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### **Performing traditions of the storytellers of the epic «Manas»**

**Abstract.** The Kyrgyz perceive “Manas” not only as an oral-poetic work, but also as a living substance that has made a significant contribution to the development of national consciousness. The epics of many peoples of the world have ceased their primordial existence in oral form; they are imprinted only on paper and have taken a book form, which means that they cannot develop further in the traditional way. The legend of Manas was not lost in time thanks to the storytellers-manaschy, who carefully preserving and creatively processing it, passed it on from generation to generation. The Kyrgyz have always considered the important and significant role of the manaschy. They inspired the warriors, escorting them to the next combat battle to defend their homeland; were next to the ancestors at fateful moments for the Kyrgyz; were the highest spiritual orders who carried the wisdom and generosity of the people. The author of the article notes that storytellers face science with the task of investigating the functions of the live performance of “Manas”, which contains a ritual character. Until now, the performance of this epic was perceived only as an aesthetic action. The live narration of the Manas epic affects the sensitive channels of the audience. The basic factors influencing the consciousness of the listener of a live epic narration are the rhythm, voice and non-verbal reactions of the narrator, as well as the plot and nature of the episode being told. All this is a special type of coding of human consciousness with energy information. The author, comparing the work of some manaschy, which have not yet been considered as a scientific object, and the work of the storytellers of the epic of a number of other peoples of Central Asia, on the basis of his observations and additional information, reveals the peculiarities of performing traditions, and also comes to the conclusion that manaschy – a carrier of rich sacred information, and storytelling is one of the specific forms of cultural and spiritual communication, which requires further deep scientific research.

**Keywords:** epic “Manas”, storytelling, manaschy, musical accompaniment, performing tradition, Turkic-Mongolian beliefs and rituals.

### **Introduction**

The performing tradition is one of the important parts of storytelling. And, at the present stage, the storytellers of the epic “Manas” have managed to preserve it. Considering this issue, we would like to find out what specific features used by the storytellers were passed on from generation to generation as an experience inherent only in the bearers of the epic “Manas”.

**Materials and research methods.** To study this problem as an integral system, first of all, traditional research methods were used – historical-typological and comparative-typological. In addition, in the study of the traditional foundations of storytelling, we offer experimental methods of other sciences: sociology, psychology and neurophysiology.

K. Rakhmatullin writes the following about the performing peculiarities of the narrators of the epic “Manas”: “The Manaschies usually did not accompany their performance by playing a musical instrument, they were not also reciters, but presented their repertoire in oral song performance, often changing the melody depending on the content of the episode being told. If it was about a battle, the episode was performed using battle melodies; if a story was told about a tragic event, the melody was chosen in the appropriate tone. In addition, the singing was accompanied by rich gestures and facial

expressions, with the help of which the narrator skillfully reproduced the basic techniques of combat and the psychological experiences of the heroes of the epic”. [1, p. 92].

R. Kydyrbaeva, noting the role of the oral tradition in the poetics of the epic, writes: “The living connection of generations of storytellers in the conditions of the oral tradition is the guarantee of the life of the epic, the guarantee of its existence. The extinction of this connection, the decline of the living storytelling school is the fact of the termination of the oral tale, the fact of the transition of the existence of the epic into a different quality – from the living legend, from the natural environment that gave rise to it, to written fixation, artificial reproduction of a complex artistic phenomenon, in which many purely specific sides of the epic living tale: the originality of recitation, facial expressions and gestures, merging with the course of the plot. There is also no listening audience, which served as the most important background, a catalyst for the events of the tradition of antiquity”. [2, p. 4].

As V.V. Illarionov writes: “The performance of any folklore work is a creative act, and every master of traditional culture, whoever he is, has his own manner and style.” [3, p. 31].

Before the performance, the Kyrgyz storyteller traditionally:

1) takes an honorable place in a yurt or in an ordinary room of the house – төп (the opposite side of the threshold), there he takes a certain pose, in most cases sits cross-legged, some storytellers sit on their knees, facing the door;

2) as an introduction, in a prosaic form, briefly tells what was said before in the plot, and what he will talk about at the present time;

3) as if under his breath, he makes a peculiar sound at a very low key, as if humming, which vibrates and passes through the whole body of the narrator – from head to feet: for example, «Eeeeeee ...». This is the beginning and it lasts for about 5-10 seconds, and horizontally reaches each listener;

4) begins in a recitative form the execution of the selected episode from the text of the epic itself;

5) the narrator begins his tale very smoothly, pronouncing each syllable in a line of poetry, and this continues for about 1 to 5 minutes;

6) the narrator picks up the pace and after a while completely enters the element of the epic plot, shouting loudly from time to time;

7) depending on the character of the hero and the content of the episode he is telling, he makes certain turns, the final lines of which are accompanied by a drawling sound;

8) depending on the skill, artistic technique and individual manner, each storyteller during the height of his performance can clap his hand, or, without changing posture (sitting, cross-legged), move back and forth, using gestures and facial expressions to express emotional feelings heroes of the epic (anger, grief, joy, crying, delight, etc.).

