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KYRGYZSTAN SPECIAL

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CONTRIBUTORS

Prof. K. Warikoo is Director, Central Asian Studies Programme, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

Prof. A.A. Bekboev is Rector, I. Arabaev Kyrgyz State University, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

Dr. K. Ch. Sultanbekov is Head, Department of Policy of Legal Disciplines, K. Karasaev Bishkek Humanities University, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

Dr. Rashmi Doraiswami is Professor and Director, Academy of Third World Studies, Jamia Millia Islamia University, New Delhi.

Saktanbek Kadyraliev is Minister-Counsellor, Embassy of the Kyrgyz Republic in India, New Delhi.

Dr. Jyotsna Bakshi formerly a Research Fellow at the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, New Delhi is currently a Visiting Professor at the Institute of World Economy and Diplomacy, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

Ms. Abalova Nazgul teaches at the Department of Philosophy and Sociology, Bishkek Humanities University, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

Dr. (Ms.) Rysaliev Zainura teaches at the Department of Philosophy and Sociology, Bishkek Humanities University, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

Academician Vladimir Ploskih is Professor at Kyrgyz-Russian Slavonic University, Bishkek and is also Vice-President, National Academy of Sciences, Kyrgyzstan.

E.G. Koreneva teaches at the Kyrgyz-Russian Slavonic University, Bishkek.

Prof. Nisar Ahmad is former Dean, College of Management at the University of Petroleum and Energy Studies, India.

Dr. Indira Musaeva is pursuing her Doctoral research at School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

Dr. V. Voropaeva is Professor of History, Kyrgyz Russian Slavonic University, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

Dr. Cholpon Turdalieva is Associate Professor at the Institute of Eastern Languages and Cultures, I. Arabaev Kyrgyz State University, Bishkek.

Dr. Pankaj Bhan is Reader in English, University of Delhi.

Dr. S. Bhatt, formerly Professor of Space Law and Honorary Professor of International Law, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

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Editor's Page

Kyrgyzstan – the land of Tien Shan is a land-locked country having coterminous borders with Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan and Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of China. After having gained independence in August 1991 following the collapse of the former Soviet Union, Kyrgyzstan chose the path of democratic civil society based on market reforms. The country has been passing through a delicate phase of transforming into a new political, social and economic order. That nearly 94 per cent of the territory of Kyrgyzstan has altitudes of more than 1,000 meters above sea level and about 40 per cent of the area is more than 3,000 meters above sea level, imparts its own peculiarities of a nomadic society having a distinct philosophy and traditions of mountain people. Having been exposed to the influences of Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Islam, Marxism and now democracy, the Kyrgyzs retain their original indigenous culture based on mountain philosophy. The United Nations bodies have time and again underlined the importance of maintaining the eco-cultural system of the mountainous regions which are the rich and unique centres of biological and cultural diversity with plenty of hydel power and mineral resources. It is against this backdrop that this Kyrgyzstan Special issue of *Himalayan and Central Asian Studies* is being brought out.

Kyrgyzstan is projected as the 'island of democracy' in Central Asia. The economic reforms, emergence of a large number of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and multi-national corporations (MNCs), many political parties and local press are seen as evidence of growing democratization and the formation of a civil society in the country. Kyrgyzstan extensively engaged international organizations and aid agencies in several areas. In an attempt to develop the concept of local self government, world bodies like the UNDP (United Nations Development Programme), World Bank, ADB (Asian Development Bank), USAID, Soros Foundation and others have rendered assistance to this nascent Central Asian Republic. Kyrgyzstan follows a foreign policy, which is of multiple alignments or 'an open door policy.'

Though Kyrgyzstan has had to experience a difficult process of social, economic and political transformation following its independence, it has retained a relatively liberal political environment, with some independent media and opposition representation in parliament. There is a semblance of democratic politics in the country which is partly due to the particular aspects of Kyrgyz political culture - nomadic tradition and lack of authoritarian political customs.

Kyrgyzstan's ancient Silk Route connections with India have been established on the basis of archeological sites existent in Naviket, Sujab, Ak Beshim, Balasaghun etc. in Kyrgyzstan. That Naviket resembles the finds in Ajna Tepe, Fayaz Tepe, Kara Tepe and Merv in other Central Asian Republics, offers the conclusive evidence of close historico-cultural links between India and Central Asia.

Ever since the establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Kyrgyzstan in 1992, important and constructive developments have taken place in the political, economic, cultural and humanitarian spheres. Both the countries have exchanged several visits at the ministerial and other high levels. Kyrgyzstan and India have shown their commitment to secularism, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, territorial integrity and peaceful resolution of all problems. They have also been expressing their determination to increase the level of trade and economic cooperation and to devise new spheres of mutually beneficial cooperation in sectors such as information technology, mining, engineering and food processing.

Given the proximity of Kyrgyzstan to India and close historico-cultural ties dating back to ancient times, India and Kyrgyzstan need to concretise their programmes of socio-economic and cultural cooperation. That there is enough goodwill at the popular level in both the countries and there is perfect political understanding between the two governments on issues of common concern, provides a sound basis for forging ahead India-Kyrgyzstan ties in the twenty first century.

K. Warikoo

DEVELOPMENT OF STATEHOOD OF KYRGYZSTAN IN EAST-WEST PARADIGM

A Comparative Analysis

A.A. Bekboev
and
K.Ch. Sultanbekov

Geographically, Kyrgyzstan is located in Central Asia at the crossroads of the great world civilizations of the East and West, and since the ancient times, it has been absorbing cultures of both the civilizations. S. N. Abramzon, a scholar of ethnic history of the Kyrgyz people, notes that the influence of the civilizations of the East and West has intertwined in the culture of the Kyrgyz people. Sharing this view V.V. Bartold states that “Kyrgyz is a nation inclined to synthesize cultures.” Since ancient times, the Kyrgyz people have been progressing in co-existence with various nations, at the same time, absorbing alien cultural innovations that tend some researchers to refer the Kyrgyz people along with the Kazakhs to the Eurasian civilization.

It is well known that the states of Central Asia are in the initial stages of democratization, since modern democratic practices have not yet taken roots among the people. In fact, in these states, including Kyrgyzstan, traditionalism is still strong. It is, therefore, necessary to analyze and actively introduce the democratic experience of the developed countries of the world in order to achieve more dynamic reorganization of states and social spheres of life. The introduction of a foreign model for the Kyrgyz state does not mean a blind copying. While analyzing the political history of Kyrgyzstan and developing a Kyrgyz state at the present stage, it is necessary to look into the theoretical issues of building a state and society.

For better understanding, we should not only make comparative analysis of the Western and Eastern notions of a state, but also try to

find practical use of these notions in modern Kyrgyzstan. For instance, it is well known that Soviet totalitarianism during the Cold War era was defined by Western scholars as similar to Plato's totalitarian "ideal state." Actually, both the former Soviet Union and Plato's "ideal state" have all six basic features of classical totalitarianism:

- *Official Uniform Ideology* – In the former Soviet Union, it was the dictatorship of proletariat and in Plato's "ideal state", it is the idea of justice.
- *The Only People's Party Headed by a Dictator* – First, it is unequivocally Communist Party of Soviet Union (CPSU) led by a General Secretary; and, second, at first sight there is no such people's organization individually in power. Plato stresses on individuality and wisdom of a philosopher-ruler, but not on institutions. "The more number of rulers, the more difficulties will be", Plato says. However, Karl Popper insists that "any long-term policy is institutional." Therefore, if we consider that there is an estate of governors in Plato's state, specially trained for state rule, it is natural to assume the presence of some educational institutes, having unlimited power in political and social life of a state.
- *Monopoly on Mass Media* – In the former Soviet Union, there was no pluralism of opinions, freedom of press and speech. Plato also advocated total censorship on all types of arts in his state. Many scholars compare Plato's statements and the policies of erstwhile Soviet Union: As in other spheres of public life, only those ideas and concepts, senses and images, whose benefit, in Plato's words, "was obvious" for a state had received legal, or as it was called, official status.
- *Monopoly on all Means of Arms* – This sign of totalitarianism, according to many scholars, is inherent in any state as it comes out of the essence of a state.
- *System of Terrorist Police Control* – In the former Soviet system, this attribute had been distinctly expressed by repressive policy. And in Plato's "ideal state", the total control with even greater rigidity was also projected: "The most

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important point here is: no one should ever remain without a leader – neither men, nor women. Even in the most insignificant issues, it is necessary to be guided, for instance, at a first order to stop, go ahead, start exercises, wash, eat and wake up at night for guarding and execution of assignments.”

- *Centralized System of Control and Economy Management* – in the Soviet system, private property had been eliminated in the name of equality as a result of which economic life of the country was completely subordinated to the government. In Plato’s government, private property was rejected as well, because Plato’s notion of property included dwelling, property, money, gold, jewellery, even family and children. Warriors had to live and eat in barracks, and had common wives and children. Here some Western scholars term Plato’s state as “barrack socialism.” Another attribute of totalitarianism, which is often used at present, is impossibility of ousting by public will that was inherent in both the states.

But with all the similarities between both the states as discussed above, the two states differ considerably from each other. Plato’s “ideal state” nevertheless was utopian as noted by many scholars. Utopian nature of this project was about the impossibility of the implementation in real life, because Plato’s ideals would go against any ethical standards, being the distorted notions of happiness, justice and well being. Plato himself admitted the inconsistency of his ideas, but believed that all the difficulties in the way towards the overall happiness can be overcome given a wise ruler.

The erstwhile Soviet Union strived to achieve the overall well being and equality, and unlike Plato’s state, put forward actual tasks and even succeeded in realization of them. Whatever we name the former Soviet regime now – authoritative, totalitarian or even dictatorial, we have to admit that it had become one of the powerful and developed countries in the world. The great political influence, high level of education and culture, scientific achievements including space exploration and newest of the new arms – all this gave a reason to the Soviet people to feel proud of their country. The Soviet government

did much for the ordinary citizens: free education and healthcare, right to work and leisure which provided them confidence. Karl Popper admitted later: “the ancient and modern totalitarian forces – whatever negatively we consider them – are based on attempts to meet the quite natural social needs.”

The Soviet period had been more favourable to economic and cultural developments of the Republics especially the Central Asian Republics including Kyrgyzstan. Kyrgyzstan’s efforts towards modern civilization have become the main outcome of the development of the Kyrgyz statehood during the Soviet period. Being a country with backward agriculture and uneducated people, Kyrgyzstan turned to be a modern state with developed infrastructure, industry and agriculture. Education and culture achieved a lot nationwide. All this shows great progress of Kyrgyz nation under the Soviet regime. It is to be noted that totalitarian regime is a consequence of historical conditions, when establishment of other regimes becomes impossible and unacceptable. By its nature, totalitarianism is conservative and it strives to achieve steady political stability which means it strives to perpetuate its system. However, this system gradually weakens some of its positions that finally leads to self-destruction.

Such present day situations are reflected in the doctrines of medieval Arabian philosopher, Ibn Haldun. According to him, there are five stages in the development of every state. The age of a state is equal to three generations; given that median age of one generation is 40 years, a state can live on the average of 100 to 120 years. Ibn Haldun emphasizes that “the age of a state depends on the ruler; the wiser the ruler, the longer the age of the state will be.” There are many similarities between the doctrines of Ibn Haldun and the development process of the Soviet Union. Though Soviet Union “lived” less than Ibn Haldun’s estimations of “average” age, one can find certain regularity in other basic points in the development of both the states. Stages of state growth as analysed by Ibn Haldun are given below:

The first stage of state growth is characterized as primitive democracy, when the ruler demonstrates his “simplicity and tolerance”

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and unity with people. Such simplicity of the ruler is naturally associated with the image of Vladimir Lenin.

The second stage is when the ruler becomes a superior authority and tries to suppress his colleagues' claims to divide power, he "develops the feeling of arrogance and insolence." In the former Soviet Union, the second stage corresponds to the Joseph Stalin era.

The third stage is the stage of leisure and quiet life, when large cities are built, majestic monuments and constructions are erected, magnificent celebrations are held to impress other countries. At this stage, the state is compelled to spend huge amount of money for luxurious life and maintenance of government. Ibn Haldun asserts that given a wise ruler, the third stage can live for 50 to 70 years. We believe that this stage corresponds to the "stagnation period" in the former Soviet Union.

The fourth stage is the stage of crisis and transition to tyrannical style of ruling, when new "oppressive forces" opposite to the previous ones, are created, finally resulting in moral degradation of the society. In Soviet Union, the fourth stage adopted another form and followed the *Perestroika* way, without violence and bloodshed, but nevertheless, as Ibn Haldun assures, had diverted itself from previous methods of the government.

The fifth and final stage is the stage of decline and end of a state. Ibn Haldun sees the alienation of the state from its base as the prime reason for the downfall of a state. It is a deviation from democratic principles, on which the former Soviet socialist state was built.

The central idea of Ibn Haldun's doctrines has some cyclic process of state development, expressed in similarity of development stages and natural phenomena: birth – growth – blossom – fading – death. Russian scholar, L. Gumilev had developed such method, proving the cyclic process of historical development. Gumilev applied this theory more globally in relation to ethno-genesis. According to him, every ethnic group passes its natural historical cycle of development, where the scientist underlined the stages of rise, phases of maximum flight, break,

inertia, obscure and memorial phase leading to homeostasis. The whole cycle takes between 120-150 years. Each phase has its own dominating style of behaviour, for example, from sacrifice to inability to satisfy desires. Gumilev's theory may also be applied to the history of development process of the former Soviet Union.

It can be noted here that states develop in accordance with the same system and pass identical phases irrespective of the time of their existence. In spite of the dominating opinion that the Soviet system is historically the first form of totalitarianism, one has to admit that the origins of totalitarianism are to be searched in the past. In the past, Plato had written about one such form of totalitarianism calling it as tyranny. According to Plato, tyranny originates from democracy: "the greatest and the severest slavery" from "extreme freedom", and the tyrant comes from ordinary people as the protégé of people. Plato's description of tyrant corresponds to Ibn Haldun's description of a ruler: "in the beginning, he affably smiles to everyone he meets, promises much to individuals and society and pretends to be gentle and gracious to all, and later, the tyrant becomes treacherous, unjust and brutal." According to Plato, tyranny is the worst system. The basic sign of such state is the deviation from its initial basis that compels them to come to further violence and terror which leads to even greater deviation from the basis, and eventually to destruction.

The studies of development process of modern states show that more steady and stable states are the states which are based on rule of law and democracy. A lawful state is the highest form of state development, when the government is maximally separated from society and is related to it not as a part to the whole, but as the whole to the whole. Kyrgyzstan has been heading to form a lawful state after being created as an independent republic with the disintegration of the former USSR. However, Kyrgyzstan can not be called totally lawful state at this phase of development, because the government of the republic has to forcefully introduce new political system. The reason for such situation is lack of professionalism on the part of the legislators and absence of high level political consciousness among people.

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The making of the Kyrgyz statehood on the basis of democratic transformation was created on the circumstances distinct from Europe and America. Historical experience of European and American countries shows that establishment of civil society in these states proceeds on the conditions of high level political consciousness of the citizens and the habits developed through centuries, active participation of everyone in decision making process etc. In this case, a state from the very beginning is separated from the society, and social relations operate separately from natural ancestral relationship. In Asia, the dominating form of relationship between the state and citizens is hierarchical, being represented as absolute subordination of lower to the higher. In this case, the state itself arises from the system of natural relations as its continuation. The first case results in a principle of priority of personality as a citizen of a state, and, in the second case, an individual is subjugated to a state. Such perception is the characteristic feature of the society of Kyrgyzstan. Transition of culture of subjectivity to the culture of citizenship requires long term efforts to influence human consciousness.

In this respect, Kyrgyzstan has great prospects. As it is known, some democratic elements in Kyrgyz traditions, which were strengthened under the influence of the Eurasian civilization, had taken deep roots from the ancient times. The nomadic civilization always differed by its great adaptability to the external conditions and absorbed all new and progressive changes in short period of time. But along with this, it never lost its individuality. Such centuries-old traditions and foundations of the society are evidenced by the fact that the Kyrgyz people have the great epic *Manas* in mind and memory and continue to revere it till now. The epic *Manas* is not only an art creation of Kyrgyz people, but also a treatise on the ancient Kyrgyz political system as a military democracy.

It is to be noted here that the democratic relations established by ancient Kyrgyz people continue to be ideal for their descendants. And this ideal should become a base for the establishment and development of a new statehood. As Ibn Haldun said, a state should not deviate,

depart from its base to avoid its destruction. The base for Kyrgyzstan is the Kyrgyz people, their best traditions, democracy, patience and tolerance towards others. But at the same time, we should not forget that like the other nomads in the past, Kyrgyz people could absorb the culture of the East and West resulting in Eurasian civilization, and also living together and mixing with other nationalities. Therefore, modern Kyrgyzstan should develop its renewed base, and should not at all deviate from it, simultaneously adopting the best practices of other states, not copying it blindly, but transforming it according to the national traditions and customs.

