty-first anniversary of the 1917 Bolshevik revolution. The chapter recounts how in the summer months of 1991 the mass grave site was revealed.

The second part is named “*Aitmatın butaktarı*” (Aitmat’s branch, pages thirty-five through ninety-three) and describes the family tree of Törökul Aitmatov, a Kyrgyz from the tribe of Kytay/Kitay. The chapter also discusses Aitmat’s father, Kimbildi Konchujok-uulu, who was a wealthy public figure of his time (during the Soviet era, social activists did not talk about the wealthy roots of their ancestors and had to show that they were from poor farmer families). When Kimbildi passed away, Aitmat, like others of the time, suffered the painful realities of poverty; however, he was able to provide his son a good education.

The third part of the book, entitled “*Hamzanın butaktarı*” (Hamza’s branches, pages 94–137), contains important information on her mother Nagima’s family tree, beginning with of Hamza Abduvaliev (1850–1932), also spelled Abdulvaliev, Gabduvaliev, Gabdelvaliev, a rich ethnic Tatar. He lived in the town of Karakol, in the Ysyk-Kul region and was Roza Aitmatova’s maternal grandfather. This chapter is crucial for understanding the lives of the Tatar diaspora of that era and the interesting aspects of Törökul and Nagima’s married life, building a home together during the harsh Stalinist period.

The fourth part of the book entitled, “*Atasızdik*” (Being without a father, pages 138–163), discusses the false accusation against Törökul Aitmatov for being “an active participant of the ‘Social-Turan Party,’ which was alleged to have been attempting through armed means to destroy Soviet rule and establish a nationalist bourgeoisie state under the protectorate of England.” The incrimination and following sentencing occurred without any just trial and resulted in his execution-style murder within the last hour on November 5, 1938, as an “enemy of the state.”

Moreover, this chapter describes the hardships children and relatives of a so-called “enemy of the state” had to face in the USSR.

The fifth part of the book, called “*Özgörüülör mezgili*” (The era of change, pages 164–175), is based on the hope, as expressed in Kyrgyz folk sayings, that “justice will prevail” and “the truth can be [temporarily] bent but it will never be broken”. This chapter deals with Törökul Aitmatov’s formal acquittal nearly two decades later in 1957 and the remaining days of his surviving wife, Nagima, who passed away before ever finding out the truth behind the killing of her husband by the Soviet repression machine.

The sixth part, “*Atamdı eskerüü*” (Memories of my father, pages 175–196), touches upon the work and historical importance of Törökul Aitmatov as a social activist and statesman.

The seventh part illuminates the achievements of the author’s brother, Chingiz Aitmatov. The chapter is entitled “*Baktıluu üy*” (The happy family, pages 197–205).

The conclusion (pages 206–209) of the book is inspired by a famous Kyrgyz proverb: “If your father dies, may the person who has seen your father stay alive.” Törökul Aitmatov’s close friends exemplified these words by remembering him and his family, especially during the turbulent times his family suffered through.

Overall, Roza Aitmatova’s book about her father Törökul Aitmatov is animated, lively, straightforward and based on facts. Moreover, this book contains an important element that others would not be able to rely on—a personal portrayal of family life that can only be shared by those so closely connected, Roza Aitmatova and her close relatives.

This book does not only tell the biography of Törökul Aitmatov, but also investigates the era he lived in. We can clearly state that this book is an important addition to any study on Aitmatov, a special scholarly branch of research on the life and accomplishments of the famous Kyrgyz writer Chingiz Aitmatov,³ the eldest son of Törökul Aitmatov.

As we mentioned before, the Czech writer and playwright Karel Capek coined the word "robot" to describe a machine that resembles a human being; Aitmatov resurrected the old Kyrgyz word "mankurt," meaning a robot-like human stripped of his intellect by a process of physical brainwashing imposed by a brutal, oriental tyranny. The Kyrgyz writer begs any new generations to remember their father's name, their ancestors, and their personal intellectual identities. The same did his youngest sister, Roza, with her new books on their father, Törökul.

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1. See Moimol Moldobekovna Jusupova, "Törökul Aitmatov: A Social and Political Activist, Statesman," (Ph.D. thesis, National Science Academy of the Kyrgyz Republic; Kyrgyz National University named after Jusup Balasagyn, 2010). (07.00.02).