As V.S. Vinogradov notes: “The manner of performing “Manas” is individual, original. It differs significantly from the interpretation of the epic used by storytellers from other peoples, including peoples neighboring with the Kirghiz. The art of manaschy can be likened to the theater of one actor, it is so synthetic, artistic and expressive, complete. “Manas” is all in a poetic form. It does not contain those prosaic speech inserts that are usually found (as a rule, for sketches) in other epics, including the small epic of the Kyrgyz in the interpretation of akyns. “Manas” is sung only in a chant, more precisely, it is recited. Manaschy does not use instrumental accompaniment.» [4, p. 223-225].

As K. Reichl noted, “despite the melodic and rhythmic variations (which is natural), each line is sung to the same melody (or, better to say, a melodic pattern). A singer’s repertoire can consist of several melodies (or melodic patterns), which means that during the performance, the narrator switches from one melody to another. However, the verses are sung in a “spontaneous” manner, since these varied melodies are usually not combined into a single melodic pattern of large size. The “spontaneous” model is thus contrasted with the “stanza” model of melody construction. The “spontaneous” model is thus contrasted with the “stanza” model of melody construction. In the case of the latter, regular metric sections, such as stanzas, are sung to a melody composed of several melodic phrases, and this melody is repeated in each verse of the song. Kyrgyz epic melodies are distinguished by a clear rhythmic pattern; from the point of view of Western musicology, the terms “tact” and “scale” are appropriate here.” [5, p. 96].

### Analysis

If we compare the performing traditions of other Turkic-Mongol peoples, then, with the exception of the Sakha-Yakut, the Kyrgyz tradition has a significant difference. Moreover, we were convinced of this more than once, watching the performance of folk epics: Azerbaijani, Altai, Buryat, Karakalpak, Mongolian, Sakha-Yakut, Turkish, Uzbek, Khakass and Shor storytellers.

“It is well known that the storytellers of the majority of the Turkic-Mongolian peoples – Uzbek shairs, Altai kaichi, Khakass khaiji, Kazakh zhyrau, Tuvan tolchu, Kalmyk dzhangarchi – usually perform epic songs to the accompaniment of stringed instruments – kobyz, topshur, chatkhan or dombra. The fact that the Yakuts had no other musical instrument, except the khomus, made it impossible to accompany the olonkho with musical accompaniment: the khomus is played by applying the instrument to the teeth, which excludes its use when speaking or singing.” [6, p. 33-34].

In addition, like the Sakha-Yakut olonkhosuts, the manaschy do not use a musical instrument, despite the fact that the Kyrgyz musical culture includes dozens of ancient musical instruments. Moreover, manaschy does not use any of them. Although they could use musical instruments suitable for performing the epic “Manas”, which is sometimes done at some concert performances with the participation of such instruments as *komuz* (string), *kyl kyak* (plucked), *dobulbas* (percussion). Yet the manaschies performed the epic without musical accompaniment. Apparently, there were explanations and reasons for this, not related to the lack or absence of a musical instrument.

The Yakut folklorist V.V. Illarionov writes: “It is interesting to study the Buryat folklorist A.I. Ulanov, who specially studied the question of the instrumental accompaniment of the uliger’s songs. He found out that Buryat uligers do not always use *khur*. Ekhirit-Bulagat uligershins, performed by a very ancient tradition of using *ugtalga*, *segdaralga*, *udeshelge*, are sung in a drawn-out manner, without playing the *khur* or any other instrument. The researcher convincingly proves that musical accompaniment appeared in the epic poetry of Buryat storytellers only during the breakdown of the performing tradition - at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries. Consequently, the ancient uligershins, like the Yakut storytellers, sang the songs of the uligers without musical accompaniment. This feature is also characteristic of the Russian epic tradition.» [6, p. 34].

In our opinion, the absence of a musical instrument as an accompaniment in the storytelling tradition of manaschy is a deliberate decision, i.e. necessity, since the use of musical instruments during the performance of the epic “Manas” could limit the possibilities of the «cosmic freedom» of the narrator. It can be said about the opposite, that when the epic was performed, the Kyrgyz musical instruments could not provide the narrator with the safety of the huge poetic arsenal possessed by the epic “Manas”.

M.N. Zhirkov writes about the performing style of olonkhosuts in great detail: «Olonkhosut, performing olonkho, takes a traditional pose: he usually sits with his legs crossed, slightly bent his back, and with one hand, mainly his right, holds his head slightly inclined to one side.» [7, p. 86].

A prominent researcher of the Sakha-Yakut epos I.V. Pukhov notes that: “The overwhelming part of olonkho is transmitted by rhythmic speech, when performed recited in a recitative manner, in a manner close to melodeclamation (but without music). In a good olonkhosut, only certain passages are conveyed by prose.» [8, p. 151].