While designing an ideal state, almost all outstanding thinkers including Plato paid special attention to the availability of a worthy ruler to realize their goals. Plato's best leader is a wise philosopher, being fostered by a state itself to rule a state. Selection of the best, according to Plato, should be held from the very birth according to natural capabilities and special talents of management. Further, the selected candidates should get training, and education, after each stage of training there is another selection, and only true philosophers, who understands the meaning of life, become leaders. Plato characterizes philosophers as people with good memory, firm will and exclusive diligence.

Aristotle, as it is known, was a follower of politics, understanding it as a mixture of democracy and oligarchy, ruled by the government of several people, since he thought that "masses is less subject to damage." Thus, Aristotle did not aim at educating outstanding personalities, but counted on the ordinary people, who possess three qualities: sympathy to the existing system, capabilities to deliver their responsibilities and moral virtue. If the candidate did not possess these three qualities, the preference would be given to those qualities necessary for a given post. For example, for a post in Treasury, moral virtue of a candidate was given precedence over knowledge or capacities.

Eastern thinkers put greater emphasis on the nature of a leader. Great Central Asian thinker Al Farabi devoted the whole treatise

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Aphorisms of Statesman to this subject. According to Al Farabi, a leader of a virtuous city should possess 12 qualities: health, good brain, good memory, perspicacity, oratorical skill, aspiration for knowledge, self-control, truthfulness, pride, selfless love, justice and bravery. While making a reservation that finding one person with all these qualities is difficult, Al Farabi proposed to have co-management of several people, though he preferred to have only one leader. Like Plato, Al Farabi thought that wisdom rules a state, but unlike Plato, he did not accept cruelty and intimidation by any means. In general, Al Farabi's doctrines of state are built on the exclusive meaning of a wise and enlightened ruler for overall development of a virtuous state.

Ibn Haldun also recognized the role of a ruler in the development of a state, especially in its duration. He said that the better the rule of the ruler, the longer will be the age of a state. Ibn Haldun did not idealize government system, but was sure that any system has the fate of disintegration and destruction, and saw the merit of a good ruler only in the duration of state existence.

The masterpiece of Turkic poetry— Yusuf Balasagun's poem *Abundant Knowledge* is also devoted to the training and education of an ideal leader. That is why some scholars translated the title according to its ethical and didactic contents such as 'Science of Management', 'Happy Management', 'Knowledge to Shape Tsars.' According to academician A. N. Kononov, Balasagun felt the need to write this poem in order to respond to the ground realities of his times. Balasagun said, "wise, clever, and right" ruler is important in regulating the life of a state.

Several modern philosophers and thinkers have given their ideas on the formation of a modern concept of political leadership. Political leadership has been classified into democratic, authoritarian and liberal. The democratic style assumes the collective decisions and accent on stimulating, but not forcing, actions of management system. The authoritarian style is a brutal rule and there is egocentrism in making decisions. The liberal style assumes granting people and events freedom to go in their own way.

In the last few years, there has been a tendency that policy of any state is estimated through the prism of its leader's personality. The world community accepted the image of a highly educated and democratic President of the young Kyrgyz Republic. But as researchers note, authoritativeness of leadership is more justified in the transitional period from totalitarianism to democracy, and therefore, the subsequent introduction of presidential leadership pursued such aims. According to several researchers, there is a model of developed or petty authoritarianism, which is "possible only under those conditions when country is headed by a reformer, whose aspiration to positive changes will be supported by majority of population." After estimation of the leadership results of the ex-President, one can conclude that Kyrgyzstan has had only one model of developed authoritativeness. According to overall opinion, the democratization of the society is not a single-staged phase, but a complex and long term process, and in this process, the role of a political leader is dubbed as the base for consolidation of the whole society, strengthening of international friendship and unity of all citizens of the republic. Due to this reason, people of Kyrgyzstan today pin all their hopes on the new leadership.

One of the main tasks of our political leaders is to devise a policy for country's economic development focusing more on the strengthening of the open market system of management, further development of private property and support for small and medium size entrepreneurship. Such policy should strengthen the middle class i.e. the class of entrepreneurs, which has been considered to be one of the major social processes of the transitional economy, because this class plays a role of a balancer in the face of the main tax bearer and the investor.

Aristotle was the first to mention about political interest towards middle class as the basis of a state. Despite the fact that Aristotle's democracy is one of the wrong types of government system, the characteristics of a democracy-oligarchy mixture with major tendency towards democracy are very significant. Aristotle states that the better state is where the middle class is in majority and where they are

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stronger than both the rich and poor together and separately. He explains that the rich are basically impudent and imperious and poor are despicable and humiliated, and two of them together create only a state of exploiters and slaves, not a state of free people. The middle class, according to him, are 'the best people', free born and cultured due to education. It should be noted that all philosophers pay great attention to training and education of citizens. But Aristotle, due to his bias towards the middle class, expresses regret that because the middle class takes an insignificant place in the society, the state adopts either oligarchy or democracy.

According to the existing definitions, a middle class is a social group with the following qualities: a certain level of income, property, some kind of business, high education and professionalism, relative satisfaction by position, moderate political conservatism, interest in keeping social order and political stability, and subjective identification as middle class.

Modern Kyrgyzstan possesses all the pre-conditions to form and strengthen the middle class such as open market economy, high level of education, even in some degree, a leading role by the state. Unlike many Western states, where the role of the middle class has the tendency of 'bottom up' growth, in Kyrgyz Republic, there has been "up to bottom" tendency from the beginning. The Kyrgyz state has developed a special policy on development of the middle class and many other programmes, a) a government programme of development and support of entrepreneurship in the Kyrgyz Republic, where the government has approved the basic measures on stimulation of enterprise activities; and b) development measures of micro-credit system in Kyrgyzstan with a set of measures to present micro-credits to the people.

These programmes envisaged a creation of favourable legal and political conditions for successful progress of small and medium size entrepreneurship. Unfortunately, the measures taken by the government have not led to entrepreneurial boom, but according to 2002 statistics,

the relative density of small and medium size entrepreneurs accounted for only 10 per cent of the number of capable citizens in Kyrgyzstan. The basic obstacles decelerating the growth of entrepreneurship in Kyrgyzstan are given in the following:

- Lack of finances for the development of enterprises, difficulties in obtaining raw materials, equipment and premises;
- Certain sections of the society are engaged in entrepreneurship at this stage only for the reason of lack of workplaces, therefore, their interest in entrepreneurship do not expand beyond earning minimum living expenses;
- The efforts made for entrepreneurship activities are not regulated by the government. Therefore, there is lack of well trained specialists and knowledge in marketing, as well as spontaneity. Besides, there is inadequate export of commodities;
- Extensive taxations reduce the rate of development and expansion of business, and promote the growth of shadow activities;
- In parallel with the growth of business activities, there is strengthening of criminalization of society, corruption and red tapism that have negative impact on the rate of growth of the middle class.

Thus, for more successful growth of the middle class at present, it is imperative to focus our attention on the elimination of the above listed obstacles. This will enable the middle class to become a real guarantor of stable, forward, evolutionary and democratic advancement of the state and help in realising the economic stability of the country, which in turn will eradicate the problem of poverty.

No less important task for the Kyrgyz state is safety – external and internal. The formative years of nation building of Kyrgyzstan and democratization of all the spheres of life were complicated by threats of international terrorism. In the summer of 1999, and then in 2000, bandit groups of *Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan* (IMU) had intruded into the territory of southern regions of Kyrgyzstan with the aim to enter into the neighbouring Uzbekistan. These events, known as

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‘Batken campaigns’, were not merely campaigns, but promoted international terrorism.

International terrorism today has a scent of Islamic fundamentalism. Fundamentalists are the followers of establishment of all socio-economic spheres of society in accordance with the rules of Islam. The very first aim of all fundamentalist organizations is to establish Caliphate and Islamic state and to achieve this, it is necessary to engage the ‘fake Muslim’ states, and, then, aim at realizing global strategic targets. One of the objectives of the Islamic fundamentalists is the establishment of an Islamic state in Central Asia. From the very beginning, the governments in Central Asia understood that this threat is not of a local character, but could be expanded to other regions. The 9/11 terrorist attacks in the USA and many such attacks in Russia and India have confirmed the global threats of international terrorism.

It is known since old days that “war is a harm” (Plato). But at the same time, the attitude to the war always differed in the purpose of war or object of war, and the country’s ideology plays not the last role. Plato also says that a war should be called a disagreement with barbarians, but a civil strife inside Elide is just a discord. That is why Plato approved the captivity with subsequent slavery of only barbarians, but not Hellenes. Though Aristotle did not accept the aggressive policy of Alexander the Great, but he stated that Hellenes “have the best government system and are able to dominate all over, if it would be united by one political system.”

Al Farabi in his political doctrine is against any kind of violence, though he does not refer to defence of the country and protection of the citizens from external attacks. Farabi talks about ‘just’ and ‘unjust’ wars. Just wars are those, which are directed towards the defence of a country’s territory, people and freedom. Unjust wars are those, which are held with the purpose of suppression of freedom of other people, “for revenge and satisfaction of other desires.” In the light of the state of affairs these days, when morality and decency are judged by colour of the skin and shape of eyes, Al Farabi’s sayings become very

appropriate: “Improbable and unbelievable that there is someone predisposed totally to all virtues by nature, ethical and intellectual. Same is improbable and unbelievable that there is someone predisposed to all blemishes.” Humanism and progressive ideas of Al Farabi, surpassed its time, that of domination of religious beliefs and mystery, as are shown in his other doctrines. In the medieval gloom, he does not isolate himself in the frames of his state and the reality of his time. He ponders over the fate of the world, dreaming about time when the whole world becomes virtuous, “if nations help each other to achieve happiness.”

Therefore, at this stage of development of mankind, when all the spheres of world community are affected by the globalization process, such kind of philosophical dictums once again confirm that security, stability and development of the world depends on how much the nation states strive for these conditions. And this small experience, which people have acquired during the last few decades, convincingly prove that terrorism at present does not have a definite home, nationality and religion. Therefore, the whole world community must actively and collectively fight against any form of terrorism and try to eliminate it.

During the last one and half decade, Kyrgyzstan had to not only fight external threats, but it experienced internal political conflicts. The Kyrgyz people were always notable for their great tolerance to adversities and difficulties. But at the same time, the mentality of the Kyrgyz people since ancient times has been developed with the idea of a leader. Thus, in old times, an elective Khan possessed only a nominal power and the power of tribe leaders and clan elders was more sensible and stronger, which led to tribalism and clan culture in the country. All the radical forces try to spark fights and conflicts in the region using political, social, economic and other reasons.

Such forces, which try to destabilize the society, are always present in the process of new statehood development. Plato focuses his attention on the activity of such politicians. He calls such politicians as “drones”, who “as soon as appear, bring frustration to any political

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system as an inflammation and bile in body.” Plato says that the “drones” get the lion’s share in democracy, because democracy gives illusion of permissiveness and the “drones” propagate themselves: “with rare exception, they almost take leadership, and the most poisonous of them gives speeches and operate, the rest seat close to the scaffold, buzz and do not allow anyone to speak differently.” To solve this problem, Plato suggests, “to take all precautions – not less than an experienced bee-keeper – mainly not to allow the birth of drones, but if they appear anyway, it is necessary to cut out the honeycombs along with them.”

Aristotle also focuses his attention to state security in a great deal, discussing all possibilities of internal coups and ways to preserve statehood. Aristotle states that the basic reason of coups is unequal rights of citizens. Like Plato, Aristotle thinks that in democracy the reason of revolts is demagogues, who etch some people into others and appear in places where “laws do not work”, and also fairly asserts that “Law should govern all.”

Aristotle sees the ways to preserve the statehood, first of all, in avoiding those beginnings, which would lead to destruction, and, secondly, constant inspiration of citizens with possible disintegration of the state, and, then, they would make efforts to preserve it. Another way of saving statehood, according to Aristotle, is to educate the citizens to devote themselves to the existing system. This, of course, is a very long process requiring great efforts of government and does not lose its topicality even today.

The Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic notes that the only source of power in the Republic is the unity among the people of Kyrgyzstan. Therefore, under existing conditions, for faster advancement of democratic reforms, it is necessary to work with the people, educating them for political consciousness and active position in life that subsequently will lead to development of civil political culture, which is the characteristic of more progressive democratic systems.

But the transitional period of any society is endowed with the requirements of more resolute actions from the government.

All the scholars, who study the features of transitional period of post-Soviet states, say about this asserting the necessity of compelled combination of democratic and authoritarian methods of rule. Therefore, many post-Soviet states, considering that at this phase excessive democracy would lead to spontaneous growth of private-ownership interests to the detriment of national interests, have chosen (in fact, in various degrees) authoritarian power.

The disintegration of the former Soviet Union gave a start to a quite long process of acquiring true national sovereignty of new independent states. Each of these states has outlined its own direction of development during this time. Some of the countries could not depart from the legacy of their past in full, others have gone far enough. In its growth, Kyrgyzstan has also outlined its path distinct from others. The basic achievement of these years is departure from the past and creating a way of true democratization of the whole society. We can outline some important points in the process of development of the Kyrgyz statehood:

- Power has been divided into three branches: legislative, executive and judicial. Local executive authorities are intensifying their activities; multiparty system is growing; civil society institutions are being established; pluralism of opinions is achieved; political elite is on the way of development; democratization of broad mass thinking is progressing;
- The economy of Kyrgyzstan has taken a direction towards market development model; liberalization of prices has been introduced; privatization and property privatization processes in stages; reforms in banking system; small and medium size entrepreneurship is evolving; market infrastructure is being formed; Free Economic Zones (FEZs) have been created;
- New agrarian policy has been designed; farm and agrarian enterprises are in progress; land reform has been introduced; demand credit lines have been activated; privatization of land has been introduced;
- Social policy of the government is being realized; social protection of indigent sections of population has been provided;

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reforms in healthcare are being introduced; reforms in national education have been held;

- Foreign policy is being actively implemented; integration in world community is successfully being held; efforts towards strengthening of friendship and cooperation between CIS countries are constantly made; steps have been undertaken to attract foreign capital investments and direct investments in the economy; international anti-terrorist coalition has been formed.

While analysing the development of statehood in Kyrgyzstan, one can conclude that being at the crossroads of two civilizations – East and West – Kyrgyzstan has to study and take advantage of the progressive experience of the Western and Eastern countries. The base of any country being its people, it should predetermine the country's policies and programmes. As history shows in the transitional period of democratization, it is important to have a solid society to preserve the statehood. The government should make efforts to achieve stability. One of the important factors of stability of Kyrgyz society is its political elite. So it is necessary to develop the political elite in every possible way. And in the transitional period of statehood establishment, the role of a charismatic political leader is significant.

BORDERS AND FRONTIERS IN AITMATOV'S WORKS*

Rashmi Doraiswamy

I

Frontiers are the unclear boundaries where regions are not clearly demarcated. Borders are definitive lines that outline state boundaries. The area defined as Kyrgyzstan today came under Russian control between 1863-1876 when the Khanate of Kokand was annexed to Russian empire. In 1918, the territory was incorporated into the Turkestan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic. In 1926, it became an Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic and in 1936, a Socialist Union Republic of Soviet Union. Kyrgyzstan declared sovereignty on 5 December 1990, proclaimed independence on 31 August 1991 and joined the CIS on 21 December 1991. In 1993, it changed its name from Republic of Kyrgyzstan to Kyrgyz Republic.

The colonization of the Central Asian region by the Tsarist empire and the encounter between Russia and this region under the Soviet rule, played very significant roles in the definition of 'states' in the region. Given the additional fact that large sections of these populations were traditionally nomadic and that the area had over centuries come under diverse political influences from Asia as well, made the definition of 'national identity' problematic.

The problem of borders not conforming to national identities in Central Asia is an actual one. Homelands are diffused over large areas that may have fallen into the 'other' side when borders were drawn. Identities were constructed after states were created and not the other

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way round. According to Anita Sengupta, "Prior to the formation of nation-states, the state was never seen as crucial for the determination of identity of communities. It was at best seen as a guarantor of an arrangement under which all communities existed. This was transformed in an era of 'nations and nationalism' when it was asserted that identities were to be largely defined by the nation state. In fact, in a number of cases the state not only defined the boundary within which identity was to be circumscribed, but also the basis for definition".

