



## EPOS AND SHAMANISM

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Article history:	Abstract:
<b>Received:</b> 22 <sup>th</sup> April 2021 <b>Accepted:</b> 7 <sup>th</sup> May 2021 <b>Published:</b> 7 <sup>th</sup> June 2021	The article examines the system of motifs associated with the initiation of the epic hero, which plays an important role in the plot of the epic, in comparison with the system of shamanic and Sufi imaginations. Theoretical views on the properties of the alpine system are described.
<b>Keywords:</b> Epos, alp, shaman, shamanism, baxshi( narrator, bard), sufi, sufism, eran, the sorrow of alpine, rebirth, Askar mountain, milk lake.	

We can see congeniality between shaman and "bakhshi" in the terms, which express the notion of shaman in Uzbek. Among Uzbeks the word *shaman* mostly used in scientific literature and gained popularity. People use the words "qushnoch", "bakhshi", and "parkhon" to refer shamans. Particularly, in the regions such as Fergana valley, Tashkent, Jizzakh and some southern regions of the country people call shamans as *bakshi*. Akin Kazakhs also use the word *bakshi* to denote shamans. In many places of southern provinces of Uzbekistan, *bakshi* refers to the singers of folk poems, while "qushnoch" and "parkhon" refer to shamans. These two meanings of the word *bakshi* – shaman and a singer of folk poems – show us that these two notions have the same root, and it was mentioned in general folkloristics as well.<sup>1</sup>

"The worldview of shamanism is based on belief in various kinds of spirits that inhabit the world around the person and live in living entities in the form of a soul"<sup>2</sup>. The main sign of shamanism is the belief in the need for special intermediaries between the human group and the spirits, who are allegedly elected, made a special people and trained by spirits themselves. The duty of the shaman mediators is to serve the spirits and to guard fellow tribesmen against the troubles with the help of the spirits."<sup>3</sup>

According to shamanic worldview, the process of selecting deserving candidate for shaman (intermediary) and taking on the responsibility of a shaman by selected person is consists of three stages:

- Selection by the spirits;
- Shamanic disease;
- re-creation as a shaman with the help of spirits.

Mentioned stages of initiation is almost same in the all places of the world where exists shamanic worldview, and the practice of Uzbek shamans proves this as well. In this process of initiation, Sponsor Spirits (*momolar*) and the Protector-Spirits (*bobolar*) take the soul of shaman to the upper world to instruct and empower him leaving his body in the earth. Right in that time the selected person to be shaman gets "shamanic disease". This spiritual state happened with grand shamans earlier – in their 3-5, and with weak shamans faced with it in their 10-12. In shamanic worldview, process of "re-creation" is one of the main factors to become a shaman from ordinary person and as a result, the Protector-Spirits get a cooperator for themselves.

The harmony between the images of shamanic practice and system of *alp*-ness, which I am presenting as a criterion for heroic folk poems, sheds light on several important theoretical issues. The complex of motives such as "foolish actions of a young hero" or "a disease of *alps*", "re-creation" of a hero and "approving as an *alp*", which took place literary expression in the folk poem "Guroghlining tughilishi" (The birth of Gurogli) has a harmony with the initiation process in shamanism.

We want to analyze comparatively the system of *alp*-ness, which contains the essence of heroic folk poems and the initiation process as a central point of shamanic worldview.

<sup>1</sup> Жирмунский В.М., Зарифов Х.Т. Узбекский народный героический эпос. – М.: Государственное издательство художественной литературы, 1947. – С. 520; Мирзайев Т. Халқ бахшиларининг эпик репуртуари. – Тошкент: Фан, 1979. – 152; Эшонкул Ж. Эпик тафаккур тадрижи. – Тошкент: Фан, 2006. – 122; Турдимов Ш.Г. "Тўрўғли" дostonларининг генезиси ва тадрижий босқичлари. Тошкент, "Фан". 2011. – 240.

<sup>2</sup> Басилов В.Н. Избранники духов. – М.: ИПЛ, 1984. – С. 9.

<sup>3</sup> Басилов В.Н. Избранники духов. – М.: ИПЛ, 1984. – С. 208.

1. Being under the attention and protection of epic protectors of hero even before the birth (being the direct fruit of a "divine fetus" in the early period). As emphasized by the researchers of shamanism, shamans also will be under the attention of certain protector-spirit before his/her birth.<sup>4</sup> In the folk poem "Guroghli", Hizr, the main sponsor of the hero calls Guroghli as a "son", "a breath son". In the Laqay version of the poem, the mother of the hero gets pregnancy from the look of Hizr.