E.A. Ulugbashev, considering the manner of performance of the Khakass khaiji, writes the following: “The central place in the traditional culture of the Khakas is occupied by the *alyptyg nymakh* – a heroic legend. *Alyptyg nymakh* is traditionally performed with throat singing – *hai*, accompanied by a musical instrument - *chatkhan*. Chatkhan is a plucked string instrument that is shaped like a long rectangular box with strings stretched over the top. Each haiji tuned the chatkhan to his own voice - *hai*, by ear. The modern Khakass *hai* can be conditionally divided into three styles: 1) Low - *khyrlap* (*khyrlada*) *khaylirga* (to perform on a wheeze); 2) Medium – *kyylep* (*kyylede*) *haylirga* (humming to perform); 3) Upper - *hygyrtyp* *haylirga* (whistling to perform). « [9, p. 42-45].

K. Raikhl believes that “the manner in which epic poems or heroic legends are performed also indicates their shamanic origins and the close connection between the shaman and the singer at the early stage of the historical development of the Turkic (and, more generally, Altai) peoples.” [5, p. 58-59].

The process of executing the momentary creation of the legend about Manas, for some reason, has always been called *improvisation*. But this is not at all true! This is the process of entering into a special state of consciousness. In that state, which in science is called transpersonal. In addition to the manner and style of performance, which are more related to the external form of the performing tradition, there are other features that are no less important in this activity. Previously, Kyrgyz storytellers performed the epic at the request of the audience on ordinary winter evenings at home, and in the summer they performed it on mountain summer pastures in a yurt or in the open air. But there were other life occasions when they performed the epic “Manas” at funerals, commemorations, celebrations, public festivals, official meetings and gatherings, fairs, contests of storytellers, etc. For the manaschies, it was important where to say, what to say and when to say.

According to the famous Kyrgyz writer K. Ashymbaev, the son of manaschy Mambetaaly Ashymbaev, “During the Great Patriotic War (1941-1945), my father was very often invited to see off the conscripts. He was invited not only by our *ayil* (village) residents, but also from neighboring *aiyls* came and picked up his father in the evenings so that he would perform “Manas”. By this, my father, as one of the prominent people in the *aiyl*, blessing the soldiers to the front, was fulfilling his human duty, and performing “Manas” before the recruits, he was fulfilling his storytelling duty. Raised their military spirit. Even at home, before eating, he often uttered the words - “May the spirit of Manas keep them! May the spirit of Manas help them!” (Message from Kalkanbai Ashymbaev dated 23.02.2015).

Participation in the civil war of 1918-1922, manaschy Sayakbay Karalaev, in his memoirs says that more than once during the war years he spoke to his colleagues and said to Manas: “At the beginning of 1918, I was assigned to the ranks of the first squadron of the Red Army. My colleagues were Adamgaly Baybatyrov, Momun Karabaev, Aidaraly Kambayev, Make Kydyrbaev, Mambet Suyunbaev and others. In the evenings, and sometimes before the battle, my friends asked me to perform “Manas”. In the beginning, I told them the plot of the episode in a prosaic form, which they ordered, and then I told “Manas” for hours. And when I stopped, they asked me to continue. Their military spirit was rising, and they were ready to go into battle even now.” [10, p. 8-10].

E. Tursunov notes that “the heroic epic was also performed for military purposes in order to achieve victory over the enemy, or rather, so that the *aruakhs* (spirit of the deceased) of the epic characters, in gratitude for providing the epic about their glorious deeds, helped in the battle with the enemy. The Kazakhs also had a custom of performing heroic epics and historical songs before battles. Back in the last century, when the Kazakh army led by Zhankozha liberated the Sozak fortress from the Kokand people, Zhyrau Toremurat rode in front of the assaults.” [11, p. 239].

“When in 1912 the Mongols started a war with China for independence, Parchen went on a campaign with the Oirat militia near Koblo, he held an important military position and participated in the storming of the fortress. They say that once, during a siege that lasted quite a long time, some kind of *derbat* began to sing the heroic epic “Boom-Erdeni” in the camp, sang badly, without embellishment, and misinterpreted a lot. Hearing such a performance of his favorite epic, Parchen, having come to great excitement, snatched his *balalaika* from the singer, tuned in and sang the same epic “Boom-Erdeni”. The Mongol warriors, of whom there were many, immediately understood who they saw in front of them. Parchen managed not only to show his art, to unfold the beauty of the Mongol epic, but also to inspire his listeners, raise their fighting fervor. They say that all the Oirat warriors who were then in the camp experienced a moment of strong inspiration, were ready to immediately storm the fortress and vowed to scatter the Chinese nests.” [12, p. 365].

“According to popular beliefs, *hai*, an epic tune, the text of the *alypty nymakhs*, were considered sacred. Not every person, let alone one who has not reached the age of majority, was not worthy of touching them.” [13, p. 22].