Once the state was created, it had to 'mark' the community with its identity. Graham Smith states that, "Since 1991, competing visions of what form these political homelands should take, have become a universal feature of politics in the post-Soviet borderlands. First, there are members of the titular nations who hold to the view that their polity is still somehow incomplete – not quite a nation-state – despite the obtention of sovereign statehood. To varying degrees, therefore, these political elites wish to complete the process of nation-building, aspiring to what Ernest Gellner calls the principle of national congruence: namely making national and political space one and the same."¹ In the referendum held on 17 March 1991, Kyrgyzstan, along with the other Central Asian states and Azerbaijan, voted overwhelmingly for preserving the Soviet Union.² The collapse of the Soviet Union has, therefore, been seen as a collapse of the centre, rather than the periphery.

There is a need to critically examine the theoretical positions on the issue of the definitions of national identity in the post-Soviet space. Most writings describe the period following the collapse of the Soviet Union as a period of the definition of national identity which is seen to be asserted in the processes of de-Sovietisation, de-Russification, decolonisation, along with transitions from command to market economy and from totalitarian to non-totalitarian governance. While de-Sovietisation, de-Russification and the transition to market economy are active markers of new identities, the so-called processes of decolonisation and detotalitarianisation are more nebulous phenomena. Decolonisation in most countries under the yoke of colonialism were preceded by mass movements for national independence, where the

movement in its imagining of the new nation, chose the markers of its future identity, often tapping history and creating 'living traditions' that would mark the new identity. Such was not the case with the Central Asian Republics where the urge to break away totally from the centre was almost non-existent. While the language issue and high handedness from Moscow's party bureaucrats had created simmering discontent in some of the Republics from the eighties onwards,³ when it came to deciding on actually breaking away, the Republics opted to stay with the Union, behaving in a manner contrary to other colonised people elsewhere in the Third World.

II

Kyrgyz writer Chingiz Aitmatov's novels *A Day Lasts Longer Than a Century* (1980) and *The Mark of Cassandra* (1995) are crucial cultural interventions in the debates about borders and frontiers and the definition of nations and states in the Soviet and post-Soviet eras. Both works, though written in different periods, question the notion of nations and borders. *A Day Lasts Longer Than a Century* was written in the Soviet period; it charts the tug of the homeland over that of the nation within the Soviet space, in which the homeland as well as the entire Soviet state (the motherland that had been defended against fascism) evoke the same emotional pull. The nation, caught between the homeland and Soviet land, with its stultifying borders and rules and regulations, does not evoke the same attachment. *The Mark of Cassandra*, written after the fall of the Soviet Union, stands in stark contrast to the 1980 novel because it rejects the very notion of a homeland.

Aitmatov in his works of the 90's continues to write in Russian, although in the past he has written both in Kyrgyz and Russian. He refuses in these works at least to excavate markers of national identity to define a de-Sovietised, de-Russified Kyrgyz identity. All the Central Asian Republics are bilingual if not multilingual. In 2001, the Kyrgyz Republic passed a law giving official status to Russian. The de-Russification programme includes shifting to other scripts and

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giving up the Cyrillic alphabet. This would, however, render the highly literate populations of these states incapable of immediately reading texts in the new script. The de-Russification programme in the sphere of language, therefore, is bound to take a long time.⁴ In fact, the processes of de-Sovietisation and de-Russification have been observed to be slower in the states of Kyrgyz Republic, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan, as compared to Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

Aitmatov, in his writings of the 90's, has continued to criticize totalitarianism and Stalinism, which he had been doing in his works even before the fall of the Soviet Union. The personal tragic history of his father, however, came to be discussed in the public domain, only after the independence. This too was done with restraint, through a third person narration.⁵ The issue has also not been used to criticise the entire Soviet system, but the negative aspects of the Soviet state such as Joseph Stalin's cult of personality.

III

Aitmatov's novel, *A Day Lasts Longer than a Century* published in *Novy Mir* in 1980, remains as pertinent today at the beginning of the 21st century as it was in 1980.

Historical events and the passing of eras deepen the resonances of a literary work. History resurrects significations that lie deep in the works, creating bridges across times. The 'universalism' that we attribute to classics, and their ability to speak across centuries, is in fact, the life that history breathes into themes, lying dormant within the text.

If Aitmatov's novel in the eighties had seemed to be a call to historical memory and a searing critique of Stalinism, it today poses the topical question of borders and frontiers, nations and homelands very forcefully. In fact, it is when we view *A Day Lasts Longer than a Century* through this prism, that its organic links with Aitmatov's 1995 novel *The Mark of Cassandra* become apparent.

In the course of the day, after the Elder Kazangap dies in Sarozek, the funeral procession of camel, tractor and dog, under the leadership

of his friend and comrade Yedigei, sets out to bury him according to the dead man's wishes. Kazangap had wanted to be buried in the legendary Ana-Beiit Cemetery. During the course of this journey, Yedigei thinks of his long life. This 'looking back' covers many historical periods in the life of the Soviet Union: the pre-war period, post-war reconstruction, Stalinism and the purges, the thaw, and stagnation. The day in which the funeral takes place, is also the day in which the two superpowers on earth realize that there is intelligent life beyond our galaxy and that given the power struggles on earth, no communication can be maintained with them. The cosmodrome near the Ana-Beiit cemetery is the site that the rockets that will fly from to form a protective hoop around the earth, effectively barricading it from any contact with an alien civilization.

The novel is set in Kazakhstan. This was a testimony to the success of the new Soviet man, where the citizen of the Soviet state could think beyond the boundaries of his own nationality and write about other nationalities. Aitmatov is bilingual too, writing in Kyrgyz and Russian. The greater identity of belonging to the Soviet Union was always there in his works. In *Piebald Dog Running on the Seashore*, for instance, Aitmatov deals with a remote fishing community in Siberia. What his works have dealt with is the creation of the 'New Soviet Man', but where he differs from other writers is his insistence on carrying the weight of traditional cultural values along in the making of this new Soviet identity. The novel is also possibly set in Kazakhstan because the Soviet cosmodrome, which is an important topographical element of the novel, is in Kazakhstan.

The novel raises the question of war and repression. Characters like Abutalip Kuttybaev were not allowed to lead 'normal' lives with their families after the World War II. The needle of suspicion was pointed at him for having been prisoners of Germans during the war and having escaped and been a partisan in Yugoslavia. The rehabilitation of Abutalip's name years later after Stalin's death, when Soviet Union established friendly ties with Yugoslavia comes too late: Kuttybaev's and Yedigei's family have already deeply suffered its consequences.

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Through the narrative of Kuttybaev, the issue of public and private domains in the life of an individual under socialism is also raised. Kuttybaev does not follow the accepted norm of the Soviet army during the World War II, where a soldier taken as prisoner was expected to kill himself. Even though his personal decision goes against the collective norm, he in no way compromises the interests of the Soviet Union. Even so, he is made to pay the price for it after the war. His desire to preserve the legends of his people to hand down to his children, is also interpreted by the authorities as being inimical to the state's interests. This intersection of the private and public, although it in no way harms state interests is what costs him his life. The thin borderline between the domains of the private and public, which though fragile, must be respected by the state, is one of the important themes of the novel. The tale of the *mankurts*, in fact, depicts the extreme situation of the emptying of the mind of homeland and kin relationships, by those in power, to ensure the complete servility of those whom they have enslaved.

The other important theme of the novel is the misrecognition of the protagonists of spaces that they have emotional links with as their own, but which have been cordoned off as borders by the state. Borders are political demarcations and are meant to be defended; frontiers are imagined limits, which can be crossed, given the will. Frontiers are extensions of the self; borders posit the 'self' against the 'other'. This is the case with the cemetery of Anna Beii, which Kazangap had identified as 'homeland' because it was tied to the collective ethnic memory of a legend. Ana Beii has been cordoned off as a high security area because of the cosmodrome nearby. The *mankurt's* mother crosses over into land under the control of the Zhuanzhuan and pays for it with her life. For her it is a frontier to be crossed to save her son; for those who control the land, any cross-over is impermissible. Yedigei's camel, too, in the mating season, crosses all borders and creates havoc in the desert. The two astronauts who go off to meet the representatives of another civilization in the distant galaxy Lesnaya Grud, feel they are extending the frontiers of

human knowledge and imagine that the earth will welcome their step of 'crossing-over'; the earth, or more specifically, the two superpowers decide to draw the border around the planet with rockets that will destroy anything that comes within its range. The astronauts treat the earth as their homeland, but earth responds by drawing borders firmly to distinguish 'us' from 'them'.

Memory (legend of the *mankurts*, Abutalip), desire (the camel Karangar, Yedigei, the legend of Rehmat Ali) and territory (Ana Beii, Earth and Lesnaya Grud) - these are the three axes around which Chingiz Aitmatov explores transgression. Just as the cosmodrome is built on a land that is enshrined as sacred in collective memory, Aitmatov layers science fiction over legend, socialist realism over myth, written word over oral tradition, nation over homeland. In posing the question of the nation and homeland, Aitmatov seems to be charting alternative emotional histories of memory, desire and territory to the ones the nation decrees. The creative portrayal of these emotional histories of homeland and frontier in juxtaposition with nation and border is characteristic of the cultural practice of nations where statehood and modernity emerged out of encounters with larger systemic structures of the colonising or other variety, in which the national unit was formed even as it came to be linked structurally to the larger unit. Aitmatov creates ever larger concentric circles of emotional homelands: from the hill Ana Beii of the legend, to Sarozek, where Yedigei and others like him have toiled for years, under Soviet rule to 'modernise' it with railway tracks and other amenities, to the larger homeland of the Soviet Union which had to be defended during the Second World War to the Earth as homeland, in the encounter with other civilizations. This sweep of a vision from the micro-spatial unit of a hill to a macro-galactic vision, is Aitmatov's own, rarely if ever encountered in creative writings in post-colonial countries. This vision was clearly born of a socialist and Soviet context, in which the encounter between tradition and modernity was a complex one, developing in spirals. If Ana Beii was sacrificed to an aerodrome, modernity would in turn become the stuff of legend. It is this cyclical

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vision that explains his use of the trains going from east to west as a refrain. The railway track, as important a line as the Greenwich Meridian, becomes the theme of an *oral refrain!*

IV

When the *The Mark of Cassandra* was published in 1995, it received very little critical attention. The little that it received was negative. Critics and fellow artists wondered why Aitmatov had abandoned his homeland of Central Asia to portray Russia and the USA in a strange semi-science-fictional narrative. Aitmatov's literary path may have taken a different direction had the Soviet Union continued to exist. He may have continued then to weave his socialist realist/mythic narratives, with a belief, whatever the hurdles, in the grand narrative of the new Soviet Man's place in Central Asia, in the Soviet Union, on the earth and in the universe. The fall of the Soviet Union fragmented this grand narrative. This was a post-modernist condition of a very different order, where Kirgizia became independent, and the umbilical cord with the superpower soviet State was swiftly cut. Rather than move on to a higher, if different form of modernism, the fragmentation of the Soviet state led to independent states getting pushed out of the realm of being part of a superpower. Boris Kagarlitsky has pointed out that the main problem of the post-Soviet states is that they are entering the semi-periphery of the new world order. They transited from command to free market economy at the time of globalization. As if this identity crisis was not enough, the Central Asian states had to work out new identities and alliances for themselves, de-Sovietising, de-Russifying themselves and inventing new symbols of national identity and golden ages from the pre-Soviet past.

The irony is that while economy, society, politics tried to adapt to transition, Aitmatov's creative mind, since it had been used to it, easily crossed borders and imaged globalization. The writers who wrote critically of him, expected him to now become a 'national' writer, writing a Third World national allegory, but Aitmatov had other paradigms to deal with. Most writers in the immediate post-colonial context are very

pre-occupied with national identity as one of the main themes of their works. Aitmatov's *The Mark of Cassandra*, in fact, refuses the nationalizing projects of the post-Soviet space. This is not a novel of de-Sovietisation; nor is it a novel that tries to delineate new national identities for the Kyrgyz. And this from a writer whose entire Soviet oeuvre argued for a respecting of past traditions in the creation of the new Soviet man.

The novel speaks of the global not from *within* national boundaries, but from *without*. If anything *The Mark of Cassandra* is a mark of the strength of the Soviet system, that this writer from a Central Asian state could actually engage in 'world literature', that is literature as a citizen of the world rather than as a citizen of this or that state. This is not a world literature born of diasporas, or migration or the extensive travel of the intellectual elites of Third World countries. It is a novel that tries to image the unasked for uprooting from a sense of belonging to the larger abstract space called the Soviet Union. The rejection, therefore, is of the whole world and the two major political systems the 20th century threw up. Filofei, resident of the cosmos for a short while, rejects both the socialism of the Soviet Union and the advanced capitalism of the USA. *The Mark of Cassandra* is the bemoaning of the loss of that greater identity that was the Soviet Union, and, in a sense, of the betrayal. Although Aitmatov wrote in Russian, he had not set any of his literary works of the Soviet period in western Russia. They were always set in the Soviet Union. *The Mark of Cassandra* is written in Russian. Russia is now the 'abroad', as is USA. And what better writer to write of the 'abroad' than Aitmatov, who had anyway, in the earlier books transgressed the boundaries of an empirical nationhood.

The Mark of Cassandra in many ways is the obverse of *A Day Lasts Longer Than a Century*. The *mankurts* of legend are here transformed into the Generation X of science –fiction: both have no kinship ties. Animals, birds and fish, in Aitmatov's Soviet period are part of the great circle of nature, of which man too is a humble phenomenon. In them, Aitmatov invests a sense of freedom, hope and renewal.

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In *The Mark of Cassandra*, the whales will themselves to death, like the lead protagonist Filofei, throwing themselves onto the seashore. It is not human agency here as in *Farewell Gulsary* that causes the death of the whales; it is their own desire to self-annihilate. *The Day Lasts Longer than a Century* in its final scenes has a bird, may be the mythical bird that cries out the name of *mankurt's* father, 'Donenbai' watch the funeral procession with curiosity from above. It is the only being that can cross borders and territories, fearlessly; yet it is bound to the earth, for the earth is its homeland. In *The Mark of Cassandra*, Filofei, sitting in the space-station, watches the world from above like the bird. There is, however, a very great difference: He has no links with the Earth. In walking out into space, to a sure death, he rejects not only nations and states and their political systems, but also the Earth as his homeland.

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1. Graham Smith, *The Post-Soviet States* (Arnold, London, 1999), p. 8.
2. "In the 17 March 1991 referendum on the Soviet Union's future, Azerbaijan and all Central Asia leaders had their populations vote in favour of preserving the Union: Azerbaijan by 93.3 per cent (although only 75.1 participated in the voting), Uzbekistan 93.7 per cent, Kazakhstan 94.1 per cent, Kyrgyzstan 94.6 per cent, Turkmenistan 97.9 per cent and Tajikistan 96.2 per cent...." *Politics of Language in Ex-Soviet Muslim States* (Jacob Landau & Barbara Kelle-Heinkele), (Hurst and Company, London, 2001), p. 12.
3. See, for instance, the chapter 'Chistka Uzbekistana' in A V Shubin's *Ot Zastoya k Reformam: SSSR v 1917-1985gg.*, (Rosspen, Moscow, 2001).
4. While Tajikistan will switch to Arabic, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan have decided to adopt the Latin script. Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan are still debating the issue.
5. For a discussion of this, see Rashmi Doraiswamy, *The Post-Soviet Condition: Chingiz Aitmatov in the 90's* (Aakar, New Delhi, 2005).

KYRGYZSTAN AND INDIA: ECONOMIC AND TRADE COOPERATION

Saktanbek Kadyraliev

The Kyrgyz Republic, which covers a territory of about 200,000 square kms. and having a population of 5,166,000 emerged as an independent state in the wake of the break-up of the former USSR. India became one of the first countries to recognize Kyrgyzstan as an independent Republic in December 1991.

Kyrgyzstan has had long tradition of close historical and cultural contacts with India. All through the centuries, economic, cultural and political relations have existed between the people of both the countries, which do influence the socio-economic developments in this Republic. Archeological discoveries show that the Kyrgyz and north Indian people have most in common in everyday life. Most contacts were made through trade between both the sides. The traders, who used to visit from India to Central Asia and vice versa, strengthened cultural linkages along with commerce. Buddhist monuments of the early middle age, “works in the style of Gandhara art” and the remains of sculptures and paintings in the ancient settlements of the Chu valley as well as the Buddhist epigraphic monuments in the Issyk-Kul region testify to the close connections between India and Kyrgyzstan in the middle age and in 15th and 16th centuries.

Close contacts were established during the Soviet period. The visit of the then Indian Prime Minister, late Rajiv Gandhi to Frunze (now Bishkek) and the Lake Issyk-Kul in 1985, opened new prospects in bilateral cultural and people to people relations. Mutual cooperation between the ‘Friendship Societies’ was very active and provided immense opportunities for getting acquainted with the history and culture of each other. The ‘Decades’ and the ‘Months’ of friendship, which were held every year in both the countries, were instrumental in strengthening these relations.

