



SPEAKING NAMES AND NUMBERS OF THE GREAT KYRGYZ EPIC “MANAS”

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Abstract

The main idea is to discuss if the names and numbers have direct meaning or they may be based on the connotations that are hidden in the names. In western culture names may consist of two main elements like the name “William”, it means “Wille or will”, or resolution and “helm”- or helmet, as the result of that the name “William” means “will helmet”, but not the “helmet” of the will.

Classification of the names according to their thematic function may be done in two ways 1) on the basis of the denotative meaning, here we mean logical

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subjective meaning or direct or denotation of the names. There we include natural geographical names of the economic regions, just the names of the people without connotative meaning or in its direct meaning. 2) on the basis connotative meaning, so the names may be associated with different events, peculiarities of the social life of the people, with cultural motivation of the people's life. There are a lot of such names in the epic "Manas" There is a connection and motivation between the names and what they mean.

The names of the things that Manas used have interesting origin and it is connected with the adjective "white". They are: his military (army is possible) tool "Ak Kelte", his sword "Ach Albars", his bird "Ak-Shumkar", his horse "Ak Kula".

What is in the name? It expresses semantic, cultural, and personal peculiarities and a phenomenon. Given names may suggest a virtue or a character trait, topographical feature, an occupation, or even a Biblical, historical, or mythological figure. It is interesting to note in the epic "Manas" that every name has its interesting origin from the historical as well as from the mythological point of view. As the result of that the translator have to know about the background" of the Kyrgyz culture in the naming of the people.

Key words: connotative meaning of the words, sacred numbers, mythology of ancient Turkic people, folk characters, virtual prototypes, speaking names, totemic culture, names and numbers as a cultural concept.

Kyrgyz epic "Manas" with its billions of lines is among the world epics like Indian "Mahabharata", Greek epic "Illiada", and German "Elder Edda" as treasury wisdom, spiritual unity of the people, cultural encyclopedia but also it shows the deep essence of the national character"

Every topic in the epic is worth interpreting and understanding. One of such topics is the names of the heroes and the numbers that are used in the epic and draws the reader's attention. Generally the names seem just the names, but when we look into the content and the origin we can see interesting background with its different connotations. The researches of the great scientists as Ch. Valichanov, B.B. Radlov, A.A. Akaev, R.Z. Kydyrbaeva, Sh.B. Akmoldoeva were useful to continue the research about this epic and its translation.

Naming is one of the cultural concepts in the life and depending on the culture it has different structures in different nations. In western cultures people have three names—two given names and one family name. The given names consist of the first and a middle name. One of the peculiarities of the western names and all three names together make up the legal name. Beside the legal names people may have one or more nicknames and endear names. All the names have their meanings, some of them may be taken from the Bible, the others may be taken from other languages.

The main idea is to discuss if the names and numbers have direct meaning or they may be based on the connotations that are hidden in the names. In western culture names may consist of two main elements like the name "William", it means "Wille or will", or resolution and "helm"- or helmet, as the result of that the name "William" means "will helmet", but not the "helmet" of the will.

Middle names or the second Christian names are very popular in western culture, they appeared in the middle ages

Germans in the USA, specially in Pennsylvania used several forenames in colonial times. After the revolutionary war (1775-1783) middle names became not so popular as it was before.

In Great Britain and in the USA family names may be often used as Christian names. In translating the names it is not enough just to translate them, it is better to understand what they mean in real life and what they stand for.

In Kyrgyz culture people have only two names, the first or the birth name and the family name, no middle name. In early times the Romans had only one name, later they began to use three names like in the western countries.

Classification of the names according to their thematic function may be done in two ways 1) on the basis of the denotative meaning, here we mean logical subjective meaning or direct or denotation of the names. There we include natural geographical names of the economic regions, just the names of the people without connotative meaning or in its direct meaning. 2) on the basis connotative meaning, so the names may be associated with different events, peculiarities of the social life of the people, with cultural motivation of the people's life. There are a lot of such names in the epic “Manas” There is a connection and motivation between the names and what they mean.