“Before the start of the game, *khajji* sprinkled wine on his musical instrument, for the latter was considered more important than the storyteller. Then he carried the bowl three times around the head of the *chathan* (*teek pazy*) and only then took a sip of the drink. The sprinkling of wine reaches the guardian spirits of musical instruments and epic heroes who are drunk with the *khajji*. The favor of the spirits is expressed by the sonorous sound of strings and a growing voice. If a relative was dying, then the narrator was not allowed to touch the *chatkhan* for a year, thus mourning was observed.” [14, p. 18].

Addressing the Khakass storytellers, V.E. Mainogasheva writes: “At one time, it was not they, but my intuition that suggested to me that it was no coincidence that people were engaged in improvisations of the heroic epic at night, that it was connected with the sacred rite, although it was not limited to it. The emotional impact at night is stronger, which also mattered.” [15, p. 65].

Among the Tuvans, “tales were told both in summer and on long winter evenings by the light of a fire, at home, in aal (village), and on a hunt” [16, p. 8].

Among the Shors, “it is customary to tell heroic poems only at night. Even now it is difficult to persuade the narrator *to kail* (to sing) during the day. It was believed that this could cause discontent of the spirits, which could harm the listeners. It was also obligatory to tell the story to the end of the beginning.” [17, p. 18].

The Kalmyks “had to prepare internally to listen to “Dzhangar”, otherwise the singing turned out to be “very difficult for the narrator” and could even “cause unpleasant consequences for those around.” [18, p. 198-199].

Among the Buryats, “on the appointed evening, the listeners gathered in the yurt, where the narrator came, and sat around the hearth. The storyteller was seated in the most honorable place on the north side of the hearth on a white, clean felt. In the literature dating back to the 18th century, there is an indication that the narrator held a white wooden cane in his hand (obviously, this is a birch cane - a typical attribute of a white shaman). Then they poured fresh milk into a cup and put it on the lid of the yurt above the entrance. Milk, according to the views of the Buryats, is a sacred food, white food sent by God for man. It is also the ritual food of good deities and spirits. In this case, it is a treat for all invited divine beings, who should soon appear and listen to the performance of the epic with everyone all night long. In the open hearth in the middle of the yurt, coals are raked into a heap, and the ash is carefully leveled with a rake so that in the morning you can see the divine guests on it. After all these preparations, when it gets dark and the stars appear in the sky, the narration of the *uliger* began – with a special “counter” or “inviting” song. This lingering song was sung antiphonically: the narrator sings a line, the chorus repeats it immediately. At the same time, each line of the song begins with the inviting reflex “a-e-e”, “a-e-e”, repeated after the narrator in chorus. In this song, they call upon the light heavenly deities - the *Tengries*. The narrator begins the singing of the epic with a “counter” song with an even melodious recitative.” [19, p. 158-159]. It is also interesting that the Buryat *uligers* “could not sing songs on moonless nights” [20, p. 73].

Among the Altai *Uryankhais*, “the epic is not only a special genre of fiction, but also an integral part of rituals and beliefs. The type of epic depends on beliefs and cult. He traces his psychological origin from that property of our soul. For example, the epic “*Khaan tsetsen zurkhaich*” is dedicated to life happiness, tranquility and a large family, the epic “*Bayan tsagaan ovgen*” is intended for a prosperous and rich life, “*Argil tsagaan evgen*”, “*Naran heven khan*” is intended for good health and a long happy life. for a good mood - and spiritual power – “*Ezen ulaan bodon*”, for the birth of a child – “*Erh nach khartsaga*”, “*Naran khan khoven [huu]*”, for a new family – “*Altai hevch*”, and in case of misfortune and shamanic curses are fulfilled “*Khan Kharangui*”, “*Baatar khar Zhandalba*”, “*Thawed khar bodon*”, “*Dovon khar bekh*”, “*Khurel arslan magnai*”, “*Huch ikhtey khurel khan*”. There were tough epics that not every storyteller could pronounce. One of these epics is “*Khan Kharangui*”. Only the most outstanding and capable, specially educated and inherited storytellers could sing this legend.” [21, p. 343-344].

For example, in the Russian North, “the storytellers, distinguished by their special religiosity, considered it a sin to sing the old days for Easter.” [22, p. 82].

B.N. Putilov writes: “During my trips around Montenegro, I repeatedly had to deal with the refusals of the guslars to sing - because of the *korota* (the memorial period for the death of one of the relatives): the *korota* practically covered almost all residents of small villages. Sometimes we managed to persuade the guslars to leave the village, and then they sang.” [22, p. 82].

E.E. Yamaeva notes: “In his younger years, the singer comprehends various prohibitions associated with the performance of the epic. For example, Arzhan Kozeryokov tells a case when he once wanted to sing and took *topshuur*, but according to his expression “neither he nor his *topshuur* could make a sound”. It turns out that a man died in the village that day, and Arzhan did not know this. Subsequently, he learned that during the funeral it is forbidden to sing a throat song.” [23, p. 76].