KYRGYZSTAN AND INDIA: ECONOMIC COOPERATION

During the official visit of the Kyrgyz Head of State to India in March 1992, six framework agreements and documents were signed. A Joint Declaration and Protocol about the establishment of diplomatic relations between the independent Kyrgyz Republic and Republic of India were signed defining the principles and main orientation of bilateral relations. The Embassy of Kyrgyzstan was opened in New Delhi in November 1992.

Since the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries in 1992, important and constructive developments have taken place in political, economic, cultural and humanitarian spheres. Kyrgyzstan and India have exchanged several visits at the ministerial and other high levels. During the bilateral talks, it has been stressed that Kyrgyzstan and India are committed to secularism, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, territorial integrity and peaceful resolution of all problems. Both the sides have reaffirmed their adherence to the Declaration of principles and direction of cooperation between them. The talks, which are always held in the spirit of friendly and mutual understanding, provide for exchanging opinions on international and regional problems, and open new perspectives of bilateral cooperation.

During the visits, both the sides expressed their determination to increase the level of trade and economic cooperation and also stressed the need to devise new spheres of mutually beneficial cooperation in sectors such as information technology, mining, engineering and food processing. Besides, Kyrgyzstan prioritized some other areas such as training of specialists, developing small and medium-sized industries in its cooperation with India.

Under the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Programme, which is the cornerstone of Indian economic assistance to Kyrgyzstan, technical cooperation between the two countries is developing very successfully. Around 50 Kyrgyz citizens undergo training in various institutions in India every year and after getting the training, many of them have been working in the spheres of banking and finance, accounting, management, information technology back home in Kyrgyzstan.

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India has gifted Kyrgyzstan a mini-dairy plant with a processing capacity of eight thousand litres of milk per eight hours, which was installed in 1998 in Sokuluk district near Bishkek on a turn-key basis. A Memorandum of Understanding on establishing the Kyrgyz-Indian Centre of Information Technology with Indian financial assistance was signed in Bishkek on 20 March 2006. India has financed a potato processing plant, which is under progress and will be soon installed in the Talas region. The Indian authorities have recently floated tender bids for selection of suitable firm for realization of this project.

Other issues discussed during the recent high level meetings between both the countries, included cooperation in growing herbs for manufacture of bio-medical products and setting up of an Indo-Kyrgyz Mountain-Medical Research Centre. This project will be materialized by joint efforts of Indian and Kyrgyz research institutions and will be beneficial for both countries. Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce (FICCI) and Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Kyrgyzstan have set up a Joint Business Council, which provides a platform for cooperation between the private sectors of the two countries. Trade between the two countries is showing a steady growth. In 2004-05, the total trade turnover reached US\$ 49.7 million recording a 28 per cent of growth over the previous financial year, while as in 1996, the trade turnover was only US\$3.9 million. The trade figures as provided by the Department of Commerce, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India are given in the following table:

INDIA-KYRGYZSTAN TRADE

Year	In US\$ million				
	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005
Exports to Kyrgyzstan	1759	1097	1467	3820	4910
% Growth		-3766	3371	16049	2854
Imports from Kyrgyzstan	443	056	047	054	062
% Growth		-8744	-1616	-1648	-1351
Total Trade	2202	1152	1513	3874	4972
% Growth		-4767	3131	15605	2833
Total Balance	1316	1041	1420	3766	4849

KYRGYZSTAN AND INDIA: ECONOMIC COOPERATION

Currently India imports raw wool, cotton, skin and hides, dry fruits, instruments and optical devices etc. from Kyrgyzstan. Kyrgyzstan imports knitted garments, textiles and fabrics, leather goods, drugs, pharmaceuticals and fine chemicals, transportation equipment, plastic and linoleum products from India. Of these, apparel and clothing (both knitted and crocheted as well as non-knitted and crocheted) constitute almost 80 per cent of the total Indian exports to Kyrgyzstan.

One of the major factors that acts as a hindrance to the growth of trade between the two countries is lack of reliable surface transport link. At present, some of the items including apparel and clothing as well as drugs and pharmaceuticals from India are being exported by air transport. The surface route, which includes transport by ship up to Iran (Bandar Abbas port), and then by surface through Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and finally into Kyrgyzstan is not only lengthy and time consuming, but also involves considerable cost, thereby significantly eroding the competitiveness of Indian exports in comparison to those of the exports from neighbouring countries like Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Turkey, Iran, etc. to Kyrgyzstan.

However, the figures of the National Statistics Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic show that there are 33 joint stock enterprises in all over the Kyrgyzstan with the participation of Indian capital and private sector. Indian companies such as “Swift Marketing”, “NEPS India Limited”, “Comexcil”, “Kirloskar Brothers Limited”, “United Phosperos”, “KLR Industries Limited” and “Daniel & Sons” are keen to open their branches in Bishkek.

India will be conferred with the status of ‘Partner Country’ at the forthcoming International Bishkek Trade Fair on 12-16 October 2006. This prestigious and popular Fair is an annual event, in which more than 25 countries would take part. Interads Group and Interads Advertising (P) Ltd., which are the co-coordinators from India, have been actively working with the Kyrgyz companies.

In March 2006, a Kyrgyz delegation led by the Minister of Agriculture, Water Resources and Processing Industry of the Kyrgyz

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Republic took part in India-Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) Agro Summit, organized by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI). The Minister had fruitful discussions with the Indian Food Processing Minister. During the fifth meeting of the Joint Business Council held in New Delhi on 10 March 2006, the Indian side expressed its keen interest to explore opportunities for collaboration in the areas of chemicals and pharmaceuticals, textiles, agricultural products, mining, engineering goods, tourism, information technology and telecom and infrastructure development.

At the invitation of the Governor of Indian state of Haryana, Dr. A.R. Kidwai, the members of the delegation of the Talas region have acquainted themselves with the achievements of this developed Indian state. The delegation visited several enterprises during visit to Haryana. The delegation has shown interest to hold negotiations on establishing partnership with the state of Haryana and in the investments of Indian businessmen for the economic development of the Talas oblast.

Such exchange of bilateral visits will serve to strengthen mutual cooperation and increase in trade between the two countries thus bringing the Kyrgyz and Indian people closer.

MARCH 24 'REVOLUTION' IN KYRGYZSTAN: CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES

Jyotsna Bakshi

On 24 March 2005, President Askar Akayev - who ruled Kyrgyzstan for 15 years since its independence in December 1991- suddenly fled the country in the face of the popular protests. The protest movements had first gathered momentum in the provincial Ferghana Valley cities of Jalal-Abad and Osh. The local authorities in both the cities peacefully abdicated power to the people's movements. From there the protestors marched to capital Bishkek leading to the fall of government there. Change of regime in Bishkek following 'Rose' revolution in Georgia and 'Orange' revolution Ukraine, sent shock waves in the corridors of power in other former Soviet republics. Subsequent developments after the Kyrgyz revolution known as 'Tulip' or 'Yellow' revolution demonstrated the resolve of the governments in other former Soviet republics to ensure that the 'colour revolutions' are not repeated in their respective states. It appears now that the advocates of the 'regime change' have suffered a set back and are on the back foot. Future only will unfold what broad pattern the developments in the former Soviet space would assume.

As regards the Kyrgyz revolution per se, it was a complex intermix of external and internal factors, including the interplay of clan rivalries and north-south divide. Two contradictory trends were simultaneously developing for some time in post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan. These were: (a) laying the groundwork for the democratization of the society; and (b) further entrenchment of pyramid-like power structure with the concentration of all power in the hands of the powerful President. The growing tension and contradiction between the two trends finally erupted in the 24 March 2005 'revolution.'

‘ISLAND OF DEMOCRACY’

Kyrgyzstan has been projected as the ‘Island of Democracy’ in Central Asia. The Kyrgyz economic reforms, emergence of a large number of Non-Governmental Organization (NGOs), numerous political parties and an independent press clearly show the growing democratization and formation of a vibrant civil society in the republic. The foreign policy of Kyrgyzstan has been one of multiple alignments or ‘an open door policy.’ Soviet disintegration resulted in the drying up of substantial federal subsidies that had kept the republic going. After its independence in 1991, it was believed that the difficult transition from the Soviet command economy to market economy could be carried out with the technical and financial assistance from international donors and financial institutions. Kyrgyzstan was prepared to cooperate with the international community, major powers and international organizations for economic development in the country. Consequently, the country opened all important sectors of its economy and even the social sectors to external investment.

Kyrgyzstan extensively engaged international organizations and aid agencies in several areas. For instance, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), World Bank, Asian Development Bank (ADB), USAID, Soros Foundation and others have rendered invaluable assistance in developing the concept of local self-government in the country as well as reform in Kyrgyz civil services. Technical Aid to the Commonwealth of Independent States (TACIS) and UNDP were reported to be helping in streamlining the administration.¹ The ‘multi-source’ financing was envisaged for the educational system. In this connection, links were established with a number of foreign countries that included the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and 28 other countries. Consequently, several thousand young people in Kyrgyzstan got an opportunity to study abroad under the Presidential Programme Cadres of the 21st Century, which is based on cooperation in education and training with a number of countries. As the state funding for science had reduced, it was envisaged that “grants from

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foreign foundations” would increase to “50 percent of the total volume of science financing by 2005”.²

Kyrgyzstan received significant amount as aid/loans from international financial institutions as well as from donor countries. From 1991 to 1997, Kyrgyzstan received nearly \$ 1.2 billion in foreign aid.³ As a consequence, the country became heavily indebted. The external debt of Kyrgyzstan surpasses its GDP. At the end of 2001, external debt stood at 125 per cent of the country’s GDP.⁴

FOREIGN-AIDED NGOS

Kyrgyzstan claims to have more than 3,500 registered public organizations, political parties and movements. The large number of NGOs that are running various socio-economic projects across the country mainly depend on external donors and sponsors. These NGOs– both local and foreign and foreign-aided-have been working in the country to develop the civil society, to create self-help groups and involve the participation of the community in various community development and poverty alleviation programmes. Thus, from a country that was closed to outside world till the Soviet collapse, Kyrgyzstan has opened up and has been reaching out to the wider world with a bang.

Through these NGOs and aid agencies, much-needed foreign funds are coming to the country. They are also providing jobs to a significant number of local people. No wonder, the NGOs have emerged as major job-providers in the country. In fact, the dream of many Kyrgyz students is to get a job in a foreign-funded NGO. Preparing projects for applying for grants from foreign-aided NGOs and aid agencies is an important activity of a large number of the educated professionals in the country.

PRESIDENTIAL POWERS

The widespread socio-economic distress among a large section of the population had led to popular disillusionment and discontent with the regime. The regime responded by offering some sops on the one hand, and increasing authoritarian tendencies, on the other hand.

The 1996 referendum overwhelmingly approved a constitutional amendment which concentrated more power in the hands of the President while limiting the powers of the legislature. The international observers from Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the human rights groups also termed both the presidential and parliamentary elections held in 2000 as marked by many irregularities and as falling short of international standards of being free and fair. Three of the candidates in the presidential elections were put behind the bars on various charges. The most prominent of them was Feliks Kulov, the head of *Ar-Namys* party who had earlier served on several important positions as the former Vice President, Governor of Chuy *oblast*, Interior Minister, National Security Minister and Mayor of Bishkek. He was arrested in March 2000 on the charge of corruption and abuse of authority as the Minister of National Security and was later sentenced to ten years of imprisonment. In June 2003, the Kyrgyz parliament passed a bill granting President Akayev and two former Soviet-era Communist Party leaders lifelong immunity from prosecution. There was widespread speculation before the parliamentary elections scheduled for February 2005 and the presidential elections scheduled for October 2005 that Akayev would either continue in power through another change in the constitution. The constitution provides for only two five-year terms to the President, but President Akayev had managed to remain in power for 15 years helped by the interpretation of the constitutional court that his first term could not be regarded as falling under the present constitution that came into force in 1993. It was also speculated that somebody from his family would take over. The third possibility was that he would retire gracefully making use of the immunity from any future prosecution. On their part, the Western powers, especially the USA through its Ambassador Stephen Young, had been keenly persuading Akayev to set an example of peaceful constitutional change of power that could be emulated by other post-Soviet heads of states in the region.

The approach of the Akayev's regime appeared to be resilient, flexible and what may be called 'swimming with the current' and one

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of least resistance.' The policy of conciliation and compromise was flaunted as "democracy". The ultimate goal of the skilful balancing was the regime survival. Confrontational approach was avoided on all issues. The state power was exercised in Kyrgyzstan in less obtrusive and more invisible manner. It was partly due to a healthy realization that overt and excessive use of state power might be counter-productive and also partly due to the fact that Kyrgyzstan lacked resources and wherewithal to control all walks of life.

DEVELOPING INNER CONTRADICTIONS

While the country had opened itself to extensive engagement with the international community with the expressed view to solving its socio-economic problems and build a modern democratic state the evolution of political culture and political mechanisms in the country followed a distinct pyramid-like logic and pattern. All power was concentrated in the hands of the President at the top of the pyramid. The system was based on a chain of personal loyalty from bottom up. Growing tension between the two contradictory trends ultimately led to the 24 March 2005 'revolution'.

The operational political system that emerged was inextricably interwoven with a network of favours, connections, bribes and corruption. The overarching loyalty to the President tended to work as the glue that kept the system and diverse actors together. President made most of the important appointments and they remained in office at his pleasure. There is no system of permanent civil service recruited on the basis of merit.

Akayev apparently played the democratic game, but at the same time kept intact his control over all the leverages of political and economic power. Moreover, it was widely believed that the ruling family extended its tentacles everywhere and was reported to have a finger in every economic pie in the country. Political and economic power, thus, became concentrated in the hands of the President, with ruling family increasingly playing more prominent and visible role that this ultimately led to its nemesis.

THE NORTH-SOUTH DIVIDE

Broadly speaking, about 51 per cent of the country's population of nearly five million, lives in the three southern *oblasts* (provinces) of Osh, Jalal-Abad and Batken that are separated from the northern part of the country by the Tien Shan mountain range. North is considered to be more Russianized, industrialized and economically relatively better off. South is poorer and has a large concentration of ethnic Uzbeks. The south is also believed to be more traditional and the hold of Islam is believed to be greater, particularly in the Ferghana Valley part of Kyrgyzstan and more so among the ethnic Uzbeks. Ever since the fall of the Soviet Union, the political power got concentrated in the hands of northern elite and northern tribes or clans. However, from time to time some sopps are given to assuage feelings in the south. For example, Osh has been given the status of the country's southern capital. The year 2000 was celebrated commemorating the 3,000 years of Osh city. The Ministry of Emergency Situations was shifted to Osh. Nonetheless, there was widespread feeling of deprivation in the south from political power, pelf and the privileges that accompany it.

Despite more than a hundred years of modernization efforts first under the Russian rule and then under the Soviet socialist experiment, and despite outward Westernization, tribalism and clan loyalties have survived in Kyrgyzstan. In fact, the central leadership of the Soviet Union itself was prompted by 1970s to devise an unwritten rule, whereby the office of the First Secretary of the republican Communist Party of Kyrgyzstan was rotated between the northern and southern clans.⁵ Attempt was also made to maintain a balance and compromise between competing clans. The people of the northern and southern regions were given proportional representation in the power hierarchy.⁶

The most important change that took place since Akayev became the President was that the system of balance between the north and south came to an end. With Akayev belonging to a northern clan, power passed into the hands of the northern clans. More government jobs went to the north. President Akayev's friends and associates from the

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Academy of Sciences received government posts. According to Alisher Khamidov, the *Sarybagysh* clan of Akayev increasingly extended its control over key economic and political spheres, leaving other clans with dwindling opportunities. Key government positions, especially in the ministries of finance, internal affairs and state security, were occupied by Akayev's clan members. Other influential members come from the western Talas region, the birthplace of Akayev's wife.⁷

Over the years, the southern clans living in the Ferghana Valley nursed deep sense of grievance over the domination by the northern clans to the deprivation of the southerners. Economic data showed that while poverty and unemployment have somewhat reduced in the capital Bishkek and the surrounding Chui *oblast* (province), there remains widespread poverty and unemployment in the southern regions. The economic and political unrest following the shooting incidents in Aksy region of Jalal-Abad *oblast* in March 2002 that continued for several months, shook the whole nation and led to the removal of the Prime Minister and the cabinet. It was symptomatic of the socio-economic malaise in the southern Kyrgyzstan and the resentment of the people of the region against the Akayev government. This had led the renowned Kyrgyz writer and diplomat Chingiz Aitmatov to call upon the people to set aside north-south differences and work together for Kyrgyzstan's economic development. However, writing in opposition newspaper *Respublica* (3 May 2002), Alexei Sukhov remarked that Chingiz Aitmatov was out of step with reality. He did not understand the depth of southern resentment over Akayev's policies. Sukhov also remarked that the southerners resented that all the five governors of Osh *oblast* in the past ten years were from the north. Most of the prominent opposition figures were from the southern clans based in Osh, Jalal-Abad and Batken oblasts. Some important MPs from the south are Azimbek Beknazarov, Adahan Madumarov, Omurbek Tekebaev, Dooronbek Sadyrbaev, Masaliev, Bekturn Asanov and Alisher Abdimomjunov.

