

Examining Folkloric Elements in the Educational Works of Kasym Tynystanov: A Scholarly Identification and Analysis

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ABSTRACT: Kasym Tynystanov (1901-1938) was a pivotal figure in early 20th-century Kyrgyz literature and education. His works, beginning with «Окуу Китеби» [*Reading Book*] in 1924, aimed to teach literacy using folkloric elements. «Окуу-Жазуу Бил» [*Learn to Read and Write*] and «Биздин Тил» [*Our Language*] blended grammar instruction with cultural content. Tynystanov's textbooks infused folklore to foster national consciousness and preserve Kyrgyz heritage. His contributions significantly shaped the Kyrgyz/Soviet education system, enriching the understanding of Kyrgyz cultural heritage and ancient Turkic folklore, solidifying his legacy as a bridge between literature, education, and cultural preservation.

EET/TEE KEYWORDS: Soviet Education; Kasym Tynystanov; Kyrgyz Folklore; Kyrgyzstan; Central Asia; XX Century.

Introduction

Kyrgyzstan is a country located in Central Asia. The history of this country is known at least since the 17th century. Initially, it was under the dominion of the Russian Empire during the 19th century and later by its successor, the former Soviet Union. Regarding its indigenous people, the Kyrgyz were transhumant nomads in the past; however, they were sedentarized by the Soviet government through policies of agricultural collectivization and industrialization.

Formal education in Kyrgyzstan during the Soviet Union was heavily influenced by the ideology of the Communist Party, where the dominant language was Russian. Nevertheless, the lives of the Kyrgyz people in their homes were still influenced by their rich oral tradition. Therefore, during the Soviet period, Kyrgyz writers had to adjust their works according to the communist ideology, along with the literary trend of socialist realism.

Kasym Tynystanov frequently incorporated folkloric elements into his scholarly and cultural works. It is evident that Tynystanov's works, intended as textbooks for schools, have made significant contributions to the cultural development of broad segments of the population. Furthermore, since Tynystanov documented folkloric elements in written form, these works, in addition to their other characteristics, hold the distinction of being the first compilation studies within the scope of Kyrgyz folklore.

Kasym Tynystanov's first work, titled «Окуу Китеби» [*Okuu Kitebi – Reading Book*], was printed in 1924 by the Turkestan State Printing House in the city of Tashkent. His second work, «Окуу-Жазуу Бил» [*Okuu-Jazuu Bil – Learn to Read and Write*], was published in 1927. Within the same year, Tynystanov's third work, «Bizdin Til», was released in Tashkent, using Arabic script. Tynystanov's fourth work, «Janı Aıyl» [*New Village*], printed in the Latin alphabet, was published in 1929 in Kyrgyzmambas, Frunze city. In 1932, Tynystanov's fifth work, «Til Sabagy» [*Language Lesson*], written in the Latin alphabet, was published.

These works by Kasym Tynystanov, apart from serving as educational tools, hold the distinction of being the pioneering compilation efforts within the realm of Kyrgyz folklore.

The new editions of Kasym Tynystanov's works could only be produced after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Alongside «Bizdin Til» [*Our Language*], the works include literary texts written by Tynystanov himself or his contemporaries. The identification and analysis of the folkloric texts presented

in Kasym Tynystanov's works are crucial for gaining a deeper understanding of Kyrgyz folklore and detecting the traces of ancient Turkic folklore and mythology within Kyrgyz folklore. Folkloric products play a significant role in establishing social order, unity, and the transmission of cultural heritage. In imparting and conveying societal values, oral cultural heritage assumes a crucial role¹.

According to William R. Bascom, folklore serves four functions. Entertainment is the most crucial, followed by the second function, which is the affirmation of culture and the validation of rituals and institutions. The third function, particularly in non-literate societies, is educational. Folklore emerges as a primary element in the education of children in non-literate societies. The fourth function of folklore is to sustain accepted behavior patterns. In this context, it is evident that the folkloric texts in Kasym Tynystanov's scientific and cultural activities align functionally with Bascom's theory of folklore².

As an intellectual responsible for a society with very low literacy rates, Tynystanov desired that the new generations learn to read and write while being entertained. Although not entirely opposing Soviet teachings, he drew heavily from Kyrgyz folklore to ensure that the Kyrgyz people remained connected to their past and that the youth did not lose touch with their identity. The texts in Tynystanov's textbooks can be categorized into three main areas: pedagogical/ideological/didactic, literary, and folkloric.

1. Окуу Китеби [*Okuu Kitebi – Reading Book*]

Kasym Tynystanov's first work, written as a textbook and titled *Okuma Kitaby* [*Reading Book*], was published in Tashkent in 1924 using Arabic script. The sixteenth text in the work consists of riddles related to the human body.

«Кыдырата таш койдум, кызыл огузду бош койдум»

I placed a stone by wandering around, I left the red ox empty – *Tongue and Tooth*

«Тий десем тийбейт, тийбе десем тийет»

If I say it's worthless, it's not worth it; if I say it's worth It, it's valuable. – *Lips*

«Кара тоонун төбөсүн, кар башканын билдинби?»

¹ M. Bars, *Kültürel değerlerin aktarımında halk edebiyatı ürünlerinden yararlanma* [Using folk literature to transmit cultural values], «Erzincan Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi», vol. 10, n. 2, 2017, pp. 217-228.

² M. Bars, William Bascom'un "Folklorun dört işlevi" ışığında Nasrettin Hoca fıkraları üzerine bir değerlendirme [An evaluation of Nasrettin Hodja's tales in the light of William Bascom's 'Four Functions of Folklore'], «Turkish Studies International Periodical for the Languages, Literature and History of Turkish or Turkic», vol. 10, n. 4, 2015, p. 157.

Кайнар булак кашатты суу башканын билдинби?»

Do you know that snow covers the top of the black mountain?

Do you know that hot spring inundates the stream with its water? – *Grey hair and tears*³.