In this respect, the situation was different for the Kyrgyz, after the body of the deceased was given to the ground, the relatives of the deceased invited a narrator who was supposed to perform the epic “Manas”. The same was done a year later at the commemoration. It was believed that the spirits of the world of Manas would help the soul of the deceased find peace in the world of the dead. In 1972, when Okesh Tyuleberdiev (born 1904) died – Hero of Socialist Labor, deputy of the Supreme Soviet of the Kyrgyz SSR of 4-5 convocations, veteran of the Great Patriotic War, former collective farm chairman, a very respected person in those places, at the funeral (in Kyrgyz *kara ash*) they invited, then still a young hereditary storyteller Shaabay Azizov, who lived on the same collective farm (the collective farm «Dzhany-Dzhyldyz» of the Ak-Suu district) and was from the same family as the deceased (Aryk), to perform the epic “Manas”. Thus, the elders decided to adequately escort (in Kyrgyz *sook uzatuu*) the deceased to another world. For three days and three nights he performed the epic. A year later, already at the commemoration (in Kyrgyz *chong ash*) of Okesh Tyuleberdiev, Shaabay Azizov was again invited to tell the epic. After that, the relatives of the deceased, as a token of gratitude, presented the narrator with one of the deceased’s expensive outerwear. When we asked the daughter-in-law of the late Okesh Tyuleberdiev, Baty Turdubekova, what episode Shaabay Azizov performed then, she answered us the following: “I don’t remember exactly which episode he said, but it looked like a lament, as the listeners were crying, and his melody performance was very similar to the melody of lamentation.”

Apparently, such funeral rites were not always performed among the Kyrgyz. And this is the only information of this kind so far. But even this example already tells us that such a memorial rite did exist before. Since among the people, everything that was related to the epic “Manas” was treated very carefully. And any unconventional action in relation to the “funeral” and epic “Manas” would cause discontent on the part of the elders of the clan or *ayil*. But the unimpeded performance of the Manas epic at the funeral and commemoration of Okesh Tyuleberdiev once again confirms our opinion that the living tale was, after all, a part of the memorial rite.

The Khakas also “had a custom of inviting storytellers to the memorial service, who performed heroic poems during the memorial night. The Khongors believed that the sound of chathana and hai could bring even stone sculptures to life. The soul of the deceased – *sune* loves to listen to throat singing. She allegedly sits on the other end of the chathana and begins to play along and draw the haiji’s voice to her. At such a moment, the narrator loses his high, i.e. throat singing. To prevent this from happening, the haiji drew a cross with coal under his throat and on the chathana. For the performance of heroic works during the commemoration on the fortieth day, the storyteller was presented with something from the clothes of the deceased. [14, p. 22-23].

Referring to the materials of the shamanic tradition of the peoples of Siberia and the North, E.S. Novik emphasizes that “ritual complexes and oral-poetic tradition were here until recently productive and were recorded by ethnographers in their living existence; many folklore genres (including such developed ones as the heroic tale and epic) were not only closely related to the rituals in their subject matter, but were also used for ritual purposes.” [24, p. 14-15].

In the fall of 1925, the seriously ill Kydyr-ake Baysariev, “sent his messenger with an order to urgently bring Choyuka in order to hear“ *Manas* ”in his performance for the last time. But it so happened that at that very moment Choyuke died, and Kydyr-aka was informed about this. Then, lying in bed, he utters the following words: “It is a pity that I did not have a chance to hear his story for the last time. This means that I have little left too! « And after some time, Kydyr-ake also leaves this world.” [25, p. 86].

### Results

One of the important points in the performing tradition of the narrator-manaschy was that the epic had to be told not just for the audience, but for the people. And this is its main purpose.

“Collectors of the epic have repeatedly noted that the storytellers feel uncomfortable in the artificial setting of the recording, as if they were separated from “their” usual audience, performing the epic without much desire and enthusiasm. They often found it difficult to concentrate on the performance. There is reason to think that the texts obtained in this way are far from always adequate to those that could be heard with a “natural” performance. This, in any case, is true for some epic traditions.” [22, p. 117].

For the first time in 1963, they began to record the epic “*Manas*” on an audio-tape recorder performed by Sayakbai Karalaev. The recording was made in a secluded atmosphere in the studio of the Kyrgyz State Radio Committee. The recording lasted for twelve days. However, when the narrator was given the opportunity to listen to the recording in his own performance, he categorically refused not only from recording his performance, but also from such a recording method. And he made me erase this record. He was alien to his own performance, recorded not in traditional conditions - in a studio in front of a microphone, without an audience. If before that he was indifferent to the recording process, then this time, in order to preserve the honor of the narrator and, perhaps, to show and prove the level of his storytelling skill, he insisted on re-recording the same episodes, but in front of the public, which was done... Even more has been done than anticipated. The recording was made on 45 thousand meters of tape.