The advent of Kurmanbek Bakiyev, who hails from the Ferghana Valley oblast of Jalal-Abad, to the position of President following the

'revolution' of 24 March and subsequently confirmed by the presidential elections of 10 July 2005, is seen as the vindication of long-held southern demand for share of power in the country.

WIDESPREAD ECONOMIC DISTRESS AND CORRUPTION

Widespread economic distress among the masses and prevalent corruption plagued Kyrgyzstan like all other former Soviet Republics. It was widely believed that the positions were either purchased or offered as political patronage. The loaves and fishes of office were regularly shared with the top. People had to pay 'bribes' at every step and for all the services.

According to official admission, about 25 per cent of Kyrgyz economy is 'shadow economy'. According to other estimates, the shadow economy comprises more than 50 per cent of the national economy. Most people are believed to be doing "No. 2" business, which is seen as the only way to survive.

ELECTIONS

The Soviet-era political culture of conformism and deference to authority continues in the post-Soviet space and could not be expected to change overnight. No wonder, to a great extent, elections in the past have been manipulated in Kyrgyzstan. The provincial governors, who owed their job to the President, would instruct the chiefs of various departments and organizations. All the department heads, in turn, ensured that all the employees under them – or all the teachers and students in case of educational institutions – vote for the official candidate. Thus, the power structure worked like a pyramid with the President at the top. Multiple political parties that exist are weak and fragmented. The system revolved around the powerful President at the top. Feliks Kulov, who was for long regarded as the only powerful opposition candidate, was put behind bars on corruption charges.

At the same time, during elections to local assemblies or provincial and national parliament, where the position of the President was not

directly involved, real contest was allowed among several candidates representing various interest groups. Ironically, they all swore allegiance to the President. The real opposition seemed small and not so effective.

THE 'COLOUR REVOLUTION' OR 'REGIME CHANGE'

Akayev regime apprehended the repeat of Georgia and Ukraine-like situation in Kyrgyzstan and warned against the import of alien model. He promised free and fair elections. Weak and fragmented opposition lacking a common charismatic leader gave him hope that he would be able to secure majority in the parliamentary elections scheduled for 27 February 2005 and the run-off elections scheduled for 13 March same year in case no single candidate got absolute majority from a particular constituency.

In 2003, the constitution was changed to provide for a 75 member unicameral legislature in place of the existing bicameral legislature. This put a great premium on every single candidate. It became apparent that Akayev regime tried to pack the new parliament with relatives and friends. The candidates included Akayev's son, daughter, two sisters-in-law, Prime Minister Nikolai Tanayev and the son and son-in-law of Toichubek Kasymov, the President's Chief of Staff, etc. It was reported that with the support of loyal administrative apparatus, President Akayev would be able to have majority in the parliament.¹⁰

However, the move appeared to have backfired. It seemed that President Akayev had lost touch with the ground reality. Sitting from the vantage point of the Presidential office, he seemed to hope that the gullible people would continue to pay obeisance and obsequiously swallow whatever was told to them. He failed to grasp that the society had, in the meanwhile, changed and the cup of the people's grievances was full.

If the opposition was divided and fragmented, the ruling elite was also not united and a cohesive lot. There were reports of divisions

within the extended family and Akayev's supporters. Many opposition leaders, who were earlier part of President Akayev's team, subsequently fell out of favour with him. They joined the rank of the opposition. Thus, Kurmanbek Bakiev, the Chairman of the opposition bloc called the *People's Movement of Kyrgyzstan*, subsequently became the acting President after Akayev fled the country. He had earlier served under him as the Prime Minister of the country. Following the Presidential elections of 10 July 2005, Bakiev has become constitutionally elected President of the country with an overwhelming majority.

Significantly, Bakiev hails from Jalal-Abad oblast in the southern Ferghana Valley of Kyrgyzstan. Unlike Georgia and Ukraine, where the protesters were based in the national capitals, the popular protest against the irregularities and malpractices in the parliamentary elections in Kyrgyzstan started from the provincial centres and not in the capital Bishkek

In the wake of the 'Velvet Revolution' or "Rose Revolution" in Georgia in 2003, and the 'Orange Revolution' in Ukraine in the beginning of 2005 following mass protests against rigged elections, the hope was entertained in the Western circles and the opposition figures within country that similar change of regime could also be brought about in Kyrgyzstan.

The USA, OSCE and several NGOs supported and funded by them, had been working for strengthening independent media in the country. As an important move to promote democracy, the US Department of State and Freedom House in 2003 established an independent Media Support Foundation Printing Press. These efforts bore results during the election campaign and the following events. Various NGOs trained the youth and prepared the fertile ground for 'democracy'. It was reported that a project to train parliamentary candidates and their supporters on how to observe elections was kicked off on 8 February 2005. About 7,000 candidates from 75 electoral districts were to be trained in the programme, supported

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by Soros Foundation-Kyrgyzstan. The Akayev government tried to curb the activities of such media and opposition forces, but finally to no avail. The authorities tried to curb the press. Thus, it was reported that on the eve of elections, the printing press found itself without electricity supply.⁸ In a statement on 21 February 2005, US Ambassador Stephen Young said, "President Akayev's decision not to run for presidency again will put him in history books as one of the founders of democracy in the country". He further added, "failure of the election in Kyrgyzstan to meet democratic standards and requirements will affect relations between the United States and Kyrgyzstan and the relation between Bishkek and the rest of the world."

Russia's Ambassador to Kyrgyzstan, Yevgeny Shmagin told the *Interfax* on 9 February 2005 that Russia would not interfere with the Kyrgyzstan's electoral process. However, Russia also made known its opposition to the "street democracy" and "flower revolutions." The reference was to the "Rose Revolution" in Georgia and the "Orange revolution" in Ukraine.⁹

FEBRUARY 2005 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

It seemed many candidates contested the elections to acquire parliamentary immunities in order to protect their shadowy wealth. There were also widespread reports of candidates luring the voters by cash and other presents.

The election authorities denied Roza Otunbayeva, co-chairperson of the *Ata-Jurt* opposition party, the chance to run in the same electoral district in which Akayev's daughter Bermet Akayeva, was the candidate. Roza Otunbayeva's candidature was turned down on the ground that she lived outside the country prior to the elections. Roza was Kyrgyzstan's Ambassador to the USA. The incident was highlighted by the opposition and their supporters as a glaring example of the regime's attempts to remain in power by any means. Roza Otunbayeva and other opposition leaders led a spirited campaign against the regime.

Decisions of Talas, Naryn, and Issyk-Kul regional administrations to deny registration to certain candidates sparked protest actions from their supporters on the eve of the parliamentary elections slated for 27 February. At least 6,000 supporters of the two politicians whose registrations had been voided by district courts blocked the road between Bishkek and Naryn leading to China. Protests also took place in south Kyrgyzstan. Thousands of supporters of Jusupbek Bakiev, the brother of Kurmanbek Bakiev, leading opposition figure and future President, protested on 22 and 23 February when police tried to seize computers from the campaign office of Jusupbek Bakiev. Several candidates, who were denied registration or those whose campaign was obstructed by the authorities refused to take it lying down and organized protest actions by their supporters. These candidates included many figures, which were earlier part of the ruling elite, but had now joined the opposition ranks.¹¹

The first round of parliamentary elections on 27 February 2005 created many controversial results. Second round of elections or run-off elections were scheduled for 13 March 2005. The southern Kyrgyzstan witnessed growing political protests by the supporters of the opposition candidates in the final weeks of the election campaign, particularly in Jalal-Abad and Nookan regions.¹²

MARCH 24 'REVOLUTION' AND AFTER

Kyrgyzstan appeared to have experienced a high velocity political earthquake in the preceding week leading to 24 March 'revolution', when President Akayev, suddenly fled the country leaving it leaderless. The trouble was brewing for some time in the wake of the parliamentary elections held on 27 February and the run-off elections held on 13 March. Beginning 20 March 2005 popular demonstrations against the President gathered strength in the Ferghana Valley cities of southern Kyrgyzstan -Osh and Jalal-Abad, a region where the socio-economic situation happens to be more acute and the grievances against the established regime are stronger. The region seemed to be the weakest link in the chain that sustained the political status quo.

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Within a couple of days, it became clear that the writ of the central government had stopped running in the two cities. The crowds demanding the resignation of President Akayev took control of all the provincial government buildings in the two cities. The police and security forces did not offer any resistance. The opposition claimed that the local security structures joined the opposition side. Peace and security were maintained in the two cities by the police and volunteers jointly patrolling the area. "The Co-ordination Committees of People's Unity" appointed new provisional Governors, Mayors and even the Rectors of local universities. In the course of these developments, other regions one after the other joined the ranks of the opposition and finally on the evening of 24 March 2005, the protesting crowds stormed the Central Government building at Bishkek called the "White House". President Akayev fled the country. There was a general feeling among the people, and especially so in the southern part of the country that President Akayev had hung around for fifteen years, while the constitution allows only two terms of five years each to the incumbent president. There was a widespread view that Akayev and his family had amassed wealth, while the people remained poor. People felt that there was no guarantee that he would have stepped down in October 2005, when the next presidential elections were scheduled. They felt that he could have "manipulated" his majority in the parliament, changed the constitution and continued to remain in power. Some people also expressed the view that if "he had continued for another five years, he would have made more money and then run away to another country and the common people would have remained poor".

The power suddenly and unexpectedly came in the hands of the opposition leaders, who were earlier a part of the team of President Akayev, and had subsequently fallen out of favour. While Osh, Jalal-Abad and other regions remained quiet and orderly, Bishkek witnessed unprecedented loot and arson on the night of 24-25 March. About half a dozen people lost their lives and more than two hundred were wounded in the violence. The estimated losses caused by rioting and loot exceeded \$100 million. The confidence of the nascent business class was shaken.

The incidents seemed to have left the leaders of all persuasions as well as the people of the impoverished former Soviet republic used to Communist-era order and deference to authority, completely chastised. The revolutionary euphoria for “people’s power” appeared to have quickly given place to the frantic search for maintaining order and the compulsive necessity to adhere to the “constitutional procedures”. The alternative seemed to be further fragmentation among the mutually feuding groups on the basis of conflicting tribal, clan, regional and ethnic loyalties and clash of personalities and personal ambitions. The flight of capital that had begun in the wake of looting and marauding pointed to the grim possibility of further economic decline in an already impoverished state-whose external debt is as big as its GDP. It was vitally important to stop the flight of capital from the country and instil confidence among the domestic and foreign businessmen and investors. Feliks Kulov, who was freed from the prison after the taking over of the Kyrgyz White House, made his appearance on the Bishkek TV *Alatoo* with a copy of the constitution in his hands. He made a frantic appeal to maintain ‘constitutional order’. He appealed to the members of police and security structures to report on duty immediately. He declared that after the order was established, he would “go back” to his prison cell till he was formally acquitted by the courts from the charges levelled against him in keeping with the law of the land.

It was reported that moral and financial aid by the USA and other Western aid agencies to hundreds of NGOs in Kyrgyzstan was directed towards speeding up democratic change in Kyrgyzstan on the pattern of the revolutions in Georgia and Ukraine. Kyrgyzstan -comparatively less authoritarian and more liberal of the Central Asian states- was chosen to set up an example of democratic change of regime before the other Central Asian states. However, the newly appointed Prime Minister and Provisional President Kurmanbek Bakiev, Feliks Kulov and other important leaders reiterated that friendship with Russia continues to occupy the priority in the country’s foreign relations and that there would be no change in the country’s foreign policy. It appears that during the period following the 24 March 2005 events,

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Russia has reconciled to the change of leadership in Bishkek and has even “co-opted” the new leaders. President Kurmanbek Bakiev’s wife is an ethnic Russian. Russia is reported to have played a role in bringing about the agreement between Bakiev, who hails from the south of Kyrgyzstan and Kulov, who is based in north whereby Kulov withdrew his candidature from the presidential elections that took place on 10 July 2005 and agreed to become the Prime Minister in the Bakiev administration. Thus the north-south cleavage that threatened to divide and destabilize the country has been effectively bridged for the time being. The Presidential election was, in fact, contested on the plank of maintaining stability in the country.

It seems there is a need for cleaning up the system and curbing the widespread and well-entrenched corruption in order to bring about a real turn around in the current socio-economic scenario for the better. Whether the new leaders will be able to do it remains a big question mark. Perhaps one concrete gain would be that the new leader/s would be more cautious and not send the heavyweight political rivals to long-term prison sentence as President Akayev did to Feliks Kulov. Also, perhaps the new incumbents would not deny the right to contest elections to some senior opposition leaders like Roza Otunbaeva, on the basis of skewed election laws while brazenly promoting their sons and daughters during the elections. Roza Otunbaeva subsequently became the Foreign Minister of the country, however, her candidature was not confirmed by the parliament as a mark of continuing political turmoil in the country.

Religious extremism was not a factor in Kyrgyz ‘Revolution’. It goes to the credit of the democratic forces in Kyrgyzstan that the forces opposing Akayev retained their secular character. During the innumerable public meetings, protests and demonstrations before and after the parliamentary elections in February and March 2005, religious issues and slogans were never raised.

POST-REVOLUTIONARY TURBULENCE

Democracy is a continuous process, which may take time to evolve into settled and mature system. Multiple faultlines and contradictions of the mountainous republic have only come to the fore prominently in the wake of the so-called democratic revolution, which may have led to certain disillusionment with democracy itself. The disputes and clashes among the underworld gangs and the attempts at the 're-division' of property and assets have intensified and come to the limelight in the post-revolutionary chaos. The connections of the underworld with the politicians that were more nascent earlier have become more obvious. A number of high-profile murders, including the murder of two members of Parliament highlight the fragility of the system. Political situation appears to be in a flux with tussle for power between the President and the parliament and clash of personality and interests among the leading political figures. But democracies do tend to be somewhat 'chaotic' and less orderly. The country stands at the crossroads from where it can make further progress towards a genuinely liberal, plural and inclusive democratic order or slip into more chaotic state of crime and inter-gang fights, with narco-dealers and the extremists waiting in the wings to make use of the situation to advance their nefarious designs.

THE MULTI-VECTOR KYRGYZ POLICY CONTINUES

As regards its foreign policy, Kyrgyzstan is continuing to follow the earlier policy of maintaining good relations with all the major powers as well as important regional players. Thus, Kyrgyzstan went along with the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) resolution of 5-6 July 2005, wherein USA was asked to set a timetable for withdrawing its air bases from Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan set up in the wake of Afghanistan operation in the aftermath of 11 September 2001. However, following the US Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld's visit to Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan in end of July 2005, it was announced that there was no immediate plan for closing the air base at Manas. The fact of the matter is that the Manas base is pumping about \$156,000 a

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day into the local economy and it accounted for about five per cent of Kyrgyzstan's entire gross domestic product in 2003.¹³ Kyrgyzstan has agreed to the continuation of the US base at Manas airport reportedly in return for increased US payments for the same.

On the other hand, President-elect Bakiev reiterated in his interview on 26 July 2005 that the development of multi-faceted cooperation with Russia is the long-term policy of Kyrgyzstan. He promised to "create the most favourable conditions for Russian capital and business".¹⁴

As maintaining stability within the country and ensuring economic development are the two pressing objectives before the new leadership of the country, it has no other alternative but to continue to try to manoeuvre among the major powers as well as the important regional players.

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GENDER POLICY IN CONTEMPORARY KYRGYZSTAN

Abalova Nazgul
and
Rysaliev Zainura

The term “gender” is not used to describe the biological sexual characteristics by which we identify females and males, but to encompass the socially defined sex roles, attitudes and values which communities and societies ascribe as appropriate for one sex or the other. In this specific sense, it was first used as a phrase, “the social relations of gender”. The social relations of gender seek to explain the global asymmetry which appears in male/female relations in term of sex roles in power sharing, decision making, division of labour, return to labour both within the household and in the society at large. The phrase directs our attention to all the attributes acquired in the process of socialization, group definition, sense of appropriate roles, values and behaviours, and above all, expected and acceptable interactions in the relationships between men and women.

The gender issue, the gender researches and gender analysis of legislative documents in Kyrgyzstan gained precedence in the last decade of the twentieth century when gender problems became known in the global arena more actively. A series of international forums and conferences like the Cairo International Conference on Population and Development in 1994, Fourth World Conference on the Status of Women held in Beijing in 1995, World Summit on Social Development in Copenhagen in 1995 and Fifth International Conference of the UNDP on Education for the Adult in Hamburg in 1997, affected the gender system, norms, identity and ideology.