The dialogue between the child and the sparrow at the beginning of the work serves as an example of the fable genre and, at the same time, functions as a pedagogical text calling children to school.

«Бир кооз чымчык, канат кагып,
Учуп келди зыб, зып, зыб
Ир, ырдады күүгө салып:
‘Чирлит, чирлит, чит, чит чит’

«A beautiful sparrow flapped its wings
Flew and came with a chirp, chirp, chirp
It sang a song with its melody:
‘Chirp, chirp, chirp, chirp, chirp’

Бала:
Сулуулукту, зейректикти,
Мен да үйрөнүп алаин
Жол-жобосун айтып берчи,
Кайдан издеп табайын?
Чымчык:
Иштин баары тырыштыкта,
Бош чүрбөсөңг куру текке,
Зейректик да, сулулук да,
Мектеб, мектеб, мектебте!»

Child:
Beauty and intelligence,
I want to learn them too.
Can you tell me the way?
Where can I find these?
Sparrow:
The whole thing is in effort,
Don't just stay idle.
Both intelligence and beauty,
In school, school, school»⁴.

In the text titled «Албарсты» [*Al basty*], Kasym Tynystanov's pedagogical protagonist, a young man named Abyl, begins to feel a heaviness in his chest in recent days. He explains the situation to his father, who tells him that the heaviness is due to *Al basty*. Abyl becomes frightened and believes in the existence of *Al basty*. He starts to confront *Al basty* every day. One day, he tells his teacher about the situation. The teacher advises him not to sleep without digesting his food. Abyl follows the teacher's advice, and *Al basty* no longer appears. In this text, Tynystanov directly addresses the reader, stating that it is a shame for educated people to believe in *Al basty*. He explains that if a person lies down dirty and messy without digesting their food, it slows down blood circulation. Slowed blood circulation makes it difficult for a person to breathe comfortably. The community refers to this condition as *Al basty*, but Tynystanov asserts that the existence of *Al basty* is an empty belief⁵. The teacher attempts to scientifically explain the issue of *Al basty* to the students. It is noteworthy that the teacher, a character, provides a scientific explanation for folk beliefs. Simultaneously, the teacher represents innovation, while the father represents tradition in the narrative. Tynystanov introduces these characters

³ K. Tynystanov, *Okuu kitebi*, Tashkent, 1924, p. 3.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

⁵ A. Bektenov, A. Erkebayev, *Kasym Tynystan uulu. Adabiy ыығarmalar [Kasym Tynystan uulu. Literary works]*, Bishkek, Adabiyat, 1991, p. 103.

to the reader. With this text, Tynystanov conveys the idea that various beliefs among the people should have a scientific explanation.

Al basty is defined in the Kyrgyz ethnography dictionary as follows: «In a religious sense, *Al basty* is considered to be the form of a jinn or devil in the shape of a woman. This religious belief has been present among the Kyrgyz people since ancient times. *Al basty* possession is described as a difficult state that occurs when a person, especially a woman who has lost a lot of blood during childbirth, falls into it at the moment when the heartbeats slow down, breathing becomes heavy, and they begin to have bad dreams while sleeping. Such beliefs stem from physiological events occurring in the human body»⁶. According to Basilov, *Al basty* can lead to illnesses, nightmares, and miscarriages. It usually takes the form of a repulsive-looking old woman, and it is particularly dangerous for women and children⁷.

From a folkloric perspective, Abyl's experience, as something that could happen to many people in their daily lives, can also be described as a *memorate* case. *Memorates* are defined as stories related to an individual's personal experience of a supernatural event, narrated by someone who has either lived through it or heard about it⁸. Swedish folklorist Carl Wilhelm von Sydow, who first considered *memorates* as a separate category from legends, coined the term in 1934 in connection with materials that, while discussed in relation to legends, were distinct in terms of personal and entirely individual experiences that did not align with the characteristic features and traditions of legends⁹.

The work includes a lullaby titled «Бөбөк Терметкендэ» [*Böbökök termekende – Rocking the Baby*].

«Алдей, алдей бөбөгүм,
Ачууланба, ыйлаба;
Арка сүйөө чөлөгүм,
Абакенди кыйнаба».

«Come, come, my beloved
Don't get angry, don't cry;
My pillar of love,
Don't force your dear mother».

«Алдей, алдей бөбөгүм,
Алдей, алдей кыргык,
Уктай койчу чөлөгүм,
Чарык умут, чаш тилек!»

Lullaby, lullaby, my baby,
Lullaby, lullaby, my little hawk
Listen, my support,
My light, my youthful wish!»¹⁰.

⁶ O. Karatayev, S.N. Eraliyev, *Kyrgyz etnografiyası boyunca sözdük* [Dictionary of Kyrgyz Ethnography], Bishkek, Biyiktik, 2005, p. 24.

⁷ V. N. Basilov, *Mifologičeskiy slovar. Albastı*, Moscow, 1990, p. 33.

⁸ R. Kvideland, H.K. Sehmsdorf, *Scandinavian Folk Belief and Legend*, Oslo, Norwegian University Press, 1991, p. 19.

⁹ C.W. Sydow, *Popular Traditions and Their Classification*, Selected Papers, edited by Laurits Bodker, Copenhagen, Rosenkilde and Bager, 1948, pp. 60-88.

¹⁰ K. Tynystanov, *Okuu kitebi*, Tashkent, 1924, p. 17.

The mentioned lullaby is among the first examples of lullabies documented in Kyrgyz culture.

