

THE DEPICTION OF BAKSHIS AND MYTHOLOGICAL FIGURES IN THE TURKIC VERSIONS OF THE "ASHIQ NA'JEP" EPIC

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Abstract

This article discusses shamanic and demonological images in the poem "Ashik Najep", one of the most popular anonymous poems among the Uzbek, Karakalpak and Turkmen peoples, which have long been neighbours in the ethnocultural area of Central Asia in the Aral Sea region.

Basically the repertoire of Ruzimbek Muratov and the version of Ugulzhan khalfa who lived in Khorezm region in the Uzbek language, the version in Turkmen by Mammetanna Sopyev, the variants and the versions of Karazhan Batir in the Karakalpak language are included in the comparative analysis.

In this place, the poem reveals the love of the people for the art of music, the importance of music in matters of education, the peculiarities of the art of "baqsishiliq" (the art which performs poems) and the issues of customs and traditions.

In addition, the epic tells about the creation of the image of a "bakhshi" (a person who performs poems), the traditions of giving wishes by the divine powers and forty shiltens and the peculiar differences in master-disciple matters.

As a result, according to each person and nation came from their national mentality, it is noted that the poem "Ashik Najep" was performed by "baqsi" in various repertoires.

Keywords: Pir, forty shiltens, wishes, disciple, bakhshi, master, poem, repertoire, version, song, music, tradition, art, image.

Introduction

Since ancient times the art of "baqsishiliq" has been common among the nation, bakhshis (people who perform poems) performed lyric and epic poems at wedding spectacles. People were keenly interested in this art. In ancient times the word "bakshi" meant the term "developed art", world scientists stated their opinions about the origin of the word "bakhshi". For instance, the turkmen scientist B.Veliev in his book "Turkmen xaliq poeziyasi" (Ashgabat 1990) compared etymological origin of the word "bakhshi" in Chinese, Hindi, Mongolian, Turkish, Tatar and Sanskrit languages and expressed important thoughts. He remarked as below: "Some scientists stated that the word "bakhshi" originated from "baq-si" (advisor, teacher) in Chinese. "Another scientist V.V. Bartold guessed that it originated from the word "bxigshu" (secretary) in Sanskrit language in the period of Mongols.

In ancient periods Mongols addressed to "lukpans" as "bakhshi". But nowadays this word is used in mongols, manjurs and qalmaq as a clergyman. In Hindi in Babury's period high-ranking

people were called as “bakhshi”. In ancient times Turkish and Mongols addressed to secretaries who wrote official letters for the government as a “bakhshi”. Turkmens called people who performed the whole poem through the melody as a “bakshi”. According to I.D.Tursunov, the word “bakshi” which is used as “shaman” in Kazakhs differs from the word “bakshi” in Chinese. Also it is different from the word “bxikshu” in Sanskrit language. As the word “qon” originates from the “qon’si”, it originates from the word “baq” in Turkish languages and means the word “doctor”.

Until now in Tatar nation “doctors” are called “breadwinner”. In our opinion the word “bakshi” in Turkish originated from “bag’-shi” in Chinese¹.

The well-known uzbek folklore scientist M.Juraev² remarks about the bakshi’s execution in uzbek folklore and also stated that it was searched by academic T.Mirzaev for the first time in uzbek folklore.

According to Xodi Zarifov, the word “bakshi” was taken from the “baxsha” in mogul and buriyat languages and means “ustod mag’rifatshi”. In uzbeks the word “bakshi” in a broad sense means “xaliq da’stanshisi, da’stanlardi atqariwshi, yadta saqlawshi ha’m a’wladtan-a’wladqa jetkeriwshi, o’nermentshi”³ (people who perform poems).

So, it is clear from the given information that the truth about bakshi’s performance among the nation has been common since early times. Because, “people thought over especially the musician’s biography, the form of musical instruments and the origin of melody in a mythical way. They gave a mythical power to Baba Gambar’s character in the origin of “duwtar” (it is one type of musical instrument) whereas they stated their initial simple views about the origin of nation melody. In addition, they mentioned about the bakshi’s duties, demands of melody as an art in stories about “Ashiq Aydin”⁴.