Before 1995, there was little awareness about the improvement of the status of women in Kyrgyz Republic because of the prevalence of a totalitarian regime of socialistic society, which did not provide the

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stimulus for the participation of women in social and political life. The only exception was the provision of quota for women. The gender problem was seriously addressed for the first time in Kyrgyzstan in the year 1996, which was declared as the ‘Year of Women’. This was the beginning of working out a new realistic programme to achieve gender balance and equity in democratic and sovereign Kyrgyz society. The programme included setting up of the State Committee on Women, Family and Youth in 1996, several Parliamentary Speeches on Status of Women (1996) and adoption of National Programme *Ayalzat* focusing on improvement of women’s status and position during the period 1996-2000.¹

In 1997, the National Strategy on Sustainable Human Development, which was on the line of the declarations made at the Beijing Conference in 1995, was approved by the Kyrgyz government. The main documents identifying the strategy of the Kyrgyz Republic in the short and long run are: Comprehensive Development Framework till 2010 and the National Strategy on Poverty Reduction, which include gender equity, poverty and socio-economic development of the country.

Gender equity in education and culture is one of the most important objective of the National Action Plan on Gender Equity in the Kyrgyz Republic for the period 2002-2006, which was adopted by a Presidential Decree on 2 March 2002.² The Law of the Kyrgyz Republic “About Basics of the State Security on Gender Equity”, approved by the Legislative Chamber of *Jogorku Kenesh* of the Kyrgyz Republic on 31 January 2003, “regulated the relations on equal rights of both the sexes in social, political, economic, cultural and other areas of human life”.³

The United Nation’s Programme of Social Management in Kyrgyzstan in 2001, also known as the “Component on Gender” is another important step in this regard. The fundamental issues included in this Programme were:

- Giving consultation to the government to work out a gender policy;

- Development of gender statistics;
- Introduction of gender approaches in policy framework and in the strategies of the ministries and departments;
- Supporting gender education in the institutes of higher learning;
- Supporting women political leaders;
- Supporting gender bureau of law (*Adilet*).

The United Nation's "Programme of Developing a Gender Bureau" was known as the Programme of Social Management after 1996. The aim of the programme was to provide assistance and support to the National Statistics Committee for collection, preparation and publication of gender statistics in Kyrgyzstan. The gender description of Kyrgyzstan prepared by the Programme of Social Management has been given as under:

- The level of education between men and women in Kyrgyzstan is almost the same, but in cities, the number of educated women is higher than that of men. The percentage of men and women who received higher education was 15.6 and 17.5 respectively. In case of education up to the high school level, the percentage for men and women turned out to be 9.9 and 16.9 respectively.
- During the period 1996-2000, the level of economic activity among women decreased to 4.9 per cent and among men, it fell down to 1.9 per cent.
- In 2001, the monthly salary of a woman was 67.6 per cent of a man's salary. The difference in salary between men and women shows that the remuneration for a job done by a woman is less than that of a man.
- The life expectancy of a man in Kyrgyzstan is 64.9 years while that of a woman is 72.4 years. The reason for this disparity in the life expectancy is due to the prevalence of a high mortality rate of men due to accident, poisoning, injury etc.
- The time spent by a woman in house keeping averages to around four to five hours per day, which is more than 20 per cent of the total time each day. The men, on the other hand, devote a maximum of 5 per cent or around one hour a day.

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- The average pension paid to a woman is about 86 per cent of the average pension paid to a man.

In 2001, due to the abolition of the moratorium on the buying and selling of land, around 2,462,000 people had their own land. The percentage of women landowners was only 50.8. According to the Kyrgyz law, both men and women possess equal rights to own a land, which is considered to be the strategic resource of the country. But the traditional stereotype mentality of the people limits the ownership of land by women.⁴ In March 2002, an agreement was signed between the Programme of Social Management, the Department of Supreme Commissioner for Refugees and the American Association of Lawyers to support the *Adilet* School of Law. *Adilet* is the association of young lawyers in Kyrgyzstan. The Gender Bureau, which is supported by the Programme of Social Management, is part of *Adilet*. The strategy of the Gender Bureau is to work out a suitable plan based on the cultural, social and educational levels of the women folk in the country. The Bureau engages itself in disseminating information, giving legal consultations, addressing the gender question and holding training seminars on gender relations and violence. It also supports women leaders and the project aiming at increasing women's representation in the parliament. As a result of this project, a new gender statistics on women's participation in political life has come up. This statistics corroborates the following facts:

- The percentage of women voters is 52, but the representation in Legislative Assembly of *Jogorku Kenesh* is only 6.7. The tendency of "pyramid" is well preserved in the country and 12 per cent women are at the oblast level, 13 per cent in regions and cities and 16 per cent at the village level.
- In 2002, out of twelve ministers, two were women, one woman was Governor of an oblast and out of 455 village heads, only twenty-one were women.
- According to the 2001 figures, 14.7 per cent of high government posts were occupied by women; among the leaders of structure sub-division, department and organization, 24.4 per

cent were women. The male dominance in the political structure, low level of gender consciousness, deficiency of support from political parties and mass-media, absence of corresponding bonds with different social organizations were the barriers for larger women representation in politics. In 2005, regular election of the Assembly of *Jogorku Kenesh* in Kyrgyzstan took place, in which there was no woman representative. According to Gyldyz Bekbaeva, legally stage parties will rule the country in the next five years, as there is no women's representation in new single chamber Parliament.⁵ T. Borombaeva, a member of the last Parliament and the leader of a party called *El Muras* (People's Heritage) says that there is no women's representation in the new Parliament because of the absence of equal opportunity for men and women. The women usually do not have adequate financial resources for the election campaign".⁶

So far as the current women representation in the parties in Kyrgyzstan is concerned, at the block "Manas", the women representation is 30.8 per cent, in the party, *My Country* it is 20 per cent, in the Communist Party it is 18 per cent and in *Ata Meken* (Native Land), whose head is the ex-Speaker of the new Parliament, Omurbek Tekebaev, there is no woman cadre in the party. There are only three women leaders- R. Otunbieva is the leader of the party *Ata Gyrt* (Mother land), T. Borombaeva is the leader of the party *El Muras* and K.Agebekova is the leader of the *Radical Communist Party*.

Speaking on the occasion of the International Women's Day, the President of Kyrgyzstan Kurmanbek Bakiev said that around 37 per cent of the heads of all level will be women. But the women of Kyrgyzstan have no influence in decision making. Men continue to hold sway in politics and political structures. Our society needs women leaders who can help in reforming politics and economics. Let us think ourselves that we have only one woman minister, the member of the government and there are no women in the Parliament. All of us hope that all the electors will use their wisdom to elect some women in the next election to the Parliament.⁷

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President Bakiev said that “the state should support gender equality that will provide harmonious development of the society. Today the authority strives to find new possibilities for the improvement of the status of women, their family, social status and living conditions.” He further said that the Kyrgyz leadership will try to emerge from the traditional local women’s problems and concept about gender equality to the idea of parity and democracy, “about the basic state guarantee in the introduction of gender equality” and “about the measures of social-legal protection from violence in family.” The Chamber of Accounts, Central Election Committee (CEC), Supreme and Constitution Courts envisage a law providing that the presence of one sex should be more than 70 per cent. The President reported that a similar bill would be worked out for the executive branch of authority i.e., the Government.⁸ If a woman wants a membership in the Parliament of the Republic, it is necessary for the women voters to know the importance and meaning of elections in a democracy. To achieve this, we need to train the women though it is a very long, complicated and tedious process. The people should inculcate the notion of democracy and possess just values without which the existence of a democracy is impossible. As most of the women in Kyrgyzstan have inherited the inimitable characteristics from their female ancestors like Chirdy, Kanykey, Kyz Saikal, Ganyl Myrza, Kurmanjan Datka and Urkya Salieva, giving the Kyrgyz women their due exactly at par with their male counterparts would usher in a progressive society in Kyrgyzstan.

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MONUMENTS OF KYRGYZSTAN ALONG THE GREAT SILK ROUTE

Vladimir Ploskih

Kyrgyzstan possesses a rich historical-cultural heritage in Central Asia. Hundreds of monuments reflecting the centuries-old history of the region have global significance. The study and conservation of these monuments are the most important tasks of the Kyrgyz society.

Saimaly-Tash is a gigantic picture gallery of the Kyrgyz antiquity. During thousands years of “drawing” on stones, people left in the mountains the traces of their life and activities. More than hundred thousand pictures in all were put on the rocks of Saimaly-Tash. These were very diverse because these were made during different periods in between the second millennium BC and the Middle Ages.

The rock images of the Lake Issyk-Kul are also of scientific interest. The largest accumulation of these images is located near Cholpon-Ata town, where an open air museum complex was set up. The second group of rock images is located near the Chong-Sary-Oy village and is not adequately explored yet.

The findings of the Saki period are numerous and diverse. The Saki burial grounds in the Ketmen-Tube valley, where more than 300 *tumuli* were excavated in fifteen burial grounds have been found. Out of these, more than 100 *tumuli* were found in Djal-Aryk and that is why, the culture of the Saki period in Ketmen-Tube is called “Djal-aryk culture”.

The Scythian craftsmen created their works from various materials - bone, horn, bronze, silver and gold. Thus, the golden figure of the rooster was found in the Saki burial mound Kairak in Ketmen-Tube. The golden ear-ring from the burial mound Sary-Djon is a model of jeweller’s art. The golden plaques found in the burial mound Djalpak-Tash (Ketmen-Tube) - with images of a bird and anthropomorphous

figures - also attract one's attention. The tiny figure of a golden goitred gazelle from the southern coast of the Lake Issyk-Kul could be attributed to the masterpieces of sculptures.

The plaques with images of a tiger head were also found there. The bronze cauldrons, sacrificial desks and lamps being decorated with the figures of animals that have been found at the Lake Issyk-Kul (Kyrchin, Chelpek) are of a great historical value. In the area of Tyup Bay and Darhan village, the bronze daggers-*akinakes* were found. The Saki altars and cauldrons recovered from the bottom of the Lake are of special interest.

Underwater findings in the eastern part of the Lake Issyk-Kul (Tyup Bay) show that the headquarters of the Governor of *Usuns* were located at Chigu town (the Town of the Red Valley), which was one of the oldest towns of the "Issyk-Kul Atlantis" and was a large centre situated at one of the branches of the Great Silk Route. Chigu was the town of the nomads, who lived here in felt yurts and houses placed on carts. In 109 BC, famous Chinese traveller and discoverer of the Great Silk Route, Zhang Qian visited Chigu. More than 2000 years ago, the relations between the inhabitants of Tien Shan and Han state were established.

One of the brightest and richest complexes of the Age of Great Relocation of Peoples (4th to 5th centuries) are the findings from the burial ground Shamshi in Chui valley. About 150 articles made of gold, silver and bronze were found here only in one tumulus. Among these, there are the diadem with golden pendants, medallion with bas-relief image of a woman. The wonderful golden mask with eyes made of cornelian especially stands out among these finds.

In sixth century AD, the funeral rite included the custom to put stone sculptures (*balbals*) on burial mounds or nearby. These sculptures can be found everywhere throughout the territory of Kyrgyzstan, especially in its northern regions (surroundings of Tokmak, Tyup and Ken-Suu villages at the Lake Issyk-Kul, Ketmen-Tube, Talas, etc.). The major part of such monuments relates to 6th to 10th centuries and

belongs to the ancient Turks. They represent, as many researchers believe, either the image of a noble adversary killed by the deceased person or the image of the deceased himself. By their stylistic features, the stone sculptures are divided into several categories. In many sculptures, the features and details of face and body as well as the elements of clothing can be clearly seen. In the right hand at chest level, they usually hold a cup or a bowl.

Decorative articles made of metal, for example, silvery belt plates with gilding, which were found in Kochkor valley (8th to 9th centuries), and Turkic belts with straps, can be attributed to the nomadic works of art.

In seventh century, Turkic people invented the old-Turkic alphabet. By the formal resemblance to Scandinavian runes, this written language was called runic. The first findings were made in between 1896 and 1898 in the valley of the Talas river. The boulders with runic inscriptions were found near Talas town and in the Ayrtam-Oy tract. In 1932, M. E. Masson found a wooden stick with runes in the same place, in Talas valley. The rock runic inscriptions in Kulan-Say and Terek-Say gorges (Talas valley) are of special interest. Russian specialist in Turkic philology, S.G. Klyashtorny attributed Talas monuments to 8th century AD. Runic inscriptions were also found at Lake Issyk-Kul, in Alay and Fergana valley. The most significant Middle Asian runic monuments are those found in Talas valley being similar to the well-known Yenisei epitaph runes.

Since the end of the 7th century, trade and commercial relations as well as production of domestic copper on the Sogdian pattern was developed. Rich reserves of such copper were found in Ak-Beshim site of the ancient settlement (Tokmak town area) and Krasnorechenskoe site of the ancient settlement. The majority of the findings were the *turgesh* large cast copper, which by weight, size and shape conformed to the Chinese copper. The local population had been acquainted with them for a long time. For example, with Sogdian legend “Sir Turgesh Kagan Fan” (“fan” is the name of the copper) and with *tamga* that was ancestral symbol of turgeshes.

Settled colonies emerged in the north of Kyrgyzstan with the settlement of Sogdian migrants. The largest of these was Nevakat (Krasnorechenskoe site of the ancient settlement) and Suyab (Ak-Beshim site of the ancient settlement). They had well-defined planning and the towns included citadels, *shahristan* (the very town) and *rabat* (the suburb). Necropolises found in Ak-Beshim and Krasnorechenskoe sites of the ancient settlement also belonged to cult constructions of pre-Islam era. Besides ancestral burial-vaults - *names* and *cameras* - in the territory on necropolises, there were temples and cult premises and a huge statue (12 m) of Buddha (made of cast clay, multi-coloured painting) found in Krasnorechenskoe site of ancient settlement.

At the end of the 10th century, a new Turkic dynasty of Karakhanids gained foothold in Semirechye and Talas and spread its authority among other Central Asian regions. Arabic and Persian authors of that period listed large towns of medieval Kyrgyzstan that were placed on the Great Silk Route. The cities were Balasagun, Suyab, Barskhan, Saryg, Osh, Uzgen etc. Handicraft production, ceramics and metallurgical production were developed in many of these towns, which became the centres of culture. The writings of Mahmud Kashgari and Yusup Balasaguni are based on these towns and the culture prevailing there.

“Burana Tower”, is located in Chui Valley, on the territory of the former capital of Karakhanid Kaganate - Balasagun. This tower is round in plan and stands on octahedral basis. Its height is over 21 metres. There is narrow winding stairs inside this monolithic laying made of baked brick. Separate bricks stepped forward in certain consecution over the total surface of the laying thus creating a peculiar smart tracery, which formed several horizontal belts.

Brick, square in plan, Mausoleum Shah-Fazil, recovered by the dome on octahedral drum presumably belongs to the 10th-12th centuries (in Saffed-Bulon village of Djalal-Abad oblast).

In central part of the Tien Shan, close to At-Bashi village, restored caravan serai Tash-Rabat rises. Initially it was a Christian cloister, but later it was reconstructed into mosque and began to function as caravan serai on the route of the Great Silk Route.

Simplicity of stone-work, heaviness of proportions and absence of the window openings form rigorous architectural appearance of buildings. Architectural decor's fragments have been on the interior walls. Finishing works were made using high-quality *gunch* (sort of artificial gypsum). Ornament carving on *gunch* was implemented with great skill.

From monumental constructions of the medieval epoch, for example, Manas *Gumbez* in Talas Valley has been kept safe. It was constructed in 1334 AD. Although scientists know (from Arabic inscription on the Mausoleum's main facade) that it was the burial-vault of Kyanizek-Khatun, a daughter of one of the Ferghana Emirs, and the term "Manas *Gumbez*" is used by tradition. The mausoleum itself is not large. Its total height is eleven metres and the length of each facade is about seven metres.

In the middle of the 15th century, a large number of strongholds was built at the Lake Issyk-Kul and in some other places. However, they were not large in size since the end of 15th and beginning of 16th century, palace-temple construction was suspended, and pre-existing constructions destroyed.

The real scientific sensation was the discovery of a cloister of medieval Armenian Christians in the region of Svetly Mys village in the eastern part of Issyk-Kul. According to the Catalan map's data (14th century), this was exactly the place where the relics of Apostle and Evangelist Matthew should be. In the same place, in the Issyk-Kul basin, excavations of mounds belonging to the beginning of our era are continuing. Also one can mark the investigations of pictographic monuments in Naryn oblast (Kochkorskaya Valley) and some others.