In the narrative titled «Жомок» [*Jomok – Tale*], there is an old man named Jomok who constantly cries because he has lost his calf. Jomok's hair is mixed with his beard. His beard and mustache are so long that his mouth and nose are not visible. A person approaches him and asks, «Oh, Jomok your mouth is not visible, how do you eat?» Jomok responds, «Invite me to your house, then you will see my mouth». The man invites Jomok to his house, slaughters a lamb, and as Jomok eats meat, a wolf eats his calf. From then on, Jomok is referred to as «жөө жомок» [*jöö jomok*]. Tynystanov attempts a humorous explanation of the etymology of the term *jöö jomok*. In the tale, events are more complex and lengthier, and some tales can also be part of an epic. *Jöö jomok*, on the other hand, refers to a slightly shorter and smaller tale, with a simpler plot. In the Kyrgyz language dictionary¹¹ (*jöö jomok* is described as a tale told with black words. In Kyrgyz folklore, *jöö jomok* s are divided into categories of life, imaginary, and animal tales¹². At the end of *jöö jomok*, the good always triumphs, justice is established, and order is restored.

The narrative titled «Алдар Көсө» [*Aldar Kösö*] and the Devil is based on the proverb «Aldar Kösö was the devil's father, and even he deceived the devil». In the story, *Aldar Kösö*, who goes hunting with the devil, narrates with fantastical expressions that he was born before the devil, or more precisely, that he could be the devil's own son. Upon this revelation, the devil acknowledges *Aldar Kösö*'s rights and leaves him the bird they hunted together. Thus, *Aldar Kösö* manages to outsmart the devil.

Aldar Kösö is a common character in the oral literature of Kyrgyz and Kipchak-speaking peoples (Kazakh, Karakalpak, Nogai, Bashkir, Karachay, etc.). According to the Kyrgyz Ethnography Dictionary, he is described as «a clever and skillful hero frequently encountered in the oral literature of Kyrgyz and Kipchak-speaking peoples» (Kazakh, Karakalpak, Nogai, Bashkir, Karachay, etc.). The name *Aldar Kösö* is also used as a nickname. In the tales, there are humorous narratives related to *Aldar Kösö*, highlighting his comical actions. His real name is *Chagatay*. He stands out for deceiving stingy rich people, profit-seeking merchants, deceitful mullahs, female healers and soothsayers, and malicious leaders, which is why he acquired the name *Aldar Kösö*¹³.

The incident between *Aldar Kösö* and the *devil*, when defined as an event that occurs as a result of communication with *supernatural* beings and is nar-

¹¹ A. Akmatalliev et alii, *Kırgız Tilinin Sözdüğü I* (A-L), *II* (L-Ya), Bishkek, Avrasya Press, 2010, p. 484.

¹² A. Musayev, T. Üsöналиев, *Kyrgyz adabiyaty 5* [*Kyrgyz Literature 5*], Bishkek, Insanat, 2012, p. 7.

¹³ Karatayev, Eraliyev, *Kyrgyz etnografiyası boyuncha sözdük*, cit., p. 27.

rated either by a person who has personally experienced and lived it or someone who has heard it from them¹⁴, can be considered a *memorate*.

In the work, there is a folk poem titled «Кайран Эл» [*Kayran El – Poor People*] related to the Үркүн [*Ürkün*] uprising. *Ürkün* is one of the names given to the uprising carried out by the Turkistan peoples against the Russian Empire in 1916. In some sources, it is also referred to as the 1916 Едису [*Yedisu*] uprising. In some Soviet-era scientific studies, it has been characterized as a rebellion against imperialism, a national movement, and a red resentment. However, in Kyrgyzstan and Kyrgyz literature, it is remembered as *Ürkün*.

The uprising mainly took place within the boundaries of *Western Turkestan*. The efforts of the *Russian Empire* to colonize *Turkestan*, the exploitation of the *Turkestan* territories by the *Tsarist regime*, the oppression of the local population by the appointed administrators, the privileged position of local collaborators, the forced migration of the people, and the allocation of new agricultural lands and wetlands to *Russian farmers* during the *First World War*, as well as the attempt to conscript local people into the army, are listed as the reasons that led to the uprising.

The uprising was ruthlessly suppressed by the *Tsarist regime*. The majority of those who survived were forced to migrate to *China*. After the establishment of *Soviet power* in 1917, the *Kyrgyz people* returned to their homeland. The *Ürkün* uprising had a significant impact on *Kyrgyz folk literature* and modern *Kyrgyz literature*. *Ürkün*, in oral literature, serves as a kind of turning point. The events that took place in the *Turkestan* region from the mid-19th century to the early quarter of the 20th century naturally found expression in the works of sensitive artists who closely followed the pulse of the people and society¹⁵. Figures of that time, such as *Aldash Moldo*, *Isak Shaybekov*, and *Abilkasim Jutakeev*, addressed the *Ürkün* theme in their poems. Additionally, in the *Kyrgyz academic tradition*, there are anonymous folk poems without a known author. In this book, *Tynystanov* uses *Kayran El* poem without a pen name.

«Айгыр, ат менен атан төө
Арык кылды кайран эл
Өлгөнүнүн терисин
Чарык кылды кайран эл
Жарты саат тынч алып
Жатпай жүрөт, кайран эл
Кытай журтун дүнүгө
Карык кылды, кайран эл

«Their horse and their big camel
Made the poor people weak
The skin of the deceased
He exploited the unfortunate people
Half an hour in peace
The poor people cannot endure
China's country with prosperity
Provided nourishment for the unfortunate people

¹⁴ О. Çobanoğlu, *Türk Halk Kültüründe Memoratlar ve Halk İnançları* [*Memorates and Folk Beliefs in Turkish Folk Culture*], Ankara, Akçağ, 2021, p. 30.

¹⁵ Н. Ашлар, *Kırgız Halk Şiirinde 'Ürkün' Yansımaları* [*Reflections of 'Ürkün' in Kyrgyz Folk Poetry*], «MJSS», vol. 6, n. 4, 2017, p. 5.

Айгыр, атка эки сеер
Нарык кылды кайран эл

Түрдүү-түрдүү көчөттүү
Шырдак сатты кайран эл»

The horse, the stallion for two pennies
Gave it away for a negligible price to the unfortunate
people.
Various embroidered
The poor people bought his felt rug»¹⁶.