2. The age of the hero when he gets "alp disease". According to shamanic worldview, a strong shaman gets "shamanic disease" when he turns 3-5. Guroghli also gets "alp disease" when he was 3-7 years old.

3. Teaching the secrets and nuances of *alp*-ness to hero by epic protector takes place in the protector's place. Guroghli meets Hizr and *chiltans* (sponsor spirits) in the cave, which situated in the mountain called Asqartogh. He finds there his lost epic horse and takes the test to check his strength.

4. Re-creation of the hero as an *alp* or noble man in the settlement of protector. In shamanism, particularly in the practice of Siberian shamans, protector-spirits eat the body of shaman; sometimes they boil his body, temper him and turn him back to normal state in their settlement (cave or uninhabited place). As a result, he turns into shaman from an ordinary person.

We can read about the process of re-creation of hero in the folk poem "Guroghli". In Turkmen version of the poem, the protectors (*eran*) tear the chest of the hero and wash all his organs with a light and give him a drink called *antahur* (*sacred water*) under the plane-tree. In Uzbek version of "Guroghli" the protectors make him a noble man by giving him *antahur* (*sacred water*) and take him to their ranks. In Azerbaijani version of the poem, the hero obtains the power of *alp*-ness by drinking a water of magical spring when the light of the clashed stars gets into the water and wave it. In all versions of this folk poem, re-creation of the hero (*alp*) happens in places such as mountain, cave, under the plane-tree (sacred tree) and near the magical springs.<sup>5</sup>

In the poem, a place where happened re-creation of the *alp* was interpreted in correspondence with imagination about the center of the earth in the system of mythologic imaginations of Turkic nations about the structure of the universe. In the worldview of Altaic Turks, which influenced less by other religions, the universal view of this imagination described as follow: "There is a mountain, and a milk lake on top of this mountain, an island in the center of the lake, and a poplar with the golden leaves which connects the earth and sky. This place was called as the Navel of the Earth."<sup>6</sup>

According to ancient mythological views of the people (who had lived in Central Asia), the souls of all human beings inhabit in the milk lake on top of the mountain Asqartogh. When the soul of a man moves to this world and birth a baby, in the poplar appears a new leaf. This leaf grows as the newborn griws, and the deeds of this man will be written down on this leaf during his life. People thought that when the order comes from the sky, the life star of this person dies and tears out its leaf from the branch. According to this view, when a person dies, his life star also flies and tears out his leaf from poplar's branch, his soul will go to the mountain Asqartogh again.

5. Getting his weapons from protectors (*eran*) by the hero also similar to the shamanic traditions as shaman gets his equipment – tambourine (*dungur*) by the will of protector-spirits at the appointed time by spirits.<sup>7</sup> Shamans wear their talismans also in accordance with the types of spirits.<sup>8</sup>

6. Obtaining magical power by the hero is one of the focal points in the system of *alp*-ness. We can see it in the eyes of Guroghli in Uzbek version of the poem. It can be seen in the voice of the hero in Azerbaijani version, and in getting well of the hero by seeing star, when he gets injured with his horse in Turkmen version. The same feature exists in the system of shamanic views as well.

7. Asking the wish of protectors (*eran*) by the hero and telling his destiny by protectors. What does this mean? Foremost, it means that *alp* is a selected person like a shaman. Predestination of his fate is in his mission as an *alp*, and his responsibility in accomplishing this duty.

After listening hero's wills, sponsors (*eran*) promise him to protect him and tell him his destiny. After the event of re-creation of the *alp* like shamans he will be under the protection of his sponsors and achieve his goals with the help of his sponsors.

8. Direct relationship between the power of the hero and power of his sponsors has similarity with shaman's practice, which has direct relationship with his protector-spirits.

9. Recognition of the hero as an *alp* after his return from the place of sponsors. This motive ends the chains of the plot, which describes the process of "becoming full-scale *alp*". Practically return of Guroghli from the place sponsors with his horse as an *alp*, and his appointment as a king in Chambil has similarity with the recognition of shaman by his tribesmen after his "adventures" with protector-spirits. A new shaman in tribe cures the illnesses of his tribesmen and helps them in difficulties. Correspondingly, the *alp* gives a strength to his people, reunites them as an

<sup>4</sup> Basilov V.N. Izbranniki duxov. – M.: IPL, 1984. – S. 59.