Therefore, through the epos "Ashiq Najep", which summarizes the profession of baxshi and its tasks and programs, which have been known to our people since ancient times, we get acquainted with the story of the mastery of the art of baxshi in the Oriental peoples. In the saga, such an image is especially evident in the image of Ashiq Aydin Pir. One of the main reasons for the inclusion of this image in the plot of the saga is the Turkmen scholar S. Gutlieva in her work: "In the order of the society ruled by Oshik Aydin, the ability to act outside the will, the sudden infusion of talent and divinity, the mystery. The persistent notions of discovery in the Middle East, the perspectives of the people are included in the plot as a special way of revealing the ideal of the people, a true master of the profession, its social meaning⁵.

The image of Saga Ashiq Aydin Pir was created as a master of the word craft, and his image depicts the power of magic. That is why the image of Ashiq Aydin Pir is "to some extent closer

¹ Велиев Б. Түркмен халк поэзиясы. Ашгабат, 1990 // Aşyrow D., Rejebow D., Kuýasowa G., Agaýew A., Aşyrowa M. Çagalar edebiyaty we labyzly okuw. Aşgabat: Ýlym, 2010. –B. 24.

² Мирзаев Т., Саримсоков Б. Достон, унинг турлари ва тарихий тарамийети // Ўзбек фольклорининг эпик жанрлари. - Тошкент: Фан, 1981.9-61-бетлар. // Жураев М. Фольклоршунослик асослари. (Ўқув қўлланма). Тошкент: Ўзбекистон Республикаси фанлар академияси Фан нашриёти, 2009. –Б.61.

³ Муродова М. Фольклор ва этнография. Ўқув қўлланма. Тошкент – 2006. –Б. 77.

⁴ Гутльева С. Нежеп оглан дессаны. – Чаржев.1990. –Б. 3.

⁵ Гутльева С. Нежеп оглан дессаны. – Чаржев.1990. –Б. 6.

to the artistic image than the mythical depiction." In other words, he was a demonologist, a master of the word profession in the minds and art of the people, and Ashiq Aydin was recognized as a very intelligent, educated, good-natured, helpful people, with divine power in the word profession. According to the saga, Ashiq Aydin Pir taught his students the art of speech and wished them to become people devoted to their people and homeland⁶. Therefore, he emphasizes that the word profession of bakhshis should not be used only for their own benefit. In these episodes, the events between Ashiq Aydin Pir and Alband, Navruz Bakhshi are clearly visible. These episodes are also reflected in the Turkic versions of the saga, ie in the Uzbek, Turkmen and Karakalpak versions. That is why the well-known scholar K. Maksetov⁷ says that the Karakalpak version of the epos "Ashiq Najep" was prepared by his teacher Ashiq Aydin, who trained students such as Alband, Navruz, Genjamurat, Azben. It should also be noted that in the Karakalpak version of the saga Karajan Bakhshi, the story begins with the story of Ashiq Aydin Pir. That is:

"When Adam ota (one of the first representatives of human being) was first born, Ashiq Aydin was born. Ashiq Aydin had more than three hundred students who knew music, performing the music from the bottom of their hearts."⁸

In the Uzbek version, the image of Ashiq Aydin Pir is widely depicted in episodes with such bakhshis. For example, in the Uzbek version, Ashiq Aydin Pir stands out as a person with a divine power. After educating his own disciples and giving them a white blessing, the goals of his disciples are realized. According to the saga, the disciples of Ashiq Aydin Pir were ordinary people. One of his disciples, Najep, is one of the smartest and most thoughtful heroes. The main reason why Najep is a musician is the inequality in the society and the lack of respect for each other. That is, it reveals Najep's goal of becoming a baxshi-musician. It gives rise to the idea that Najep should fight for good. For example, these episodes are typologically described in three folk versions of the saga, namely, Uzbek, Karakalpak and Turkmen. For example, in the Uzbek version: "Now listen to the news from Najep Ulan, who came at the period of seven months. After for sometime, and Najab, who is seven months old, has been sent to school but he had no desire for studying, kept not attending the classes. Then Alband said that:

"O rich boy, I sent you to school, I gave you my duty, and now you feed me, clean me, take care of me, my son," he said.