In this article we will discuss about the names of the second group. It is very difficult to translate such language units with connotative meanings, even the names of the people. In translation of the names we can use such methods like transliteration, calquing, description and so on. Any way we may lose the connotative meaning of the names and there may not be the same association of the word Manas and Kanykei for the foreigner as it was for the Kyrgyz people. The task of the translator is to keep the background colors and to give it to the foreign reader. In this case pragmatical aspect of translation is important for the translator as well as for the reader, or for the receiver of the information. So extralinguistic facts can not change linguistically units.

When we speak of the great epic “Manas” it is impossible not to speak about the origin of the name “Manas”. There are different versions about this name in different languages. In Arian tribes there is the name Manu. Manu means ‘man’ -to think- or ‘mind’, or ‘intelligence’ in Arian. There is a mythology about the nomadic Arian people. If we take the meaning of the word Manas in Sanskrit it means “cleverness, mind, brightness- (There is a special category of the terms “cleverness” “mind” which differs the man from the animals. There are some similarities in the name of the character in the epic ‘Manas’ and “Manas” is as the first mythological character in the epic for the Kyrgyz people as he wins different kinds of animals that appeared in ancient times. According to the description we can understand that those animals are very ancient. The Sanskrit word that means brightness or cleverness also correspond the character of the epic “Manas” . He is the only bright character who wants to defend his own land from the enemies and who would like to keep peace, to devote international relations among different nations. The name “Manas” is not only the main character of the epic but also it includes such connotation like “sacredness” “dearness” “valuable’ together with his totemic animals that support him all the time, during the battle and it was an unusual character for the people and at the same time it is connected with mythology and history of the Kyrgyz people. Nowadays there are a lot of people who would like to name their sons “Manas”. It is for the reason that they would like their sons to be brave and clever like Manas. But there is a tradition if you would like to give the name of the great people you do some ceremonies for the sake of that name like slaughtering the sheep and praying for that the spirit of that person would support him.

We mustn't forget that Manas has his nickname like “Chong Jindi” which means “a big hooligan or a big fighter”. Giving such a name has two reasons 1) Kyrgyz people have a tradition, if the family would like to protect the child from evil eyes you should give unknown, bad names not to be noticed to the enemies. 2) it describes one of his features or

moods, or peculiarities in everyday life. The name Chong Jindi is given for Manas because when he was a small boy he was so naughty that he behaved like a silly boy-, he slaughtered the sheep without any reason and presented it to his friends or when somebody offended him he killed and there are so many other reasons why he received this name. Besides Manas had a magic force not to be burned, not to be killed, not to be injured and so on. It is interesting to note historical background of the names. If we analyze the names of the epic “Manas” we can find some prototypes of the main character “Manas”.

Researching the history S. Klayshtornui considers that “Tapy Alp Sol” as Kyrgyz a warrior might be as the prototype of Manas. There are a lot of virtual prototypes of the Kyrgyz hero Manas.

The names of the things that Manas used have interesting origin and it is connected with the adjective “white”. They are: his military (army is possible) tool “Ak Kelte”, his sword “Ach Albars”, his bird “Ak-Shumkar”, his horse “Ak Kula”.

There is a great legend about his horse “Ak Kula”. Usually people define and name the animals according to their color that they had or to the qualities they had. In this case the naming of Manas’s horse is quite different. There is something mystic and magic.

It is described with great love and interest to the horse or to any animals as the Kyrgyz people were nomadic and took care of the animals very well and all kinds of stylistically devices are used in the description of his camel - Kambarboz, his bird-Ak - Shumkar, his dog- Kumaiyk and his horse- Ak Kula.

In the description of the horses there are about two hundred words that are used in the epic “Manas”. There are more than thousand words that are connected with the horse in the epic.

The addition of the word “ak-white” to the names of the horses like “Ak Kula”, “Ak sargyl”, “Ak Kokyl”, “Ak Kuiruk”, “Akborchuk” is a special poetical form in the epic “Manas”. This form is used in the names of his tool- “Ak Kelte”, his clothes- a kind of special jacket- “Ak -Olpok” and “Ak-Kanku”- his saddle. There will be no difficulties in the process of translation, they may be transliterated but behind these words there is the connotative meaning that helps to discover inner structure of the meaning and the word “ak- white” gives positive connotation for the reader. If the epic is translated for an other culture like Hindi, it should be taken into the translator’s consideration where the word “ak –white” in Hindu culture may be used as the sign or symbol of mourning or something negative.