The text titled «Малдардын Талашы» [*Maldardyn Talashy – The Quarrel of Animals*] features the *camel*, *horse*, *cow*, *sheep*, and *goat* talking. The work is written in the *fable* genre. The animals engage in a discussion among themselves, debating which one is more beneficial to humans. Eventually, an *owner* intervenes, stating that each of them is valuable to humans because of the benefits they provide, emphasizing love for animals and their significance.

Following this text, there are poems titled «Ойсул Ата» [*Oysul Ata – Camel*], «Камбар Ата» [*Kambar Ata – Horse*], «Зенги Баба» [*Zengi Baba – Cow*], «Чолпон Ата» [*Cholpon Ata – Sheep*], and «Чычан Ата» [*Chychan Ata – Goat*].

In Tynystanov's work, the ancestors *Kambar Ata* is the protector of horses in ancient Turkic mythology, *Oysul Ata* is the guardian of camels, *Zengi Baba* is the protector of cattle, *Cholpon Ata* is the guardian of sheep, and *Chychan Ata* is the protector of goats¹⁷. In Tynystanov's texts, the concepts of *Kambar Ata*, *Oysul Ata*, *Zengi Baba*, *Cholpon Ata*, and *Chychan Ata* are used both in the context of ancestor worship and to describe or give a general name to these animals.

In ancient Turkic culture, it is believed that animals have protective spirits, known as *iyeler*.

These *iyeler* safeguard the animals, establishing their presence in the cosmic design. In the mythology of a nomadic tribe that herds animals, whether domestic or wild, the importance of these animals is significant, providing essential evidence for the existence of a cult of ancestral spirits protecting these creatures.

As these nomadic people transitioned to a settled lifestyle, the emphasis on the animal cult diminished, giving way to a focus on plant-based culture. However, the cult of *iyeler* protecting animals remained preserved in Turkic mythology¹⁸. It is believed that horses, synonymous with Turks, along with sheep, cows, bulls, goats, camels, and deer, each have a guardian spirit. These *iyeler* establish the prosperity of these animals while regulating the relationship between them and humans. Ancient Turks showed respect to these *iyeler*,

¹⁶ K. Tynystanov, *Okuu kitebi*, Tashkent, 1924, p. 31.

¹⁷ M. Dyikanbayeva, *Kırgız atalar kültü ve Kırgız atalar kültürünün yaşayan kültüre etkileri* [*Kyrgyz Ancestor Culture and Its Effects on Contemporary Culture*], unpublished doctoral dissertation, Ankara, 2009, p. 135.

¹⁸ F. Bayat, *Türk mitolojik sistemi 2* [*Turkish Mythological System 2*], Istanbul, Ötügen, 2012, p. 81.

offering sacrifices during specific periods guided by their ecological balance-based folk calendar to enhance the prosperity associated with animal husbandry¹⁹.

In Kyrgyz culture, *Cholpon Ata*, known as the guardian of sheep, is primarily recognized as the name of a saint originating from the *Yesevi* Sufi order, according to most sources. This name appears in various forms in other Turkic cultures, such as *Choban Ata* or *Choban Dede*. Among the people, there are various folk narratives about *Cholpon Ata*, and these stories generally include information about him herding sheep²⁰.

Choban Ata is associated with the civilizing hero function of being the one who first domesticated animals on the steppe and became the first shepherd. However, after the acceptance of *Islam* in Central Asia, the Turkic people, through the *Yesevi* Sufi order, transferred the civilizing hero function of *Choban Ata* to *Zengi Baba*, a *Yesevi* dervish renowned for his wisdom in the region.

Zengi Baba, known for his miracles in hagiographies, is depicted in mythological tales as the shepherd who domesticates animals and grazes flocks. The cult of *Choban Ata*, the protective ancestor of all shepherds and the guardian of animal herds, became popular among nomadic Turks who raised animals for a long time. Over time, even as his function was shared among other historical and legendary figures, *Choban Ata* has managed to preserve his role as the protector of animal husbandry²¹.

In Kyrgyz culture, *Oysul Ata*, recognized as the guardian of camels, is believed to be associated with the name of *Üveys (Veysel) Karani*, an *Islamic* saint²². Similarly, among the Turkmen people, it is accepted that *Veyis Baba* is the guardian, owner, and protector of camels. According to information in the *Turkmen Soviet Encyclopedia*, *Veyis Baba* is a mythical figure or character considered the spiritual leader of camels among *Central Asian* peoples (Turkmen, Kazakh, Kyrgyz). Belief in *Veyis Baba* predates the spread of *Islam* in the region.

According to widespread folk narratives, *Veyis Baba* is believed to be the first person to practice camel husbandry, possessing profound knowledge and expertise as a shepherd. Communities engaged in camel breeding call upon

¹⁹ M.S. Chelepi, *Türk tasavvufunda hayvan ruhu ve koruyucu pirlar sembolizmi* [Animal Spirits and Protective Saints Symbolism in Turkish Sufism], IV. Uluslararası Alevilik ve Bektaşılık Sempozyumu Bildiriler Kitabı (Proceedings of the IV International Alevi-Bektashi Symposium) (October, 8-20), Ankara, 2018, p. 267.

²⁰ M. Orozobaev, *Kırgızcadaki İslam dışı geleneksel inanç ve inanışlarla ilgili söz varlığı* [Vocabulary Related to Non-Islamic Traditional Beliefs and Practices in Kyrgyz], unpublished doctoral dissertation, Ankara, 2010, p. 67.

²¹ Bayat, *Türk mitolojik sistemi 2*, cit., pp. 83-85.

²² M. Orozobaev, *Kırgızcadaki İslam dışı geleneksel inanç ve inanışlarla ilgili söz varlığı* [Vocabulary Related to Non-Islamic Traditional Beliefs and Practices in Kyrgyz], unpublished doctoral dissertation, Ankara, 2010, p. 67.