"It will be wonderful, father," said Najab, playing in love with the horse, playing hide and seek, going to bed, getting up early and playing again.

But when Alband returns, he is hungry, and in their case, Najab is busy with the game. Alband sees this situation:

"Come on, Najabjon, did you feed the yorga (unique species of a horse) after I left?"

"Father, when you see me feed the horse ever, it has been standing since you left," said Najep.

⁶ Ошиқнома 4 китоб. Урганч, 2009. –Б. 7.

⁷ Мақсетов Қ. Қарақалпақ халқының көркем аўызеки дөретпелери. –Нөкис: Билим, 1996. –Б. 295.

⁸ Қарақалпақ фольклоры. Көп томлық. 27-42-томлар. – Нөкис. Илим, 2011. –Б.279.

"Rich boy, you wouldn't have done that if you were a child of mine," said Albant, slapping Najep in the face. There was fire in Najep's eyes. He went to his mother and cried. Looking at his mother:

"Mother, is this bakhshi my real father or not?"

"If he was you your real father, he wouldn't put you in that situation," said his mother.⁹

These episodes are described in a slightly different way in the Karakalpak version of the saga, i.e., the motives for feeding the horse between Najab and father Albant are not described in this version. Only episodes in which Najab wants to become a disciple of Ashiq Aydin Pir are described:

"Now you hear the word from the child of the day from whom you hear it.

Najep boy came to age three, from three to four, from four to five, from five to six and came to the age seven after six. We can listen next words from Najep:

- "Hey", Grandfather, I grew up, lead me to the khan, I'll get rid of being orphan and I'll burst up ahead a time".

- He said

- Then, his father:

- "Hey, Najep, you're doing this in your seven, you're going to beat me with wood in your eighteen" – saying this words, father slapped eighteen times.

- Very good, than having slaps from your own mather and father-in-law, better to go away from here people say there is Ashiq Aydin. I didn't see this in my dreams, and in real life.¹⁰

- I go there, go in, do his works, and if he teaches musics such as muhalles, suxalles (these are national musics), I'll get back eighteen slaps to forty eight ones or I'll change my name"- said, he took his duxtara and went away. After this, in three country's versions described Najep's being apprentice to Ashiq Aydin.

As we see from poem, Najep works for Ashiq Aydin for seven years and lerns secrets of music. In addition to he learn about living on, humanity, working for people, loving them, kindness and evil dead. Before going back to his own house he accepts his master's wishes and observes what he said.

This episodes were given by their appearance.

He goes deep sleep and in his dream drink sharap from hand of Ashiq Aydin.

This sharap was magical and It helps to learn secrets of musician deeply. By describing cemeteries and spirits in Najep's dreams, achieved more.

We have to say that we can see dream motive's differences by demonolog's roles. In other country's poems, If hero dream, in his dream "Qiriqshilter" give wishes, but in "Ashiq Najep" poem, main hero in his dream accepts wisher from forty sheltens and his master Ashiq Aydin. Inconsequence, there are forty one demonolog characters. So , Najep a bit better than heroes from other poems.

⁹ Ошикнома 4 китоб. Урганч, 2009. –Б. 80.

¹⁰ Қарақалпақ фольклоры. Көп томлық. 27-42-томлар. – Нөкис. Илим, 2011. –Б.279.

He becomes skillful after drinking forty one bowls. In this way, we have to say that there is conventional secret numbers. By saying forty one described characters numbers. For example, in poem there is character forty shiltens and with then opened secrets of religion beliefs, it is to say that “erens”, shiltens supports people by spiritual, and rises beliefs to the future, and developes. It is common way in East to give wishes to heroes. And it’s clear for all of us that our ancestors believed for Forty shiltens, it is that the number forty becomes from traditions and beliefs. Because, from informations we know that our prophet had forty wives and shiltens. There are beliefs that they lead people to good actions, and for peoples’ good communications do everything.