In some cultures numbers mean something peculiar for the people. There is the number “40” that is mentioned in the epic several times in all the versions of the epic.

There are lot of word combinations with the word “forty”, for instance, “kyrk chilten”- forty spiritual supporters of Manas.

The word “chilten”- comes from the Iranian word which means –“chil”-forty and “tan “ means “ person”, all together it means totemic notion like “forty supporters” that have magic force to support somebody without being seen to anybody. In the epic it is described as an epic tradition and according to Iranian mythology “forty chilten” has something mystic and magic and they support the person who they like. There are other word combinations with the word “forty-kyrk” –kyrk chilten- forty spiritual supporters, kuyk-choro-forty warriors or soldiers, kyrk jigit- forty fellows, kyrk kyz- there is a legend about forty girl’s life and love, Kyrk kaiyng-Forty birches, kyrk yilyy kyrgyz-forty Kyrgyz family that moved to Altay, kyrk yryy el- forty tribes of the Kyrgyz people, kyrk nookor-forty friends, kyrk bala-forty boys.

On the base of the content number “40” is sacred and symbolizes poverty in the epic. Number “40” which shows traditional unity, philosophical understanding of the world by the Kyrgyz people is special for them.

Forty people gathered under one union and under one leader.

There is a proverb “one of the forty is sacred, one of the thousand is a prophet or like God (olya-one of the images of the prophet). There is a word combination “kurk choro” that is closely connected with the hero Manas till the end of the epic.

When we read the whole epic we see not only forty warriors who fought together with Manas in the battle but also their braveness. In real life there are more than forty, more than sixty but number “forty” is mentioned as his “forty warriors” symbolically. There is no use to write all their names but the main point to mention is that each of the warriors had their own specific manners or characters to help Manas in the battle or even in everyday life. For example: the name “Koshoy” one of the Manas’s advisers endowed magic force -to write a verse or to sing a song, the ending, “oy” means as the former ending of the personal names, the second meaning of the name “Koshoy” is the God’s ability to write a verse, talent.

There is a folk character in the Russian tale “Koshey” who posses such qualities like “not to die”, a person with magic force, in this tale and in the epic “Manas” they are positive heroes.

One of the forty choros- (warries) is Abysh -Koshabysh. In the epic he is the character who can count all the gathered people quickly or who is good in math. The next character is Alakey, who was the best shooter, the third is Agyday, who was the best fortuneteller, he always told about the coming events

The next is Toorylchy, who is the best “chalgynchy”, another’s name is Kalkaman, who was a good leader and an organizer. So each choro-warrior has his own abilities to lead and participate in the war, to win the war.

There is other magic number in the Kyrgyz culture is “six”. It has not only positive color, but also negative color depending on the situation. There are so many word combinations that are used in the epic with different connotation. They are “six sher-six lions”, “six kurch”, “six aram”. “Six sher” is a metaphor which means six great heroes of the world or this area like prophet Sulaiman, prophet Daud, one of the epic heroes Iskender Zulkarnain, epic hero Yrystom Dastan, prophet of the god Aziret Aaly and the sixth hero of the world “Manas” is mentioned here as the youngest one. The word combination “six sher” is zoomorphemized by means of the word “sher” which means khan or the leader of the lions, so these six characters has the features of the brave lion. They posses braveness, strength, might power, muscle, sway, influence like a lion, that’s why it is metaphorized like “six sher”. It is one of the traditional devices not only in the Kyrgyz epic but also in the Central Asian epics. Understanding the background of the epic we may say that epic “Manas” is so important for the world culture to develop the unity of the people in the world.

The origin of the word combination “six aram” is interesting. The word “aram” in Kyrgyz means something dishonest, something shocking, banned, something fraudulent, dishonest, deceitful, prohibited and illegal. In the epic according to the context we mean the people who were against Manas’s activity and these six persons always tries to be in opposition in the battle, even in his every day life. As the result of their typical characters they are renamed like “six aram”. It is a metaphor too. In the epic by the word “six aram” we mean Manas’s enemies like Abyke, Kobosh, (Bakdoolot’s sons) Kochkor, Chybyt, Adybay, Kolbay. There is a connotation in number “six”.