2. Roza Törökulovna Aitmatova, *Belyie stranitsy istorii: Moi vospominaniia* [The white pages of history: My memories] (Bishkek: LLC "V. R. S. Company", 2013), 268 pages (ill. ISBN 978-9967-27-080-00).

3. Tynchtykbek Tchorev, "Chingiz Aitmatov's Lifelong Journey toward Eternity," *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, December 12, 2008, http://www.rferl.org/content/Chyngyz_Aitmatovs_Lifelong_Journey_Toward_Eternity/1359041.html.

ALTAY KEP LE UQAA SÖSTÖR. ALTAYSKIE POSLOVITSY I POGOVORKI [ALTAIAN PROVERBS AND PROVERBIAL SAYINGS]

COMPILED BY N. R. OYNOTKINOVA, TRANSLATED BY N. R. OYNOTKINOVA AND S. P. ROZHNova. ROSSIYSKAYA AKADEMIYA NAUK, SIBIRSKOE OTDELENIE, INSTITUT FILOLOGII [RUSSIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES, SIBERIAN BRANCH, INSTITUTE OF PHILOLOGY]. NOVOSIBIRSK, 2010. 268 PAGES.

ALTAYSKIE POSLOVITSY I POGOVORKI: POËTIKA I PRAGMATIKA ZHANROV. MONOGRAFIYA [ALTAIAN PROVERBS AND PROVERBIAL SAYINGS: THE POETICS AND PRAGMATICS OF GENRES. MONOGRAPH]. COMPILED BY N. R. OYNOTKINOVA, ROSSIYSKAYA AKADEMIYA NAUK, SIBIRSKOE OTDELENIE, INSTITUT FILOLOGII [RUSSIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES, SIBERIAN BRANCH, INSTITUTE OF PHILOLOGY]. NOVOSIBIRSK, 2012. 354 PAGES.

In Turkic studies, Altaian proverbs have a special place. The importance of proverbs is confirmed by the fact that Wilhelm Radloff opened the first volume (in two parts) of his monumental collection of Turkic oral poetry ... exactly with Altaian (and Teleut) proverbs. The first volume, published in 1866, is dedicated to “the dialects of the Altai proper: the Altaians and Teleut, the Lebed-Tatars, Shors and Soyon”.¹

Altaian is actually a group of dialects; on the basis of the southern dialect (of the *Altai kizhi*) a standard language has been created, originally called Oirot and since 1948 Altaian (*altayskiy yazyk* in Russian).² Nadezhda Oynotkina is a specialist for Altaian folk poetry. In the important *Index of Typical Passages of the Heroic Epic of the Peoples of Siberia (Altaians, Buryats, Tuvinians, Khakas, Shors, Yakuts)*,

edited by Ye. N. Kuz'mina and published in 2005,^{††} Nadezhda Oynotkinova (then still under her maiden name Baydzhanova) compiled the part on the Altaian heroic epic.³ In 2010 she edited and translated (into Russian) a collection of Altaian proverbs and proverbial sayings. This book comprises ca. 1400 proverbs, collected from published books, archival material and observations gathered on fieldtrips between 2004 and 2006 from ca. 60 informants. As is usual in collections of this kind, the proverbs are arranged according to thematic principles: man—old and young, man—strong and weak, man—cleverness, life and death, time etc. As might be expected with a genre like the proverb, old acquaintances will be found in Altaian garb. One example will have to suffice. Under the heading “man—good and bad” we find: “*Kizhige oro kaspā – / Boyjīng tüzhering*” (Don't dig a pit for a man,/ You will fall in yourself). There exist parallels in various languages (in German: *Wer andern eine Grube gräbt, fällt selbst hinein*), among them biblical Hebrew. The corresponding “proverb of Solomon” is in English translation (King James Version): “Whoso diggeth a pit shall fall therein / and he that rolleth a stone, it will return upon him”.⁴ Scholars working on proverbs will find a rich mine of information in Oynotkina's carefully edited collection.