In poem, topics connected and opened way to hero in order to help people. It is to say that, as we mentioned above, Najep appeals to magic forces.

For example, Najep misses for his mother and dreams:

- “I left my house even if my mother begged not to go “ – he cries. Sitting like this falls asleep.

In dream, forty shiltens round him. They asked Ashiq Aydin “who is this boy?”

- Ashiq Aydin “It’s our son Najep”.- he answered. Then let’s help the guy and they started giving sharap.

- Ashiq Aydin “pir” also gave a bowl of sharap . After drinking forty one’s bowl he got up and there were no shiltens and no “pir”.¹¹

After this motive, Najep received permission from his master, Ashiq Aydin Master to return home. However, in the epic there are places to determine the level of maturity of the art of baqsishiliq (art which performs poems) of the professional owner through experimental motives. For example, it was showed in private questions that Ashiq Aydin asked when he leaded his disciple to life.

“Ashiq Aydin told him:

“My son, if you know the song, the master will ask you a question, and you will answer. If you know the answer, the master will allow you, otherwise you will not be allowed”.

Najep

“If you have any questions, ask me,” he said.

Oshiq Aydin Master:

- Ul nedurkim ikki boshli

Porasi bor chorasi yuk,

Ul nedurkim besh yuz yillik

Manzili bor orasi yuk?¹²

Najab:

- Bu dunyodir ikki boshli

-Porasi bor, chorasi yuk?”

At this point, Najep replied to questions of his teacher Ashiq Aydin master, but master asked in order to test his disciple again.

¹¹ ЎзР ФА Кўлёмалар институти фольклор фонди. Инв. № 7238. –Б. 32-33.

¹² ЎзР ФА Кўлёмалар институти фольклор фонди. Инв. № 7238. –Б. 34-36.

“My son, this is not the end of question. Such answers are known to all servant boys. Maybe you learned from them. I will ask you another question, and if you answer that, then I will allow you to return, and if you do not answer, you will not be allowed.”¹³

Then Najep said,

“My teacher, don't be disappointed. If you have any more questions, ask them.”

Oshiq Aydin:

- Ul ne togdir, korki ketmas erimas
- Ul ne daryo tular-toshar yurimas?
- Ne sokidir ulmas-yitmas, karimas,
- Ne karvondir, kunib o'tar xatar, ey?

Najab:

- Kov togining korki ketmas, erimas
- Kungil daryo, tular-toshar yurimas.
- Ajal soki o'lmas-yitmas, karimas
- Jon bir karvon, ko'nib o'tar xatar, ey.

After these questions and answers, Oshiq Aydin looked at Najab:

“Son, you have achieved your goal, you have become a “baqshi” (a person who performs poems) you will be my best student,” he said.

In the epic we see that the hero's interest and talent of the art of music were instilled in him in a mythical way. However, even though Najep was such a talented, it can be seen that his actions were imbued with real-life events, that is, connected with life. That is, these episodes in the poem are marked by the fact that Oshiq Aydin master gave “duwtar” (it is one type of musical instrument) and blessed.

In this way, the motive of the mysterious object is widely used in the poem, which has wide impact on the development of the plot. For example:

- If you have forgiven my sin, give me a black duwtor (a type of musical instrument) that came down from the sky, he asked.

- “Son, the duwtor (a type of musical instrument) that came down from sky is standing in the corner of the side room. Bring it to me, I will take a look.

- Najab ran to the room and took the “duwtor” (a type of musical instrument) and put it in the hands of his teacher. Ashiq Aydin after seeing the “duwtor”:

Duwtor (a type of musical instrument) is good, and now it's your. Let me say you a two-word exhortation. And said

“Have a nice way, may your time be perfect, may you get a land wherever you go”.¹⁴

Here, he gave the mysterious object is a symbol of the magical power of the sacred art of music black duwtar (a type of musical instrument). That is, Ashik Aydin master blessed his disciple through this duwtar (a type of musical instrument). To bless is considered to be a confession of the disciple by the teacher. We all know, the duwtar (a type of musical instrument) is made of

¹³ ЎзР ФА Кўлёмалар институти фольклор фонди. Инв. № 7238. –Б. 37-38.