“Thus, the live performance of the *Manas* epic is a process of transmitting higher vibrations or impulses from the world of *Manas* (a world of a higher order) to society through storytellers. And the main goal of this phenomenon is to contribute to the evolution of human consciousness and maintaining communication with the higher world (a kind of matrix for the real world). This means that the live performance of the *Manas* epic, which was given to the Kyrgyz and accompanies them for many centuries, can be considered a unity of three interrelated components: the transcendental world (or the world of *Manas*), the storyteller and society. In other words, before us are revealed three aspects of the phenomenon of the living narration of the epic “*Manas*” – the transcendental nature of the phenomenon; the bearer of the storytelling gift; society as a host.” [26, p. 66].

Usually, storytellers begin their performances at the request of the audience. The audience orders which episode from the epic they want to hear. At present, of all the episodes of the epic, the Kyrgyz are often asked to perform “*Taitoru Races*” (in Kyrgyz “*Taitorunun chabylyshi*”). This episode, beloved by the people, became popular thanks to Sayakbai Karalaev. Only he could perform this episode in an emotional and poetic form, bringing it to the highest perfection. Sayakbay Karalaev’s high skill was spoken about during his lifetime, and now, when he is gone, video and audio recordings of different years, which are always in demand, have been preserved in his performance. Usually, storytellers begin their performances at the request of the audience. The audience orders which episode from the epic they want to hear.

Here is how Sayakbai Karalaev described this episode, A. Saliev: “When *Manas* died, his successors sowed confusion and ruined the people. Kanykei, the widow of *Manas*, endures unheard-of bullying. And she and her nursing son Semetey, seizing Chyyrды’s mother-in-law, runs to her father, Bukhara Temir Khan. Here the boy is brought up by her brother Ismail, not knowing his true parents. But Semetey grows up as an indomitable brawler, making violence against mullahs and ishans. Then they

decided to put him, a twelve-year-old boy, on the throne in the hope that the dignity and concerns of the ruler would settle him down. In honor of such an event, grandiose races are arranged, at which Kanykei, thinking of luck, also lets his sixty-year-old *tulpar* (horse) Taitoru: if he comes first, it means that the spirit of Manas is still alive, and Semetey will return back to her homeland, and the tulpar would fall behind, then Kanykei would commit suicide - she would not suffer from humiliating orphanhood! Again, she looks through the telescope and counts the horses. Oh, spirit of Manas: ahead of Taitoru - only sixty horses! Will the old tulpar really live up to expectations? Will there really be a day when she will open to her son, and they will see the white peaks of Ala-Too? My heart beats more and more, thoughts rush in my head. “*Aylanayin* (my dear) Titoru, besides you, I have no support here - wipe my widow’s tears!..” Moreover, the gaze is all there, into the dimming distance.

Sayakbai disperses, picking up the pace, as the old Titoru increases his run, overtaking the tulpars - the chant sounds more and more powerful. No rustle, no movement around, only the eyes of the listeners are burning, as if in front of them are the very races, and only the clatter of hooves and the voice of Kanykei are heard. It seems as if the river nearby in the gorge has stopped making noise, and the planes are flying overhead without a hum.» [27, c. 208-209].

This episode became especially popular during the war and post-war times, when women, listening to the tale of Kanykei’s difficult mental state after the death of Manas, got used to the fate of the widow and saw themselves in her. Indeed, at that moment, the fate of Kanykei was similar to the fate of those widows who lost their husbands. And in this case, the image of Kanykei gave the widows hope, fortitude, confidence and strength. The process of performing the epic «Manas” and its impact on a person, on the environment, is an important point not only for the narrator who performs this process, but also for the listeners, who sometimes not understanding and not realizing it, find themselves in the possession of this process.

Due to the difficult economic and political situation in Kyrgyzstan in November 2009, prominent figures of culture, literature, public associations, non-governmental, creative organizations and unions of the country decided to create a new Public Association called “Manas Eli” (Russian “People of Manas”). And on December 26, 2009, at the general meeting of this Public Association, it was decided, through regular and public performance by the narrators of the epic «Manas” , to express the dissatisfaction of the entire public with respect to the ongoing reforms of the current political regime. Thus, it was decided from January 15 to start the tale of the epic “Manas” under the slogan – “Ulutum – Kyrgyz! Uraanym – Manas!” (“The Kyrgyz are my people! Manas is my cry!”). Also at the meeting, it was decided to speak every Friday for three hours every week. It was a voluntary social and political act, which included almost all the storytellers living in the capital of Kyrgyzstan. And the last tale ended on Friday, April 2, 2010 at the twelfth performance. Perhaps the act would have continued further, if not for the tragic events that took place on April 7, 2010 in the capital of the country. Thus, we can say that the members of the Public Association “Manas Eli” have achieved their goal, the current anti-popular political regime has fallen. The struggle, which lasted for three months at the spiritual (energetic) level, is over. The victory was on the side of the people. It is difficult to say whether it was connected with the performance of the epic “Manas” ? It is also difficult to answer the question why at that moment, as a nationwide act of discontent, the members of this organization chose the live performance of the epic “Manas”? Perhaps this was due to the fact that there was no other way out and way of fighting the current political regime. But before making this decision, the members of this Public Association were well aware that in critical situations, when the people were in danger, the Kyrgyz always turned to Manas.