In her monograph Oynotkinova provides a thorough study of Altaian proverbs and proverbial sayings. The book consists of four substantial chapters and various appendices (lists of phraseological units, lexemes, semantic key-words etc.). In the book the previous research on Altaian proverbs and the theoretical orientation of the study (Chapter 1), the formal and poetic characteristics of Altaian proverbs in the context of the proverbial lore of the Siberian Turkic peoples (Chapter 2), the pragmatic and poetic-syntactic features of the Altaian proverbs and proverbial sayings (Chapter 3), and the Altaian world view as represented in the proverbs

^{††} Compare: Dmitry Funk, “Type Scenes in the Heroic Epics of Siberian Peoples,” *Folklore: Electronic Journal of Folklore* 43 (2009): 169–176.
<http://www.folklore.ee/folklore/vol43/b01.pdf>.

(Chapter 4) are discussed. Oynotkina specifies six goals in the introduction: 1) the generic definition of proverbs and proverbial sayings, 2) the discussion of the diachronic and synchronic structure of the proverbs and their place among their Turkic neighbours, 3) the study of their poetics, with reference to different linguistic levels (phonology, syntax, lexicon), 4) the analysis of their pragmatic dimension, 5) the elucidation of Altaian cultural codes, and 6) the reconstruction of the Altaian traditional “world map” as it emerges from the proverbs and proverbial sayings.⁵ The corpus of her study is roughly identical with her previously published collection.

Oynotkinova uses the Russian terms *poslovitsa* (proverb) and *pogovorka* (proverbial saying), which have become established largely through the collection of Russian proverbs and proverbial sayings by V. I. Dal', published in 1862. His distinction of these two forms of proverbial lore are discussed in the first chapter, which surveys the scholarly literature on the subject, with a strong emphasis on Russian scholarship. The two terms (with their Altaian equivalents) are defined at the end of the first chapter as follows:

Proverbs (*kep-söstör*) are poetically organized, generally two-part sayings of a didactic character, in the form of complete sentences, simple or complex. They have literal or figurative meaning, which is mainly expressed with the help of stylistic figures and tropes.

Proverbial sayings (*uqaa söstör*) are unrhymed, generally one-part sayings, which describe various characteristics of natural phenomena or the human condition and have the form of complete simple sentences. They also have literal or figurative meaning, which is expressed with the help of tropes.⁶

In addition to *kep sös* (proverb) and *uqaa sös* (proverbial saying), Oynotkinova also shortly discusses some related terms, phraseological units, called *buzulbas sösqolbu* in Altaian (lit. unbroken word-combinations), aphorisms (*chechen sös*, orator-

words) and epic formulas (*qay chechen sös*, orator-words performed in the *qay*-manner, the throat-singing used in epic performance).⁷

In the following chapters, the focus of Oynotkina's discussion is not on defining genres and sub-genres of "wise words," but rather on analysing her Altaian material. In the second chapter the Altaian proverbs and proverbial sayings are placed in the context of other Siberian Turkic languages, especially Tuvian and Yakut. Oynotkina focuses on rhetorical figures and tropes, such as parallelism, epithets, metonyms and hyperboles, and analyzes their distribution over various lexical fields. The central role that metaphors play in proverbs is duly acknowledged by extensive discussion.⁸ Her analysis is predominantly couched in linguistic terms and aims at linguistic precision, without neglecting, however, the semantic implications, and hence the cognitive and cultural meaning of proverbial lore in Altaian. The third chapter deepens the analysis by considering the pragmatic and poetico-syntactic characteristics of Oynotkina's corpus. She develops an analytic model⁹ that is based on linguistic distinctions between different modalities (verbal moods) and their corresponding discourse genres. Nine discourse genres (resembling the illocutionary acts of speech-act theory) are posited: statement, blame, praise, prohibition, recommendation, wish, order, warning, obligation; they are uttered in a particular verbal mood, such as indicative, imperative, optative, conditional or with the help of modal predicates like *kerek*, "it is necessary." This classification is both exemplified and further refined, especially by focusing on the syntactic structure of the proverbial corpus.