In the word combination “six kurch”– “six sharp” – sharp is the quality of the knife. “Six sharp” is the common name of the swords that fell down from the heaven specially for Manas’s best warriors. The sword was for Manas, its name is Zulpukor, the second is for Ajybay, its name is “Achbolot”, the third is for Bakay, its name is “Kulbolot”. The fourth is for Almambet, its name is “Joykuma”, the fifth is “Achalbars ‘it is for Chubak”, the sixth sword is for Surgak, its name is “Narkesken”. Every sword is described by means of the special epithets and with great interest. In the epic you may see a lot of word combinations with number six, like six cities, six water and every word combination possesses connotation.

The next important fact is to know what it means in reality or what is the origin of this name. There was no such a name in Kyrgyz like “Kanykei” Manas’s wife’s name maiden was “Sanyrabyiga”, In Tadjik means “beautiful”, as she was the daughter of the Tadjik khan- Temirkhan or in other versions it is named as Karakhan. Her name “Kanykey” is originated by the free word combination “khanga nike” –which means “marriage to the khan”. According to the Kyrgyz custom or to the plot of the epic genre or from ancient mythology of ancient Turkic people, heroes’ marriage is quite different from the marriage of the ordinary people in the tribe or in the nation. Kyrgyz people were very democratic with their daughters. The girls or ladies choice was important in finding the future spouse, There was an unwritten law for them like if a man (specially a warrior) wanted to marry a girl, have to fight. If the boy won in the competition he will marry to her. If the fellow could not win the girl, then he is to be her slave. It is interesting to note that one of the Greek tribes like Saks has the same tradition – if a sack man wants to marry to a girl, there would be a battle between the girl and the boy. If the boy wins then he has the right to marry her. If he could not win he should be her slave. It was not the same case with Kanykei, though it was with Kyz Saikal.

When Manas came to propose to marry her, he visited her residence “ordo” without any invitation and permission declaring that he is Manas, her future husband. But Kanykei was so angry that he broke the tradition of the marriage. There was no permission for the bride to visit her groom before the wedding ceremony. As the result of that she injured his hand angry Manas wanted to launch a war in the land of his future father in law. But wise and quick witted Kanykei did not allow the war and she found the way out smiling at Manas and apologizing for her being proud and for his quick tempered manner. The people were satisfied about having wedding ceremony saying that she is worth to be the bride of the great hero –khan – warrior – leader like Manas. So she was the model of the khan’s wife. Kanykei showed the real generosity 1) when she sewed “kandagai -trousers” for Koshor for his wrestling with Joloy. 2) when she built the tomb for Manas, she killed all the builders of the tomb in order not to be known for the enemies. (there are 77 versions of the epic and this case is in one of these version. 3) she could make medicine from herbs and when Almambet was injured she cured him and Almambet recovered. 4) She knew how to take care of Manas’s horses like Akkula. So she showed all the best sides of the lady whose husband is a leader, a warrior, and a hero. She is not only a lady, but also a wise leader and an adviser, the best sewer, a very good hostess.

The next name is Jakyb, Manas’s father. This name has a lot correspondents in European and Turkic languages like Jakub, Jakob, Jakub, (in Uzbek, Turkmen, Tadjik).

As to the origin of this name we have a lot of meanings from the Bible till our everyday usage of this name. This name tells us about the main root of the people wherever they live. Besides Manas has a magic force not to be burned, not to be killed, not to be injured and so on. When he was in the battle he was always supported by the

different totemic animals like lion from the sides, dragon from the back side and a bird from the head and a baby camel from the other sides, so we came to the conclusion that every name has its own history and special meaning and peculiarities

What is in the name? It expresses semantic, cultural, and personal peculiarities and a phenomenon. Given names may suggest a virtue or a character trait, topographical feature, an occupation, or even a Biblical, historical, or mythological figure. It is interesting to note in the epic “Manas” that every name has its interesting origin from the historical as well as from the mythological point of view. As the result of that the translator have to know about the background” of the Kyrgyz culture in the naming of the people.

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