Veyis Baba for help when their camels fall ill, and they make material offerings in gratitude to him, as conveyed by *Gökçimen*²³.

One of the well-known guardian spirits in Turkish mythology is *Tanrıoğlu Baba Kambar* or *Kambar Ata*. *Baba Kambar* undertakes the task of protecting and herding horses among the Turkmen, Uzbek, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Tatar, and Nogai Turks. He is fond of entertainment as well, and after the advent of Islam, he became associated with the motif of *Kambar*, the devoted servant and assistant of Hz. Ali, responsible for caring for his horses. The volunteer servant responsible for Hz. Ali's horses is also named *Kamber*²⁴. In Kyrgyz culture, *Kambar Ata* is also recognized as the master of horses. *Kambar Ata* is described by Tynystanov with the following verses:

However, in the Sayakbay Karalayeve variant of the *Manas* epic, *Kambar Ata* is portrayed as follows:

«Камбар Ата – кара айгыр,
Көп жылкыдан кары айгыр
Камбар алып бай жакып,
Мойнуна кысе салынып
Жаратканга Жалынып
Камбар ата – айгырды,
Ал туякка чалды эми
Айгырды Жакып союду эми»

«Kambar Ata – black stallion,
An old stallion from many herds.
Taking Kambar, rich Jakyp.
With the reins around its neck
Praying to the Creator
Kambar Ata, the stallion,
He hammered in his horseshoes now.
Now, Jakyp has slaughtered the stallion»²⁵.

In Chinghiz Aitmatov's story *Meeting with the Son Chordon Kambar Ata*, rushing to catch up with his son, prays: «May Allah grant that I reach on time! Come on, help me catch up! There's so much I need to tell my son!».

He thinks, without loosening his grip on his teeth, reciting the prayer of the rider galloping at full speed: «Oh, spirit of the ancestors! Kamber Ata, the guardian of the horses! Assist me! Let my horse not stumble! Grant him the wings of a falcon! Give him a heart of iron and legs like a gazelle! Bestow upon him the liver of fish!»²⁶.

The origin of another legendary figure, *Zeñgi Baba*, is claimed to be associated with the name of a saint named *Zaňgi Baba* who lived in the 13th century. According to Islamic sources, this man, known by the *epithets* *Zaňgi Ata* or *Zaňgi Baba* due to his black color, is said to be the grandson of *Arslan Baba*,

²³ A. Gökchimen, *Türkmen kültüründe deve ve develerin piri Veyis Baba* [The Camel and the Camel's Patron Veyis Baba in Turkmen Culture], «Türk Kültürü Ve Hacı Bektaş Velî Araştırma Dergisi», vol. 80, 2016, p. 226. Available at: <<https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/pub/tkhcbva/issue/71954/1157610>> (last access: 27.07.2024).

²⁴ F. Bayat, *Kadim Türklerin mitolojik hikâyeleri* [Mythological Stories of the Ancient Turks], Istanbul, Ötüken, 2017, p. 190.

²⁵ S. Karalayeve, *Manas destanı Sayakbay Karalievdiñ variantı boyunça* [The Epic of Manas According to the Sayakbay Karaliev Version], Bishkek, Turar, 2010, p. 93.

²⁶ C. Aytmatov, *Oğulla buluşma* [Meeting with the Son], Istanbul, Ötüken, 2010, p. 48.

the first mentor of *Hoca Ahmet Yesevi* from Turkistan. It is mentioned that he earned his living by herding cattle²⁷.

The first documented example of *Bekbekey* is also found in the work. In Kyrgyz folk poetry, *Bekbekey*, which is sung with a melody under the title «Эмек Ирлары» [*Emek Irlary*] that encompasses agricultural and livestock activities, is typically performed during summer evenings while herding animals or guarding the livestock pen.

Bekbekey is a song primarily sung by young girls while herding animals or overseeing the pen, with the aim of protecting them from thieves, wolves, or various calamities²⁸. The *Bekbekey* song is usually performed by bridesmaids or girls and, occasionally, by boys who are waiting for flocks of sheep. During mountain nights, in the warm summer months when the weather is pleasant, or in the cool spring and autumn months, these songs are sung with the accompaniment of the *kobuz* for the shepherds waiting with their flocks in the pens²⁹.

In Kyrgyz folklore, there are various examples of *Bekbekey*. Some modern poets also have poems titled *Bekbekey*. In Kyrgyz folklore, *Emek Irları Bekbekey* is divided into three main classes: *Bekbekey*, *Shyryldang*, and *Op Mayda*. Etymologically, according to some scholars, *Bekbekey* is the name given in the form of «bek» «bek» «ey» to protectors considered sacred by ancient migrant peoples. However, some scholars indicate that the words «bek, bek, ey» have evolved from exclamatory verbs to nouns³⁰.

Folklorist S. Zakirov expresses the following idea: in the past, attendants who stood around the stable to protect the animals, calling out to each other. Girls who looked after the animals expressed their feelings with the words «бек бол» [*bek bol* – be well], «сак бол» [*sak bol* – be careful] in the rhythm of the song as «bek.. bek...ey., sak...sak...ay». The words later sung separately merged, giving rise to the song *Bekbekey*³¹. An example of *Bekbekey* in Tynystanov's work is as follows:

«Мине турган атынга
Жал болоюн бекбекей!
Иче турган ашынга,

«To the horse you will ride
May its mane be like silk!
To the food you will eat,

²⁷ M. Orozobaev, *Kırgızcadaki İslam dışı geleneksel inanç ve inanışlarla ilgili söz varlığı* [Vocabulary related to non-Islamic traditional beliefs and superstitions in Kyrgyz], unpublished doctoral dissertation, Ankara, 2010, p. 67.

²⁸ C. Tashtemirov, S. Bayhodcovev, S. Zakirov, *Kırgız elinin oozeki çığarmaçılık tarıhının oçerki* [An Outline of the Oral Literary History of the Kyrgyz People], Frunze, İlim Basması, 1973, p. 24.