“The intuitive (unscientific) knowledge of the ancestors since ancient times said that the live performance of the epic “Manas” is a tool for awakening the spirit and purifying the soul, and these levels of human consciousness, as you know, have always been considered the spiritual core of a person. That is why storytellers from ancient times were considered special people and really possessed a number of transcendental abilities.” [28, p. 65].

In this regard, B.N. Putilov notes, “an epic singer is born, grows, learns his art, creates his own repertoire, and is ultimately formed as a master for the sake of systematic performances in front of the public. The function of the speaking storyteller is by no means reduced to performing and artistic; the act of performing is essentially richer and more complex. Nevertheless, the artistic principle in it appears as obvious and predominant. It, as we will see, is clothed in various ritual forms.” [22, c. 80].

K. Reichl adheres to approximately the same opinion: “The performance of the Turkic epic has some features that emphasize its quasi-ritual character. One of them is time. A special time is allotted for the fulfillment of the legends. The epic is usually performed at a strictly defined time, and in some traditions its performance outside this time may even be prohibited.” [5, c. 88-89].

Nowadays, you can find cases when storytellers are invited to weddings (in Kyrgyz *nike toi*) and to perform a ritual - *tusho kesuu* (a Kyrgyz rite when a braided black and white woolen thread is cut, which is used to tie the legs of a child who begins to walk). Parents of newlyweds and children invite storytellers to perform an episode from the epic “Manas”, thereby receiving the blessing of spirits from the world of Manas. When inviting storytellers, parents do not order a specific episode from the epic. Therefore, the choice of the episode remains with the narrator. And the storytellers usually tell the episodes at weddings: “The Marriage of Manas to Kanykey” or “The Marriage of Semetey to Aichurek”. At *tusho kesuu*, storytellers usually try to perform the episode “The Birth of Manas” or “The Childhood of Manas”.

At one of the regular meetings, Shaabay Azizov told us about the functions of certain episodes of the epic and the ability to choose them before saying: “Each episode of the Manas epic has its purpose (in Kyrgyz *ordu bar*) and carries a certain energy (in Kyrgyz *kuch-kubat*). Therefore, you need to understand which episode, where, under what circumstances, life events and for which audience to tell. It is believed that when the manaschy begins his performance, the spirits of those heroes of the epic, about whom he speaks, come. It all depends on the nature, content of the episode and the type of heroes of the epic (in Kyrgyz *baatyrlardyn kasietine karata bolot*) who participate in this episode. Therefore, it is very important for the storyteller to know about this. It is not always necessary to talk about Manas itself, since Manas has a very powerful force. It is desirable to talk about the descendants of Manas. Even Manas himself will be very glad to hear the legend about his descendants. And the episodes “Death of Manas” or “Wake of Manas” should not be told without special need” (Message from Shaabay Azizov dated March 12, 2003).

A similar situation can be seen in the Altai performing tradition. According to E.E. Yamaeva: “In the course of working with storytellers, we repeatedly had to make sure that in the minds of the storytellers and the people of the heroes of the heroic epic (Maadai-Kara, Kan-Kapchykai, Yoloshtoy, Yangar, Kan-Altyn, Kezer-baatyr and others) act as patrons of the people. At the same time, the names of some heroes (Yangar, Kezer-baatyr) were forbidden. Telling the epic for no reason could lead to personal tragedy, to the death of relatives. For example, N.K. Yalatov said several times “Yangar’s story did not go without a sacrifice.» Shortly before he sang the legend, his wife died. It is believed that the legends “Yangar-baatyr” and “Kezer-baatyr” can be told only at turning points in history, in an era of impending changes or bloody wars. At the same time, they also believe that the heroes Yangar and Kezer at the “right time”, “when they need to appear” (ie, in critical, difficult, pre-war times) themselves appear (“are shown”) to the people, they themselves force the storytellers to perform epic.” [23, c. 117-118].

Here is what A.V. Kurbizhekova writes about the Khakass epic and its storytellers: “The heroic legend is not a fairy tale, it is a living substance that exists in a subtle world parallel to us. There is the owner of the Alypty Nymakhs, Khaya and all his characters exist and will exist, live while the Khajji-Nymakhchi happily narrates to the end, and part with him until the next narration. Our scientists have not studied the phenomenon of the heroic epic, since during the Soviet era, they could not explain it, which means that it did not exist, and «this cannot be, because it should not be.” [29, c. 47-48].

### Conclusion

Thus, it became clear in which tradition the manaschi exists and how it functions. According to our research, it is obvious that the live performance of the epic “Manas” promotes the immersion of a person in an altered state of consciousness (trance) and an increase in memory and attention indicators; and harmonizes the biomagnetic field of the listeners. There is a possibility that a similar phenomenon affects a person through the auditory, visual and extrasensory channels (or entrances to consciousness) of a person. The basic factors influencing the human consciousness of the living performance of the epic, from the point of view of science, may be the rhythm, voice and non-verbal reactions of the narrator, as well as the narrated episode of the epic. In addition, each part and episode of the epic “Manas”, perhaps, represents a special type of information coding by energy.