Creation of cultural and historical areas, which will allow preserving invaluable monuments and attracting tourists, is very important. Such complexes have appeared in Osh, Uzgen, in Krasnaya Rechka, Cholpon-Ata, in Talas Valley (Manas *Gumbez*). Today, it is necessary to pay special attention to the development of the State Programme "Cultural Heritage", which will strengthen research and conservation of historical and cultural heritage of Kyrgyzstan.

ON THE TRAIL OF SILK ROUTE

Travel Experiences in Kyrgyzstan

K. Warikoo

The landlocked country of Kyrgyzstan is bordered by Kazakhstan in the north, Uzbekistan in the west, Tajikistan in the south-west and China in the south-east. The picturesque country is famous for the Tien Shan (heavenly mountains), Issyk Kul Lake, lush green meadows, flowing streams, rich and variegated flora and fauna and high mountains which cover more than ninety three per cent of its territory, thereby providing lushgreen grasslands to its large livestock. Having considerable hydro-electric energy resources and rich deposits of coal, lead, gold, mercury and other minerals, hydel power, mining and light and food industries are the main areas of economic activity. Following its independence in August 1991 and the adoption of multi-party democratic system, Kyrgyzstan is in its transition to a new order. Notwithstanding its sparse population of over five million covering a total area of about 199,900 square kms. and the general peace and tranquility prevailing in this country, this process of transition has not been entirely smooth. This author had an excellent opportunity to travel through this beautiful country taking almost a round covering Talas, Manas, Bishkek, Urusai, Issyk Kul, Balykchi, Cholpan Ata, Naryn upto Torugart pass during a ten days (26 May - 4 June 1994) drive as member of the first ever overland Central Asian Cultural Expedition to rediscover ancient Silk Route. Another field study visit to Kyrgyzstan (Bishkek and Osh) in November 1997, enabled this author to have fruitful interaction with a cross section of Kyrgyz academics, area specialists, foreign policy advisors, NGO and cultural activists. This paper recapitulates these travel experiences which gave a physical feel of the changes occurring at the socio-economic and cultural levels in Kyrgyzstan in its post-independence era.

The 17 member Indian Central Asia Cultural Expedition (CACE) (May-July 1994) led by Major H.P.S Ahluwalia of the Everest fame, **64** *Himalayan and Central Asian Studies* Vol.10 Nos.2-3, April-Sept. 2006

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covering more than 17,000 kms. through Uzbekistan; southern Kazakhstan; Kyrgyzstan; Xinjiang, Tibet, Gansu and Qinghai provinces of China; Nepal and back to Delhi (India) marked a renewal of people to people contact between India and Central Asia. The CACE sought to relive the experience of travel and study of the Central Asian societies and cultures with particular reference to their common Silk Route connection. We entered Kyrgyzstan on 26 May 1994, after completing our tour of Chimkent, Dzhambol and Taraz in the southern part of Kazakhstan. Driving our way along the Talas river, we reached Talas town - the birthplace of Kyrgyz epic hero Manas and the famous Kyrgyz writer and diplomat Changiz Aitmatov. On the way, we stopped at the large reservoir having a capacity of five million cubic metres which was built in 1976 A.D. by the Soviets to tap the flush waters of Talas river. Though the Kirov reservoir has now been renamed as Toktogul, the huge bust of Lenin cemented on the hill overlooking the reservoir reminded us of the Soviet contribution to this gigantic engineering feat. At Talas, we were treated to a colourful evening of Kyrgyz music and dance and recitation from the epic *Manas* by the Kyrgyz artists.

Next morning (27 May 1994) we drove to Manas and visited the Manas mausoleum and museum. Large stone pillars and some stones with human figures locally known as *Balbals* have been preserved in the Manas precincts, testifying to the pre-Islamic heritage of the Kyrgyzs. Preparations were then afoot to celebrate the 1000th anniversary of Manas in June 1995, which was done on a grand scale as planned. A national historical and cultural complex has been developed at the premises of Manas-Gumbaz in Talas region, which includes a big museum housing all archeological and ethnological monuments connected with the legendary Manas. A small mausoleum existing in this premises was also restored. The *Manas* epic is an ancient work of oral poetry having five lakh verses which glorify the legendary Kyrgyz warrior 'Manas' on horseback, it tells us about his courage, valour and love of the motherland and his military feats against the invaders from neighbouring areas. *Manas* has become the symbol of renaissance of the Kyrgyz cultural and historical heritage in

independent Kyrgyzstan. Manas-the national hero of Kyrgyzs is being revered. That indigenous traditions associated with *Manas* have not only survived the seventy years of Communist rule, but have been revived with renewed vigour, speaks volumes about the nationalist and spiritual resurgence in Kyrgyzstan. The hillock locally named Karal Chaku overlooking the Manas mausoleum is considered sacred by the Kyrgyzs universally. Large number of local people, both young and old throng the place as pilgrims and climb the hill top. No alcohol is served or taken within the premises of the Manas complex which is considered to be sacred. Local people continue to believe that this hillock protects them from any evil influences or enemies. Inside a traditional Kyrgyz *yurt* maintained near the Manas premises, an old Kyrgyz lady offered us tea and bread as she did to all pilgrims coming to Manas, the expenses being covered by contributions from the pilgrims.

During a visit to the Kyrgyz Academy of Sciences, Bishkek in November 1997, this author had a fruitful interaction with the Kyrgyz scholars at the National Centre for Manas Studies established by the Academy. Prof. Musaev, the then Head of this Centre informed that *Manas* is now taught in schools, colleges and universities as a special “40 hours a year” course of study. *Manas* has become the symbol of national identity, history and common cultural heritage, being seen as a means to consolidate the national unity of the people of Kyrgyzstan. That *Manas* has been translated into Hindi by an Indian scholar, is a matter of gratification, particularly so because the Kyrgyz academics and literateurs greatly admire Indian heroes of *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* comparing these epics to *Manas*. The Kyrgyz specialists trace the origin of word *Manas* to India. In fact, Academician Musaev showed this author a copy of *Ramcharit Manas* to score his point. One found that the Kyrgyz academics and literateurs cherish deep consciousness and admiration for the Indian heroes from the epic of *Ramayana*.

Though Kyrgyzs are Sunni Muslims by faith, they continue to follow indigenous traditions and customs. However, efforts are on to bring Kyrgyzs closer to the basic tenets of Islam. New Mosques are

being built and a few *madrassa* have also been opened where Quran is being taught to the younger ones. The International Fund of Assistance to the Revival of Spiritual Culture of Peoples of Kyrgyzstan, *Yyman Insan* was established in 1993 to finance the construction of the Mosques and *madrassas* in Kyrgyzstan. About 2,000 Kyrgyzs went for the *Haj* pilgrimage to Mecca in 1994. And some of them were said to have mobilised the requisite 1,200 US dollars to meet their *Haj* expenses after disposing off their assets including immovable properties. However, initial euphoria for undertaking the *Haj* pilgrimage appears to have ebbed down due to inflation and high cost of living. *Qurban Id*, locally called *Kuman-ait* is celebrated with great fervour. At the same time, the ancient tradition of worshipping hillocks, trees, rivers, sun, images and legendary Kyrgyz heroes continues. Similarly, belief in existence of spirits, practice of local Shamanism with its elements of magic, removal of bewitchment, evil influences etc. is also prevalent. These beliefs have been passed on from generation to generation in the form of legends, epic poems and stories. Buddhism has been prevalent in Kyrgyzstan mainly in urban centres and towns located along the Silk Route till 12th to 13th century. That the symbol of sun occupies a central place in the National Flag of Kyrgyzstan, only reinforces the view that Kyrgyzs continue to revere nature and its elements. This consciousness got translated into the secular political belief of independent Kyrgyzstan, which adopted its constitution in April 1993 declaring itself to be a secular state (Article I).

From Manas, we re-entered Kazakhstan at the ancient town of Merket, from where we drove further through gorges, ravines and mountains till we reached Bishkek, the beautiful green capital city of Kyrgyzstan. Surrounded by Ala Tau and Tien Shan mountain ranges and high meadows, Bishkek is quite similar to Srinagar-the summer capital of Indian State of Jammu and Kashmir. We were warmly received by the Mayor of Bishkek on 28 May 1994. Bishkek is the administrative, educational, cultural and industrial centre of Kyrgyzstan. Big statues of Lenin, Manas and Ur Kooya Salieva (a Kyrgyz woman revolutionary) stand aloft in the centre of Bishkek. Bishkek is a clean

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aired city with broad avenues lined by trees and full of parks. The main Lenin Square in Bishkek city was now renamed as the Chui Square after the historic Chui valley. But Bishkek retains its European rather than Asian ambience, as this city was built by the Russians. We witnessed the celebrations of the second anniversary of Kyrgyzstan's National Guards at the main square in Bishkek city on 29 May 1994. Thousands of Kyrgyz citizens watched the acrobatics by paratroopers and the parade by National Guards with great enthusiasm. Yet, on enquiry from some Kyrgyzs on that occasion, one found that the Kyrgyz mothers were scared of sending their sons to join the army, due to the bloody experiences in Afghanistan and on the Tajik-Afghan border. We also spent some time at the Kyrgyz-Slavonic University, which was established earlier in 1993 as a result of bilateral agreement between Russia and Kyrgyzstan.

The members of the Expedition also visited the hill resort, Urusai (6000') about an hour's drive from Bishkek and spent a night there, before we returned to Bishkek. On the morning of 31 May 1994, we left Bishkek and continued our quest of the ancient Silk Route. We reached the ancient town of Tokmak, which is the site of the 21 metre high Buran Tower. Here we came across the remnants of pre-Islamic and Buddhist heritage of Balasaghun which used to be a flourishing trading and cultural centre on the Silk Route. This historic site, spread over an area of 36 sq. kms, was declared as the Balasaghun National Park in 1977. The Buran Tower was first restored in 1967-68 and again in 1975-78. Whereas this tower was constructed in the 11th century A.D. to commemorate the ascendancy of Islam in the region, the totems (stone figures locally called *Balbals*) lying throughout this area act as reminder to the pre-Islamic past. These totems, the sculptures carved out in the likeness of the deceased persons, were erected in the memory of the dead. Interestingly, this tradition still continues albeit in a modernised form of erecting concrete graves with stone pillars carrying portraits of the dead. This peculiar tradition would be an anathema in the puritan Islamic countries. About eight kms. away from the Buran Tower, there is the Ak Besham archeological site

ON THE TRAIL OF SILK ROUTE

standing testimony to the Buddhist settlements in this area. This site was found to be in a dilapidated condition and needs to be developed further into a Museum due to its unique historico-cultural importance.

After a full day's drive through Tokmak, we reached the Issyk Kul Lake in the evening of 31 May 1994 and stayed at the beautiful Ak Besham Hotel. This hotel was not only named by the Soviets after the historic Russian ship *Aurora* which had played a key role in the October Revolution but its exterior is also designed like that ship. This hotel has now been renamed as Issyk Kul Ak Besham Hotel. During the Soviet times, this hotel used to be the exclusive preserve of dignitaries from the former USSR and foreign guests. Now it has been turned into a joint stock company and opened to both the domestic and foreign tourists. The turquoise blue Issyk Kul Lake, which is guarded by grand snow capped mountains, to the south by Terskey Ala Tao, on the north by Kungey Ala Tao beyond which one can see the glaciers of towering Tien Shan, is the pearl of Kyrgyzstan. Issyk Kul Lake is the deepest lake in the world after lake Baikal. Whereas it is fed by 80 streams and rivers, it is drained by none. However, we were disappointed to see that no fish existed in such a huge lake. This area was closed to foreigners during the Cold War, as submarine exercises were regularly carried out by the Soviets here. It has now been developed as the main tourist resort of Kyrgyzstan.

On 2 June 1994, we left Issyk Kul and continued our journey through Balykchi, Kochkor and Sarybulak villages. Balykchi is an important industrial town in Issyk Kul region. One noticed that the industrial waste and pollutants which used to be poured into the Issyk Kul lake, need to be disposed off properly to save the lake from this hazard. From Balykchi we drove to the frontier town of Naryn across the Dolan Pass (10,000') passing a herd of wild Bactrian camels and innumerable mountain marmots. The drive to Naryn through undulating terrain hemmed in by mountains all around, was exhausting. Naryn was an important place on the ancient Silk Route. We spent the night in a *yurt* at Naryn. Here one started feeling the Chinese touch in the local cuisine, obviously due to the proximity of China. We left Naryn early

morning next day (3 June 1994) slowly driving our way over the mountains upto Turgart Pass (12,000') - the highest point on this road. There is a Kyrgyz customs check-post at Turgart. We found that a big building of Customs House and a hotel were being constructed on the Kyrgyz side of the border at Turgart. Several trucks (16 tons) carrying cattle hides, sheep skins, iron and steel were moving up from Kyrgyzstan for export to Kashgar in Xinjiang (China). The Kyrgyz and Chinese military observation posts were stationed on the hillocks facing each other. The journey between the Kyrgyz and Chinese border posts was a difficult bone-jarring ride over the rough unpaved no-man's land till we reached the Chinese check-post late in the afternoon. After crossing the border gate, we were in Kashgar territory of Xinjiang (China). The snow covered ridge of Tien Shan mountains is the dividing line between China and Kyrgyzstan, southern slopes belonging to China and the northern slopes to Kyrgyzstan.

Local nationalism has taken strong roots particularly amongst the younger generation and in the rural areas where Kyrgyzs are in majority. Old places and streets bearing Russian names or which act as a reminder to Kyrgyzstan's association with the former Soviet Union, have been renamed on the local pattern giving due recognition to Kyrgyz heroes and places of historical and cultural importance. The Russian ultranationalist, Zhirnovsky and his supporters are despised by the local Kyrgyzs and the anti-Russian sentiment is persistent. Many Russians, Germans and Jews have emigrated to the Russian Federation, Germany and Israel respectively due to worsening inter-ethnic relations and dwindling of economic avenues in Kyrgyzstan. By the end of 1996, about 300,000 Russians had left the country. Adoption of Kyrgyz as the official language, privatisation of enterprises and closure of many industries are also responsible for the exodus of skilled non-Kyrgyz minorities. When this author met Mr. Askar Aitmatov, Advisor to the President of Kyrgyzstan in the Government House in early November 1997, Aitmatov conceded that in its first years of independence, there was upsurge of nationalist tendencies. Decrees on land and language, removal of non-titular nationalities from the administrative posts and

economic hardships had stimulated the emigration of minorities- Russians, Germans and Jews from Kyrgyzstan. However, Aitmatov felt that timely steps taken by the government such as the establishment of (i) Assembly of Peoples of Kyrgyzstan, (ii) Kyrgyz-Slavonic University, (iii) Associations of different national minorities, (iv) continuing dialogue between government and these bodies to understand the concerns and interests of these minorities and (v) granting the status of language of official communication to Russian, helped in stabilising the inter-ethnic relations in Kyrgyzstan.

Ethnic tensions between Kyrgyzs and Uzbeks in Osh that erupted into a major violent clash in 1990, have yet to be resolved. Thousands of Uzbeks from the Osh region, where they are mainly concentrated, are reported to have migrated to Uzbekistan. Members of both the Kyrgyz and Uzbek communities in Osh run their own schools, mosques, shops, cafes etc. separately, so that there is little interaction between the two groups.¹ Uzbeks constitute about 50 per cent and Kyrgyzs about 48 per cent of the population (about 2.5 million) of Osh and Jalalabad region in the south of Kyrgyzstan. During my few days stay in Osh in November 1997, I enjoyed the hospitality of Prof. Bakyt Beshimov, President of Osh State University. Osh being the main agricultural base producing silk, cotton, fruits, tobacco and livestock besides having light, food processing and silk industries, plays a key role in the economy of Kyrgyzstan. Osh presents an oriental Central Asian look as against the typified Russian European city of Bishkek. One found that Uzbeks were mainly involved in trade and that the percentage of Kyrgyz students in Osh University was more than that of Uzbeks. All students are required to learn Kyrgyz language on entering the Osh University. I also had an opportunity to interact with the students and faculty of the Indian Studies Centre which has been operating in the Osh University for the several years now. The Central government being conscious of the regional divided is striving to improve road communication between north and south. Bishkek-Osh highway has been built with Japanese funding. But Osh being too close to Afghanistan, Tajikistan and Andijan, it is quite vulnerable to the

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negative and destabilising influences of Islamic extremism, drugs trafficking and arms smuggling particularly through the Kharogh-Osh highway. In fact, Osh has evolved into a major transit entrepot of drug trafficking from Afghanistan through CIS to Europe. The old Silk Route is fast turning into the Narcotics Route.