²⁹ N. Yıldız, *Kırgız Türklerinde iş türküleri* [Work Songs of the Kyrgyz Turks], «Millî Folklor», vol. 18, n. 70, 2006, p. 70. Available at: <<https://www.millifolklor.com/PdfViewer.aspx?Sayi=70&Sayfa=61>> (last access: 27.07.2024).

³⁰ U. A. Asanov, *Uluttuk ensiklopediya* [National Encyclopedia], Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan Yay, 2015, Vol. 2, p. 808.

³¹ T. Tanayev, *Kırgız folklorundagı lirikalık janrlar, I. Kitep* [Lyrical Genres in Kyrgyz Folklore, Vol. 1], Osh, OMU, 1998, p. 18.

Бал болоюн бекбекей!	May it be sweet like honey!
Түндө түндөп Жүгүргөн Түлкүнүн колу сөгүлсүн, Түнкү үйкүнү төрт бөлгөн, Карышкыр каны төгүлсүн.	Running in the night, May the fox's leg break, Interrupting the night's sleep in the middle, May the wolf's blood be spilled.
Бекбекей качты, бел ашты... эй...	Bekbekey ran away, crossed the mountain pass, hey...
Саксакай кууб адашты... эй...	Saksakay lost his way while chasing, hey.
Бекбекей, бек кайтар!... эй...	Bekbekey, keep a good watch! Hey...
Саксакай, сак кайтар!... эй...»	Saksakay, guard and protect! Hey...» ³² .

In Tynystanov's work, there is a text titled «Чагылган» [*Chagylgan – Lightning*]. This text features elements specific to ancient *Turkic* beliefs about lightning. In the narrative, lightning strikes a house in the village, resulting in the death of a woman and animals. Tynystanov critically examines the prevalent belief in lightning nails among the people with a modern perspective. According to Tynystanov, lightning does not strike in the shape of a nail, and the hero in the text eventually abandons this belief. Tynystanov argues that an illiterate population can make various claims and attribute natural events to wrong and ancient beliefs. He emphasizes the fallacy of such beliefs. However, Tynystanov does not provide a scientific explanation for the occurrence of lightning in the text; he simply states that lightning does not fall like a nail.

The ancient Turks used the expression «Tanrı yaşın yandaşattı» meaning «God struck with lightning or thunder»³³. Among the ancient Turks, there was a belief and ceremony related to the lightning nail and raising it to the sky. In Central Asian communities, when lightning strikes the ground, its nail is believed to be driven into that location. While considering the place where lightning struck sacred, the Turks avoid getting too close to it and keep their animals away. According to the Kyrgyz people, the feathers of an animal grazing in a place struck by lightning immediately fall out, leaving it completely bare. This is because when lightning strikes a place, its nail remains stuck there. The ancestors of the Uyghurs also gather at the site where lightning struck, perform rituals, sacrifice animals, and bury them in the same place after the ceremonies. After some time, they gather at the same location again. Female and male shamans recite prayers, and warriors ride their horses, circling around the pit or the tree burnt by lightning³⁴.

The perceptions of lightning and thunder in ancient Turkic beliefs are quite

³² K. Tynystanov, *Algachky emgekter* [Initial Works], Bishkek, 2001, p. 184.

³³ M. Kashgarly, *Divanü Lûgat-it-Türk* [Besim Atalay], 5th ed., Ankara, TDK Yayınları, 2006, Vol. 4.

³⁴ B. Ögel, *Türk mitolojisi* [Turkish Mythology], Ankara, Turkish Historical Society, 2002, p. 284.

complex. Uyghurs interpret lightning and thunder as a message from God. They shoot arrows into the sky and shout while lightning falls, and they welcome lightning by banging metals together to create noise³⁵. According to some beliefs, there is a deity associated with lightning. This deity follows evil spirits on the ground, sends its fire to the trees where they hide, and thus causes lightning to strike. *Burkut Ata*, recognized as a common deity in the Turkic world responsible for bringing rain, also performs the task of causing lightning among the Tatars and Turkmens³⁶.

In the journey from Central Asia to Anatolia, the phenomenon of lightning, as well as the sun, moon, and rainbow, has not been well-received despite positive beliefs³⁷. According to *Reşidüddin*, in the 13th-14th centuries, there were two tribes, one afraid of lightning and the other not. The *Uryankat* tribe claimed to be associated with those who blew the bellows in *Ergenekon*. Their traditions involve shouting at the sky, lightning, and thunder when they occur frequently, and speaking ill words. According to the Mongols, lightning is similar to a dragon. When it strikes and falls somewhere, they sit in their tents in fear and do not go outside³⁸.

2. Окуу-Жазуу Бил [*Okuu-Cazuu Bil – Learn to Read and Write*]

The work was published in Moscow in 1927. During that period, the state aimed for the widespread literacy of the population, and Tynystanov wrote his work in line with this goal. The first part of the work aims to teach reading and writing; therefore, the letters of the Arabic alphabet are introduced, and words are divided into syllables. There are few folkloric texts in this work, and besides grammar and literacy texts, there are also texts related to the state structure of that period.

In this work, there is a text titled *Ürkün*, which provides information about the 1916 *Ürkün* uprising and the tragic events that occurred to the Kyrgyz people after the uprising. Following this text, there is the poem *Kayran El*, which Tynystanov had used in his previous textbook. In the folk tale titled «Дупыстрык

³⁵ A. Inan, *Eski Türk Dini Tarihi* [History of Ancient Turkish Religion], Istanbul, 1976, p. 30.

³⁶ A. Gökçimen, *Türkmenistan'da Bir Yağmur İyesi, Burkut Ata* [A Rain Spirit in Turkmenistan], «Bilgi», vol. 52, 2010, p. 70.