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**«Манас» эпосын жырлаушылардың орындаушылық дәстүрі**

**Аннотация.** Қырғыздар «Манас» эпосына тек ауызша поэзияның туындысы ғана емес, сондай-ақ жалпы ұлттық сананың дамуына айтулы үлес қосқан жанды субстанция деп қарайды. Әлемнің көптеген халық эпостары шын мәнінде өздерінің ауызша тіршілігін тоқтатқан; олар қағаз бетінде таңбаланып, кітап түріне көшкен, яғни әрі қарай дәстүрлі арнада жетілу мүмкіндігінен де айырылған. Манас туралы жыр болса, жыршы-манасшылардың арқасында мұқият сақталған қалпында, шығармашылық өңдеуге түсе отырып, ұрпақтан ұрпаққа табысталып келеді. Қырғыздар манасшыларды айрықша қадірлеп, олардың қоғамдағы орнын түсіне білген. Манасшылар отанын қорғауға аттанған сарбаздарды кезекті майданға жырмен шығарып салған; қырғыздардың тағдыршешті кезеңдерінде рубасыларының жанынан табылған; халықтың даналығы мен жарқын болмысын бойына сіңірген биік рухани тұлғалар болған. Мақала авторы ғылымның алдында «Манасты» жанды түрде орындаудың атқаратын функцияларын, олардың ғұрыптық сипатын зерттеу міндеті тұрғанын атап көрсетеді. Осы күнге дейін бұл эпосты орындау жай эстетикалық әрекет ретінде қарастырылып келген. «Манас» эпосын жанды түрде орындау аудиторияның сезімі мен түйсігіне әсер етеді. Тыңдарманның санасына ықпалын тигізетін негізгі факторлардың қатарына жыршының дауыс мәнері мен ырғағы, вербалды емес қимыл ишаралары, сондай-ақ айтылатын оқиғаның сюжеті мен сипаты жатады. Мұның барлығы адам санасын энергетикалық ақпаратпен кодтаудың ерекше түрі саналады. Осыған дейін ғылыми нысанға айналмаған манасшылардың шығармашылығы мен бірқатар Орталық Азия халықтары жыршыларының шығармашылығын салыстыра отырып, автор өз бақылаулары мен қосымша мәліметтердің негізінде орындаушылық дәстүрлердің ерекшелігін айқындайды, сонымен қатар манасшы – бай сакралды ақпараттың тасымалшысы, ал жыршылық – мәдени және рухани коммуникацияның айрықша түрлерінің бірі деген қорытындыға келеді және оны әрі қарай тереңдете зерттеу қажеттігіне ден қояды.

**Кілт сөздер:** «Манас» эпосы, жыршылық, манасшы, музыкалық сүйемелдеу, орындаушылық дәстүр, түркі-моңғол наным-сенімдері мен салт-дәстүрлері.

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**Исполнительские традиции сказителей эпоса «Манас»**

**Аннотация.** Кыргызы воспринимают «Манас» не только как устно-поэтическое произведение, но и как живую субстанцию, внесшую существенный вклад в развитие общенационального сознания. Эпосы многих народов мира прекратили свое исконное существование в устной форме; они запечатлены лишь на бумаге и приняли книжную форму, а значит, не могут далее развиваться традиционным путем. Сказание о Манасе не потерялось во времени благодаря сказителям-манасчы, которые бережно храня и творчески перерабатывая, передавали его из поколения в поколение. Кыргызы всегда считали важной и значительной роль манасчы. Они вдохновляли воинов, провожая их на очередное боевое сражение для защиты своей родины; находились рядом с родоначальниками в судьбоносные моменты для кыргызов;

являлись высшими духовными санами, которые несли в себе мудрость и великодушие народа. Автор статьи отмечает, что перед наукой стоит задача исследовать функции живого исполнения «Манас» сказителями, содержащего в себе ритуальный характер. До сих пор исполнение этого эпоса воспринималось лишь как эстетическое действие. Живое сказывание эпоса «Манас» оказывает глубокое чувственно эстетическое воздействие на аудиторию. Базовыми факторами влияния на сознание слушателя является ритм, голос и невербальные реакции сказителя, а также сюжет и характер сказываемого эпизода. Все это представляет собой особый вид кодирования человеческого сознания энергетической информацией.

Автор статьи, сравнивая творчество некоторых манасчы (что до сих пор не было объектом научного исследования) и творчество сказителей эпосов других народов Центральной Азии, выявляет особенности исполнительских традиций, а также приходит к выводу о том, что манасчы – носитель богатой сакральной информации, а сказительство – это одна из специфических форм культурной и духовной коммуникации, которая требует дальнейшего глубокого научного исследования.

**Ключевые слова:** эпос «Манас», сказительство, манасчы, музыкальный аккомпанемент, исполнительская традиция, тюрко-монгольские верования и обряды.

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