<sup>5</sup> Гўрўғлининг туўғилиши / Айтувчи Муҳаммад Жомрод ўғли Пўлкан. Нашрга тайёрловчи: М.Муродов. – Тошкент: Бадий адабиёт нашриёти, 1967. – Б. 129.

<sup>6</sup> Басилов В.Н. Избранники духов. – М.: ИПЛ, 1984. – С. 70.

<sup>7</sup> Басилов В.Н. Избранники духов. – М.: ИПЛ, 1984. – С. 77.

<sup>8</sup> Басилов В.Н. Избранники духов. – М.: ИПЛ, 1984. – С. 117; Гўрўғлининг туўғилиши / Айтувчи Муҳаммад Жомрод ўғли Пўлкан. Нашрга тайёрловчи: М.Муродов. – Тошкент: Бадий адабиёт нашриёти, 1967. – Б. 132, 134-135; Кўрўғлу / Тартиб едани: М. Н. Таҳмасиб. – Баки, 1959. – Б. 33.

originator, and improves self-awareness of the people. He gathers young men and respected elder people to restore statehood of his dependent country. He brings the respect and honor to the nation. He helps to achieve the goals of the people of his country, and lifts the humanity to the new level of perfection.

In "Guroghli" folk poem, comparative analysis of motifs, which have been reflected *alp*-ness, with traditional shamanism system indicates that, "*alp*" and "shamanism" were in the composition of entire traditional system of ancient Turkic people. According to these systems, the person, who was not a shaman could not enter to the "*world of spirits*" and the person – *alp*, who did not spiritual prepared also could not enter to the world of *alp*-ness. As opposed to ordinary people, shamans have sponsor *erans*, who will connect them to "*world of spirits*", and it is understood that, *alp* has *eran*-sponsors, who will connect him with entire galaxy – underground, ground and space and help and support him to go to those places freely. The roots of these imaginations are connected to ancient animistic views, which mentioned that, people and spirit-*eran* world communicates with the help "chosen" object. In "Guroghli" folk poem, the motifs that fit the outline of the shamanism system worldview directly, proves that this epic is the product of ancient mythopoeic mind, which is the basis of the animistic concept.

Traditions of *Alp*-ness system in "Guroghli" mostly were reflected in its introductory part, letters which are in bold.

With the help of *erans*, Guroghli can walk on the ground, in underground, in the space easily; all sciences and languages were given to him. His sight can even crush a stone. He can sing by playing in musical instrument (in the Azerbaijani version, the hero is a peerless man in love – *bakshi*. The Earth shudders from his voice). He can be transformed into different aspects by the help of white and black feathers, which have been given by protectors (*erans*). Among shamans, there could be such a people, who have one or two traits of *Guroghli*. But, there is no such a shaman, who has all traits, power of *Guroghli*. No shaman will be charged with the task of *alp* – collecting people and rebuilding the country. If he does the same thing, his mission goes out of the sphere of shamanism and goes to the *alp*-ness side. In a word, shamanism will be part of the imaginations of *alp*-ness system. Because, *alp* is the greatest shaman at the same time. The *alp*, who is the shaman at the same time, is even higher than the greatest shamanism. Just as the Prophet's sanctity and sufficiency were great. At the same time, the *alp* is considered to be the greatest *bakshi-uzan*. Thus, shamanism, being as a brook of the oldest *alp*-ness system imagery, has subsequently developed as an independent system. Today, *alp*-ness system imagery is seen as an artistic code in the epic, while the imagery of shamanism system lives as a living process in the minds and worldviews of the people.

In the evolution of artistic mindset, the Uzbek epos passed through a purely artistic mindset and the shaman epic samples remained in the early periods of the historical process among Uzbeks. Based on the findings<sup>9</sup> of Ingyong O, a folklore writer, we can say the existence of shaman epos samples, shaman epic songs and ceremonies among other nations of the world, in particular the Korean people. These states and data provide important facts to clarify epos development and evolution stages. The comparative study of the Uzbek and Korean epos, and the performing arts, will give important theoretical conclusions about the development of world folklore and the present state. In the process of present globalization, the role of the epos in human morality, in the development of all samples of art is unique; therefore the study of all epic samples in the international arena remains one of the most actual issues.

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<sup>9</sup>Ingyong O. "Alpomish" va "Jumong" dostonlarining qiyosiy-tipologik tahlili (Comparative typological analysis of folk poems "Alpomish" and "Jumong"). Toshkent, "Turon zamin ziyo", 2014. – 220.