³⁷ F. A. Turan, *Orta Asya'dan Anadolu'ya Mitik Yolculukta Tabiat Olayları* [Natural Events During the Mystical Journey from Central Asia to Anatolia], «Milli Folklor», vol. 12, n. 96, 2011, p. 57.

³⁸ B.S. Sayılır, *Eski Türk İnanış ve Mitolojilerine Göre "Ses" in Türkler Üzerindeki Etki ve Yansıması* [The Effect and Reflection of 'Sound' on Turks According to Old Turkish Beliefs and Mythologies], «Ulakbilge Journal of Social Sciences», vol. 68, 2022, p. 3.

Менен Буруштук» [*Durushtuk menen Burushtuk*], there are two wealthy men, one honest and the other deceitful. The honest one is named *Durusbay*, and the deceitful one is named *Burushbay*, as given by the people. *Burushbay* is much wealthier than *Durusbay*. One day, *Burushbay* asks *Durusbay*:

Burushbay, isn't it better to get rich with deceit in the world?

-No, it's not better!

-Look at my wealth. It's almost ten times the money earned with honesty. Let's ask people which one is better. If you win, I will give you all my wealth, but if I win, you will give me all your wealth³⁹.

Durusbay refuses this proposal. He doesn't want to enter into a pointless bet and risk losing the money earned honestly. Because if they ask the people, they might say that *Burushbay* is right. Therefore, *Durusbay* makes another proposal: when it becomes clear over time who was wrong, the losing party will go to the other and confess their mistake. The two men agree on this matter. Years pass, and both of them grow old. One day, *Burushbay* visits *Durusbay*, inquiring about his well-being and whether he has increased his wealth. *Durusbay* says that he hasn't increased his wealth and has no worries. He explains that, being old, his sons are now taking care of his affairs. They treat him very well and respectfully, promising to uphold the image of a good person that he inherited, and he has no concerns. *Burushbay*, on the other hand, complains that he hasn't received any good from his sons and that they have squandered his wealth recklessly.

Although he claims to work honestly, he complains, saying, «Were you honest yourself?». *Burushbay* confesses to *Durusbay* with tears in his eyes that honesty is the most sacred thing in the world.

3. Биздин Тил [*Bizdin Til – Our Language*]

The work is primarily written for the instruction of grammar and language peculiarities. The book includes rules for writing letters, information about the October Revolution, excerpts from various Kyrgyz epics, some poems from Tynystanov's collection of poems called «Касым Ирларынын Жынагы» [*Collected Works of November Poems*], and various information related to military service. While Tynystanov notes the sources of some texts, he does not specify the sources of others. It is highly likely that the author himself wrote these texts. Excerpts from the epics «Janyl Myrza» and «Semetey» are used for the instruction and practice of certain grammar additions in the work.

³⁹ Bektenov, Erkebayev, *Kasım Tınıstan uulu. adabiy çıgarmalar*, cit., p. 107.

4. Жаны Айыл [*Jany aiyl* – *New Village*]

The work is written in Latin script and is intended for elementary school students, containing numerous pedagogical texts. In the text, there is a narrative related to the legend of «Baba Dyikan», who is considered the master, ancestor, and protector of farmers in Turkish mythology. Baba Dyikan is known by different names among various Turkic groups, such as *Bobo Dehkon* in Uzbeks, *Baba Dyihan* in Turkmens, *Dikan Baba* or *Dikan Ata* in Kazakhs, *Diyhan Baba* in Karakalpaks, and *Baba Dyikan* in Kyrgyz⁴⁰.

According to the legend, it is believed that Baba Dyikan appears in the form of a gray pigeon. If Baba Dyikan walks among the crops, the harvest will be abundant. Kyrgyz people expect abundance and prosperity in the harvest from Baba Dyikan. When they harvest the first crop, they pile it up in the shape of a peak, sacrifice a sheep on top of the pile, and sprinkle the blood as an offering. Then, they wait for the arrival of Baba Dyikan. They believe that Baba Dyikan, after waiting throughout the night, will fly in and land on the pile, bringing blessings.

Based on an alternative perspective, Baba Dyikan is considered the first person to sow wheat in the soil. The song he sings while working is called «Оп Майда» [*Op Mayda*]. In Kyrgyz, «Mayda» [*mayda*] means «small, thin, few, tender, young». These communities that sow wheat with a plow place a large tree trunk in the middle of the threshing floor and tie their oxen or cows to it in turn. During plowing, the tied rope winds around the tree trunk. The ancient Turks called this tree trunk «op». Therefore, during the threshing time, if an animal goes outside the designated area, it is driven toward the «op» side⁴¹. In another expression, «op» is considered a shout, a command, or a scream to empower the animal plowing the field⁴². In *Dîvânü Lugâti't-Türk*, «op» is explained as the «ox in the middle of the oxen that run to thresh»⁴³.

Baba Dyikan appears very rarely to some people in the guise of an old man with white beard. This legendary element, especially encountered in folkloric materials such as tales and epics, as well as in applause and prayers, is also present in the Manas epic. In the epic, Manas encounters his father Jakyp Baba Dyikan. In the variant of Manaschy Bagysh Sazanov, the event is narrated as follows: The Turkish tribes, who suffered a major attack by the Chinese, lose

⁴⁰ A. Karypkulov, *Manas ensiklopediya I* [*Manas Encyclopedia I*], Bishkek, Kırız ensiklopediyasının başkî redaksiyası 'Muras' ilimiy-progapagandık işker dolbooru, 1995, p. 121.

⁴¹ C. Tashtemirov, S. Bayhodcoyev, S. Zakirov, *Kırız elinin oozeki çıgarmaçılık tarıhının oçerki* [*An Overview of the Oral Literary History of the Kyrgyz People*], Frunze, İlim Basması, 1973, p. 30.

⁴² A. A. Akmataliyev, *Kırız adabiyatının tarıhı* [*History of Kyrgyz Literature*], Bishkek, Kut-Ber, 2017, p. 125.