¹⁴ Ошиқнома. Ошиқ Нажаб. 4-китоб. - Урганч, 2009. –Б.84

wood, but it is able to convey all the feelings and inner forgiveness to the human heart through the sound. Its sweet, pleasant sound resides in the soul of the listener. Man is inevitably fall in love to music. That is why our people consider music as a magical power. Therefore, the use of the mysterious object *duwtar* (a type of musical instrument) shows that such a magical power is infused in the art of folk music, even if it is developed to the level of high ideal force. In this poem, the plot is seen as a poetic tool that serves to interconnect the events.

Blessing disciple by *duwtar* which is magic subject in the poem, setting off him to way of life is not only is master teaching the art of melody, but also his disciple has an important role in his lifestyle. That's to say, Blessing is a symbol of the gratitude and thankfulness each other. It is the source of being wealthy mentally. This custom is widespread in East poetic.

In the poem, *Ashiq Aydin* and *Najep* images is given typically. By *Ashiq Aydin* and *Najep's* characters is leading kindness, well becoming ways, whereas *Najep's* images is expressed as resisting at that times period's conflicts, peoples who is a dishonest, unfair, unjust. *Najep* is an image of diligent person who is trying to place truth in life. At that poem it is caught the eye that in the *aytis* (a folk traditional compete) between *Najep* and *Navruz*, then in the *aytis* of *Albent* master.

Consequently, *Najep* spend on his occupation for kindness, injustice of period, fair. For the reason that *Najep* is a intelligent, careful, honest character. One of the main characters of this poem with the beginning of occurrence *Albent* learned the art of melody well. He will be *Ashiq Aydin* master's disciple, too. Actually, *Ashiq Aydin* master taught mysteries of the art of melody deeply. Nevertheless, *Albent's* conceit character caused to go without taking his master's blessings. For the reason that *Albent* struggled for his benefit and wealth. He trained with occupation of *bakshi* in the *King Soltan Esen's* palace.

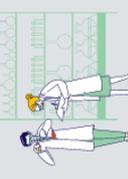
That's to say, He didn't serve for people's benefits, whereas he interested in wealth and used to live easily. It caught the eye in the poem that being charactes like *Albent* kept in the East feudal *King's* palaces. As a result of, freedom of creativity is limited. Their talented skills depends on their *King's* wishes. *Bakhshi* created a melody about their *King's* policy and fights. Therefore, in *Albent's* character it is totally shown tragic events of *bakshi* of the art of melody.

In the poem when *Albent bakhshi* was old, *King Soltan Esen* ordered his soldiers to look for young *bakshi* among the town. Then *Najep* arrived the palace with *King's* order. He competed to *Albent* master with playing the melody. In the competition *Najep* won with his talent.

To sum up, In *Ashiq Najep* poem which widespread among Turkish people, especially, *uzbek*, *karakalpak* and *Turkmen* people, it is represented that people interested in the art of melody and appreciated as a power of magic. Visiting *Ashik Aydin's* grave who is the master of the art of melody among *uzbek*, *karakalpak* and *Turkmen* people who live as a neighbor in the Middle Asia around *Aral sea* ethnic cultural areal, becomes a custom. *Ashiq Aydin's* grave is located in the Republic of Turkmenistan, principal of *Tashawiz*.

At the investigating of the discussion, it is concluded:

1. It caught the eye that creating character of *bakshi* and demonologic in the *Ashiq Najep* poem have specific customs. In the poem the impressions about perfect person of people is appeared



by demologic character. Although Ashiq Aydin master character is historical person, is not real biography, but is given decoratively.

2. It is represented people's love of melody and attracting of attention of listeners and effectiveness of melody especially, looks duxtar as a magic power.

3. Peculiarities which depends on repertoires of bakshi and kissaxan who performing poems appear in Turkish people, especially, uzbek, karakalpak and turkmen. Therefore, Ashiq Najep poem is performed by bakhshi differently and originated every people, nations and mentalities.

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