The fourth chapter (entitled *Altayskaya paremicheskaya kartina mira*) returns to cultural meaning. Oynotkina presents a sketch of the Altaian world view as reflected in Altaian proverbs and proverbial sayings by charting the proverbial material according to semantic areas, which are divided into two "macro-concepts", i.e. *kizhi* (human being) and *neme* (object). Eighty-one percent of the corpus belong

to the macro-concept *kizhi*, nineteen to *neme*. Both concepts are subdivided and the various aspects of their semantic and cultural ramification are discussed. The social relationships of *kizhi* consist of a number of concepts under which the proverbs and proverbial phrases can be subsumed: *albatī* (people), *bala-ene-ada* (child–parents), *törööndör* (relatives), *töröl jer* (place of birth), *nökör* (friend) etc. Further divisions of *kizhi* are economic relationships, speech, the spiritual world of man, life, the intellectual world of man, the emotional world of man. As *neme* is far less frequently represented as a key concept in the corpus, there are fewer subdivisions. With this “map,” Oynotkinova establishes a semantic and conceptual grid that allows her to sketch a differentiated picture of the proverbs and proverbial phrases of the Altaians. This grid is also used in her edition of Altaian *kep söstör* and *uqaa söstör*.

The strength of Oynotkinova’s carefully researched study lies no doubt in the syntactic-rhetorical and semantic-conceptual taxonomies presented, but also in the ample quotations from Altaian proverbial lore. The reader becomes in this way well acquainted with Altaian proverbs and is guided by the analysis to fit them into the broader context of cultural semantics. Oynotkinova has made good use of relevant studies in other languages than Russian. Familiar paremological literature like the works of Archie Taylor or articles by Alan Dundes, Roger Abrahams, Wolfgang Mieder and others are quoted. On the whole, however, the book reflects paremological research in Russian. This is, of course, no weakness. In this way, the reader is made familiar with a rich scholarly tradition that has only fragmentarily been taken note of in non-Russian research. Oynotkinova’s study (together with her edition of Altaian proverbs) is a valuable addition to our knowledge of this corner of the Turkic-speaking world. It is perhaps fitting to close with an Altaian proverb (illustrating alliteration, parallelism, and rhyme):

*Key söstö kemjü joq,
Kep söstö tögün joq.*

“In an empty word, there is no limitation, in a proverb there is no lie.”¹⁰

Karl Reichl

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1. *Proben der Volkslitteratur der türkischen Stämme Süd-Sibiriens. I.*, collected by W. Radloff. St. Petersburg, 1866 (text volume and translation volume).

2. See Omeljan Pritsak, „Das Altaitürkische,” in *Philologiae Turcicae Fundamenta*, vol. 1, ed. J. Deny et al. (Wiesbaden, 1959): 568–598.

3. *Ukazatel' tipicheskikh mest geroicheskogo èposa narodov Sibiri (Altaitsev, Buryat, Tuvintsev, Khakasov, Shortsev, Yakutov). Èksperimental'noe izdanie* (Novosibirsk, 2005); the Altaian section is found on pp. 11–259.

4. Prov. 26:27.

5. N. R. Oynotkinova, *Altayksie poslovitsy i pogovorki: Poètika i pragmatika zhanrov* [Altaian proverbs and proverbial sayings: the poetics and pragmatics of genres] (Novosibirsk: Rossiskaya Akademiya Nauk, Siberskoe Otdelenie, Institut Filologii [Russian Academy of Sciences, Siberian Branch, Institute of Philology], 2012), 12.

6. Ibid., 67–68.

7. Ibid., 60.

8. Ibid., 85–108.

9. Ibid., summarized in a table on page 140.

10. From Oynotkinova's edition, p. 98; the contrast *chün-tögün* (truth–lie) with reference to *sös* (word) is discussed in the monograph on pp. 239–240.

25 YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE:

Developments in Central/Inner Asian Post-Soviet Literature and Culture

In 1991, after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the Central Asian republics of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan gained independence. Shortly thereafter, Mongolia underwent a peaceful democratic revolution that resulted in a multi-party system and a new constitution. Prior to these events, Mikhail Gorbachev (1931), the then General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, introduced a new phase of openness (*glasnost*) that paved the way for greater freedom in cultural expressions. In the Central Asian Turkic regions, more specifically, the poets and writers now openly presumed their traditional roles in leading their people in re-identifying with their cultural past and heritage. They also guided and inspired their audiences in asserting their independence in 1991 from the Soviet Union/Russia.

With 2016 marking the twenty-fifth anniversary of independence for the Central Asian republics, it is only befitting that the focus of the third volume of the *Journal of Central and Inner Asian Dialogue (JCIAD)* be dedicated to developments in Central/Inner Asian Post-Soviet literature and culture. *JCIAD* welcomes article submissions encompassing the topic apolitically, and with a unique focus on the literature and culture of the region since independence.

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