⁴³ Kashgarly, *Divanü Lûgat-it-Türk*, cit., p. 439.

the battle and are expelled from the Central Asian region where they lived. Exiled to various regions as separate tribes, the Kyrghyz are moved away from the Tian Shan mountains and settle in the Altai mountains. Here, having lost his parents at an early age and facing hardships in poverty, Jakyp seeks refuge under the protection of his older brother Bay. One day, a white-bearded, turbaned old man, riding a packless ox, crosses paths with Jakyp in the area of Aykol and suggests planting wheat there. Taking the old man's advice to heart, Jakyp requests a bag of wheat from his brother Bay and plants it where the white-bearded man had advised. That year, crops in other regions suffered significant damage from locusts, but Jakyp's crops, with the grace of Baba Dyikan, remain unaffected and yield abundantly. From that day on, Jakyp sells his harvest, improving his situation and becoming wealthy⁴⁴.

As Bayat⁴⁵ states Baba Dyikan is a sturdy old man who serves as the patron of farmers, being the one to plant the first seeds and open the first irrigation channels. However, despite being the patron of farmers, Baba Dyikan couldn't make the irrigation canal on his own; he learned this from the Devil. At this point, the interaction between legend and folktale comes into play.

In the story written by Tynystanov, events unfold between Baba Dyikan and the farmers. Even though the harvest is abundant that year, the farmers are not satisfied, so they call Baba Dyikan to increase the yield. A farmer wants to sacrifice his goat to summon Baba Dyikan, but his wife opposes this idea, leading to an argument. The dilemma is that if the sacrifice is not made, significant wealth will be lost. The future wealth cannot be compared to the goat. The farmer decides to sacrifice the goat, pleads with Baba Dyikan, completes the necessary ritual, returns home, sets up a feast, and invites all the neighbors. Some of the neighbors approve of the farmer's sacrifice and pleas to Baba Dyikan. After the meal, the guests disperse. The farmer's wife suggests returning to the field to prevent the livestock from entering and eating the crops of returning people from the high pasture. However, the farmer opposes his wife's idea.

While the farmer sleeps at home, he dreams of Baba Dyikan. In the dream, Baba Dyikan comes to the field and relieves himself; suddenly, the crops multiply, and the harvest increases. The farmer cannot contain his abundance of crops in the containers. Interestingly, the Baba Dyikan the farmer sees in his dream is actually comprised of many horses and foals. These horses and foals come to the field at night, devour all the wheat, but instead of the crops multiplying and the harvest increasing, the field is left with nothing but horse dung. The farmer's wife wakes up early in the morning, goes to the field, sees the devastating scene, and cries. There is nothing left in the place of the wheat but blowing winds. The farmer, still asleep at home, wakes up in confusion

⁴⁴ Karypkulov, *Manas ensiklopediya I*, cit., p. 121.

⁴⁵ Bayat, *Kadim Türklerin mitolojik hikâyeleri*, cit., p. 195.

and asks, «What happened, what happened?». The woman, holding a cow dung fork, responds, «Baba Dyikan, Baba Dyikan». The text concludes in this manner.

5. Тил Сабагы [*Til Sabagy – Language lesson*]

In this book, written in Latin script in the year 1932, alphabet, grammar, suffixes, and spelling rules are taught. In the preface of the book, Tynystanov mentions that the book is written according to the Kyrgyz language program and emphasizes that the goal of the book is not only to teach reading and writing but also to contribute to children learning their mother tongue quickly and accurately. Additionally, it is stated that the book will help children develop various skills. The work includes folkloric verses, songs, and riddles inserted into the dialogues of students. In this work, Tynystanov also provides detailed information about birds. In his poem titled «Ак Бугудай» [*Ak Buudai – White Wheat*], he almost pleads with wheat, wishing for it to grow with high yield.

«Ак буудай	«White wheat,
Ак буудайм,	I am white wheat,
Толук даның,	With full ears,
Башынды ие көр!	Bow your head!
Ушу Жаздын	This spring
Маани-Жайын	Appreciate it!
Жакшы биле көр!	Know its value well!
Капыталдын	Into the black soil's
Жүрүгүнүө	Into your heart
Октой тие көр!	Enter like a bullet!
Октой, октой, октой!	Like a bullet, like a bullet, like a bullet!
Октой тие көр!»	Enter like a bullet!» ⁴⁶

Conclusion

Kasym Tynystanov, who made significant contributions to the development of the Kyrgyz language and culture, was executed by the Soviet regime in 1938 at the age of only thirty-seven. In his textbooks and other literary-cultural works, Tynystanov extensively utilized folkloric sources and oral traditions. There are two main reasons for Tynystanov's preference in this regard. Firstly, during that period, there were no written Kyrgyz texts readily available for

⁴⁶ K. Tynystanov, *Algaçkı emgektek* [*Sensor efforts*], Bishkek, 2001, p. 220.

students in schools and the wider population to read. Secondly, Tynystanov aimed to introduce folkloric works to the general public and evoke national consciousness among the people.

While some of the non-folkloric texts in these works are about the Soviet state and ideology, Tynystanov's character is closer to the *Jadidism* ideas, which include national motifs, rather than the Soviet ideology in terms of temperament and worldview. His initial education in a village school, followed by his involvement in the *Alash Orda* movement during his time at the Kazakh Education Institute, and the influence of *Magzhan Zhumabayev*, further intensified Kasym Tynystanov's national sentiments.

Despite this, Kasym Tynystanov believed that folkloric products should be frequently used in the upbringing of Kyrgyz youth, emphasizing fundamental moral, humane values, and national consciousness. According to him, *folklore* and *mythology* constitute the most valuable cultural treasure of a nation, and this treasure must be utilized in the education of the new generation. The identification and analysis of the folkloric products in Tynystanov's works hold importance for both Kyrgyz folklore and global folklore studies.