Kyrgyzstan views the Afghanistan conflict as a threat to security and stability in the entire Central Asian region. On its part, Kyrgyzstan is keen to eliminate its landlocked situation by opening multiple communication options with the outside world through Russia, China etc. Aitmatov expressed satisfaction that Kyrgyzstan had managed to settle its border problem with China as inherited from the past. Whereas Kyrgyzstan has agreed not to allow any Uyghur secessionist activity within its territory, there continues to be humanitarian concern for the Uyghurs who are settled in sizeable numbers in and around Bishkek. On their part, China is prepared to disallow any increase in the number of Chinese immigrants in Kyrgyzstan which hopes to restrict the same by reinforcing its passport regime.

There is no denying the fact that Kyrgyzstan attained an appreciable level of development in the spheres of education, health and other sectors of socio-economic upliftment during the Soviet period. This becomes evident from the existing infrastructural facilities in terms of educational and technical institutions, hotels, hill resorts and some industries. Yet, we found that Kyrgyzstan was passing through a difficult phase on the economic front in its transition to the market economy. About 1,000 enterprises had ceased to function due to lack of raw materials resulting in the unemployment of skilled and unskilled workers.² Production had declined by 30 per cent and unemployment had touched a figure of 3 lakhs in 1993.³ Kyrgyzstan was importing 60 to 80 per cent of the essential commodities. Though Kyrgyzstan's economy is best suited for breeding livestock, agricultural production also declined and more particularly in case of meat, milk and eggs. Every section of society in Kyrgyzstan was feeling the pinch of the economic difficulties. Whereas the students are faced with the problem of high costs of education, the newspaper and book industry also

suffered due to rising cost of paper which was earlier supplied by Russia. For instance, the Writers' Union of Kyrgyzstan which published 150 new books in 1991, could not bring out any new book in 1992.⁴

Kyrgyzstan has gone ahead in restructuring the economy introducing privatisation. Though the pace of privatisation has been quite fast in case of industrial enterprises, it has also been introduced in private property. For the first time in over 70 years, thousands of flats have become the property of private owners. By the end of 1992, about 19 per cent of the state owned farmland and urban land was privatised and owned by private individuals.⁵ But privatisation of collective farms of livestock has led to the distribution of livestock among small farmers who in turn sold or killed the livestock thus leading to steep decline in livestock. 5,896 state enterprises or 59 per cent of the total were privatised between 1991 and 1995.⁶ USAID has been rendering 'technical' assistance to help in this process of privatisation. Foreign companies particularly from USA, Turkey, South Korea and Germany have also entered the fray setting up joint ventures. Notwithstanding these economic reforms and privatisation, there has been slump in the local economy. In 1995, industrial output declined to 32.7 per cent of the 1991 level.⁷ This was despite the fact that 27 unprofitable industrial enterprises were reorganised and six were declared bankrupt. By mid-1996, over 900 medium and large scale enterprises had been privatised and by mid-1997, some 61 per cent of former state owned enterprises had been taken over by the private sector. In 1996, industrial output increased as compared to the 1995 level. Yet, it equalled the level of 1971.⁸

In the agricultural sector, the collective farm system (*Kolkhoz* and *Sovkhoz*) were replaced by private farms, agricultural cooperatives and associations. But from 1991 to 1995, agricultural production declined by 36 per cent.⁹ In 1996, the 'right to private use of land on 99 years lease' was granted. As per 1996 data, private farms produced 70 per cent of meat, 72 per cent of milk, 96 per cent of eggs besides seeds, potatoes, fruits etc.¹⁰ Yet the level of agricultural production remained the same as in the years 1971-73.¹¹ However, the year 1996 witnessed

the first increase in industrial and agricultural production since independence.

Decline in production, rise in prices, low wages and rising unemployment have generated severe social problems. There has been steep rise in crime rate, drug addiction and divorces. It was reported that during 1992 there was 70 per cent rise in crime in Kyrgyzstan and 220 per cent in Osh region, most of which was related to drugs.¹² Sudden emergence of the nouveau riche class is being lamented by the lesser privileged sections of society. Common people are peeved at the sight of former bureaucrats, managers and politicians assuming private control over prime plots of land, enterprises, shops and even automobiles which were previously state property. Some people did compare the positive aspects of life in the old Soviet system when there were no shortages and no big gap between the rich and the poor. Now people have to pay even for their education, health and other social services, which were taken care of by the state previously. The average monthly wages are not compatible with the minimum expenses for food, shelter and clothing. 60 per cent of the people are living below poverty line and the gulf between the rich and poor has widened. There is a parallel economy upto 30 per cent of GDP. This is also borne out by the increase in number of imported cars, which are being consumed by the nouveau riche. Despite its huge hydel power potential and existing power projects, even the capital city of Bishkek suffered sometimes from power shortage during the winter months, adding to the woes of the people.

The problem of upstream country like Kyrgyzstan which is dependent for its fuel and gas requirements on adjoining countries of Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, is accentuated by its expenditure of about 80 million US dollars a year for storage of water to be supplied to these downstream countries. Now that the water sharing agreement has been signed by the concerned Central Asian countries and some arrangement is being worked out to compensate Kyrgyzstan for the maintenance of water and storage expenses, will help Kyrgyzstan to exploit the full potential of its hydel resources for power generation. That inflation level

has been brought down and currency is stable, shows signs of economic recovery.

Kyrgyzstan is passing through the delicate phase of transforming into a new political, social and economic order. The people of Kyrgyzstan who have many educational and professional cadres and have strong instinct of survival taking pride in their independence and sovereignty, hope to weather the transitory problems facing them at present. The younger generation of Kyrgyzs is determined to preserve the national sovereignty of Kyrgyzstan and work for its prosperity.

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FORTRESSES IN KYRGYZSTAN

E.G. Koreneva

The territory of modern Kyrgyzstan is at the crossroads of three branches of the Great Silk Route. For a long time, it was the region of moving nomads, who were a link between the settled civilizations of the East and West, the Mediterranean and China. Numerous archaeological excavations and ancient sites confirmed that these nomads represented the cultural and technical achievements of settled civilizations.¹ These excavations have established that the trade routes were very convenient for movement, as there was water and forage for cattle, fine opportunities for hunting, materials were available for making handicrafts and stone instruments. Later on, settlements came up there and even fortresses were built.

In general, ancient monuments were recognized as the valuable historical sources reflecting centuries-old history of the people and their role in the history of the world civilization. Created by hard work and talent of the people, these monuments are a treasure of popular wisdom, historical inter-relations of people, their struggle for social and national liberation. The monuments served many purposes including science, education and culture besides the patriotic and aesthetic education of people.

From all the Russian authors of 18th century who wrote about Kyrgyzs, only two had visited the Kyrgyz territory – Tsar’s Ambassador, Ivan Unkovsky and Phillip Efremov (1750 - 1811). Efremov informed about Kyrgyz settlements between the cities of Osh and Kashgar and a trade route to Kashgar. He clearly distinguished the Kyrgyz people from the Kazakhs.²

Phillip Efremov, one of the few 18th century European travellers, had passed through Ferghana, Àlay, Terek - Davansky pass in Kirghizia, through the highest passes of Karakoram on his way to India. In the Western literature, the opening of the Terek - Davansky pass

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was attributed to Mir Izzet Ullah, who had travelled from India to Kokand in 1811 AD. But thirty years prior to Izzet Ullah's travel, Phillip Efremov travelled along this route but in the opposite direction. He was the first in Russia who told about the trade route connecting the East through Central Asia with the West, and first gave information about southern Kyrgyz, while travelling in Îsh and Àlay.³

Efremov's notes on southern Kyrgyzs, their movement and position narrate that Kyrgyzs lived not in and around Bukhara but between the cities of Osh and Êashgaria, in the mountains and plains as nomads in small numbers.⁴ According to this information, at the end of the 18th century Kyrgyzs were independent, but had their big feudal lords.⁵

In almost all countries of the ancient world including Kyrgyzstan, the public life has been connected to religious views, political authority, complex ethnic processes, art and architecture. The medieval architecture reflects communication and the spiritual experience of that period, which has now come down to several generations. Fortresses are rather simple fortified constructions of 18th - 19th centuries.

According to the written sources of the past, there are about ten fortress in Kyrgyzstan - including Pishpek, Tokmak, Karakol, Bairskaun, Êînurulen, the Sufi-Kyrgan, the Daraut- Kyrgan, Chinaz, etc. But only three – the fortress of Kanntyan on the Sokh river, the Daraut-Kyrgan in Chon-Àlay and Cholok-Korgon in the central Ôian-Shan are still existing while others have been destroyed during the revolts by Kyrgyz people against Kokand chiefs.⁶

English agent, Mir Izzet Ullah, who was in Êîkand Khanate in the year 1812, writes about the Ferghana Kyrgyzs.⁷ Describing a route from Kashgar through Àlay to Kokand in 1812, Mir Izzet Ullah named the Kyrgyz settlement as Shor-Bulak. He gave information about the mining and trading of lead by the Kyrgyz people.⁸

From the second half of 18th century to the second half of 19th century, the history of Kyrgyzstan is closely related to Êîkand Khanate. During this period, Kyrgyz people struggled against the Kokand Khans, the oppressive feudals, which marked the end of Khan despotism.

Southern parts of Kyrgyzstan were occupied by Kokand armies in between 1762 and 1821. Kokand armies had captured the northern areas of Kyrgyzstan during the period 1825-1832 AD. In 1825, Kokand armies conquered the Chu valley and erected the fortresses of Pishpek and Òïkmaq, making these two fortresses their military garrison units.

At the centre of the Kyrgyz settlements and on the border with China, a number of fortresses were erected reflecting the attacks of the Tsin armies. Describing these fortresses a quarter century later, Chokhan Valikhanov wrote that Kîkandis, having subordinated the wild Kyrgyz, had surrounded the borders from Eastern Turkestan to Khotan.⁹

In his *Description of Kîkand Military Line on the River Chu*, the senior Aide-de-Camp of the separate Siberian case, and the Captain of Joint Staff, M.I. Venyukov, narrated the plans of Kokand strongholds in Òïkmaq and Pishpek. According to Venyukov, that Kokand line of strongholds in the territory of Prichujskoj had protected the border. This defence line was made with eight fortification-Òïkmaq, Pishpek, Àksu, It-Kichu, Àulie-Àta, Cholok-Korgon (the same fortifications was in the central Tian Shan), Suzak. All these were separated from the internal areas of Kokand Khanate by the low mountains (Kyzyl-Kórt, Boroldai and the Kara-Òàó), making one range, and the first four by snow-covered Kyrgyz Ala-Òîñ. Suzak and Cholok-Korgon were advanced posts on the way to Àzret and Tashkent from lower reaches of the Chu river, and other forts were down on the way from Zailiskoij territory to Kokand.¹⁰

In general, fortresses were erected on both the borders of Kîkand Khanate in the beginning of 19th century as part of the basic strategy and administration of the Khanate. It was a military manoeuvre. The construction of these fortresses was done coherent circuit during the period when the Kokand Khanate was at its best. Soon after the Khanate began to decline, followed by bloody inter-feudal contentions and anti-feudal revolts.

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The construction of the first Kokand fortress in the territory of Kyrgyzstan is connected to the expansion of the Kokand Khanate during the reign of Omar Khan. During the period 1813-1815 the former Bukhara fort of Jangak on the Syr-Daria river coast was reconstructed by Kokandis and rechristened as Ak Masjid. In 1814, the Chulak-Kurgan was erected on the northern slopes of the mountains of the Kara-Tay. During the same period, the Kyzyl-Kurgan (the Red fortress) was built at the confluence of the rivers, Gulcha and Murdash. It received its name from red clay which was used for its construction.¹¹ In 1825, Àulie-Àtà was erected on the Talas river, besides two others such as Ketmen-Tube (Uzun-Akhmat or Ulug-Korgon) in the same valley, and Daraut-Kyrgan in Chon-Àlay. In four years, Merket, Pishpek, Òikmak and Àtbashi fortresses were built on the Chu river. Besides these large fortresses, there were a number of finer fortresses built during the same period, which were used as satellites or small forts for the pickets. The basic idea of building Kokandi forts was to control the captured territory within the Kokand Khanate.

According to one Russian document prepared during the middle of the 19th century, Kokandis plundered and oppressed Kyrgyzs.¹² Ìullah Àbdul Ìadzid, an envoy of the British Indian Governor to Kokand Khan (in 1860-1861), wrote that there were as many as fifteen territories in the Khanate which were dependent directly on the Kokand Khan. He, however, wrote that some people were included in the structure of *vilaets*. *Beki* operated as Khan's vassals. They not only had the rights to issue death penalty but also executed almost all the powers legally. At the same time, they were independent of the Khan's will. However, *Beki* were required to be in the palace once or twice a year with the report and *tartuk* (gifts) for the Khan and other influential dignitaries.

There were some ten areas of local management in the 60th year of the Khanate. Mullah Abdul Majid, during his six-week sojourn in Kokand, wrote that there were 78 small areas under the Khanate. These were some kind of volosts, under the officials holding the rank of a *yzbashi* or *yzbegi*.

By Khan's special decrees – *Khirmans* - were appointed as military - administrative officials in the rank of *datkhi*. In large Kokand fortresses with garrisons consisting of hundred soldiers (such as Pishpek and Merket), there were *Kushbegi* and *Kharimy*.

Ìullah Àbdul Ìajid, who directly interacted with Kokand soldiers, wrote that the standing army consisted of 10,000 persons out of which only 1,500 were active armed soldiers. It was mainly cavalry. According to Majid, the basic national structure of the army, comprised Kyrgyz, Kazakh and Kipchak tribesmen, besides Afghans and Hindustanis.¹³

The Alay fortress, a safe trading line between Ferghana and East Turkestan, was located along the brisk trading way linking the Kokand Khanate with East Turkestan and through it with China and India. The fortresses strengthened Khan's authority over the cattle breeding Kyrgyz population of Alay. The Kokand fortresses were divided into small constructions which housed 20 to 50 soldiers. These fortresses represented the strengthenings of the quadrangular or oval form having an area upto 0 to 2 hectares. These were high, but with thin walls having ledges or towers on corners, and the outside parts were surrounded by a moat. However, the strengthening and a small number of garrison had problems in protecting the trade routes, supervising the wandering Kyrgyz nomads and gathering of taxes *Zakat*. According to Ch.Valikhanov, "The collectors of taxes will drive about on Kyrgyz uluses up to Khotan. The kins of Kyrgyz, wandering on the river Naryn on valleys of Tuektash, up to the city of Ush-Turfana, are subordinated to the Andizhan Governor to whom commandants of the strengthenings constructed in the settlements of these Kyrgyzs are subordinated also: Jungal, Òoguztaray and Kyrтка. Kaisaki and the Kyrgyz wandering across Talas, Chu and Jungal, are subordinated to the Tashkent deputy. For supervision over these the strengthenings are constructed: Àvlie-Àdà, the Chulak-Kurgan, Merke, Pishpek and Òïkmak."¹⁴

With the downfall of the Kikand Khanate, all these fortresses became desolated, and were even destroyed. Some traces of the

Kokand fortresses are found in Àksu, Òïkmak, Shish-Tube, It-Kichu, Barckaun and Konur-ulen. Nearby these small fortifications, there were sentry pickets, and barrow or *korgon*. Besides the soldiers, *Zakatchi*, who collected taxes for ferrying cattle through the river, were the influential officials in these pickets.¹⁵

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CLASSICS AND MODERN THEORIES: LINKAGES BETWEEN *MANAS* AND MANAGEMENT

Nisar Ahmad

Human race has always benefitted from the discoveries and innovations made by their predecessors as well as their contemporaries. These discoveries have travelled from one part of the world to another when mankind, in its pursuits for food, shelter, and for many other reasons, travelled across the globe. We are aware, how the travellers on the grand Silk Route, besides carrying their merchandise, also carried their cultures, beliefs, and values, which not only left a lasting impression, but even impacted many a local culture. The civilizations evolved through this inter-mingling of cultures. This evolution was for the betterment. Someone invented the wheel, and this wheel travelled to all parts of the world. Modern inventions and theories have found their acceptability in all cultures whenever the people belonging to those cultures found them relevant. In ancient times, the working unit was a family where everyone contributed. But when the theory of ‘Division of Labour’¹ came about, it was found useful by the world and adopted by people, which improved their productivity and quality of life.

While the importance of modern theories can not be denied, it is equally important to highlight the relevance of these theories in the cultural context of a people. The Islamic architects from Central Asia and Arabia discovered amazing theories of cooling towers where

* This paper is based on this author’s paper titled “The Komuz of 3 M : Manas, Men and Management” which was included in the programme for International Symposium on *Globalization and Turkic Civilization*, organized by the Centre for Turkic Civilization Studies, Kyrgyz - Turkish Manas University At Bishkek, 10-11 November 2005. The ideas which formed the outline of that paper have been dealt with in greater details so as to arouse interest of young scholars from Kyrgyzstan and other parts of the world.

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minarets of a building were used for circulation of cool breeze inside a building. This was found very useful by the people in Indo-Gangetic plain of Indian peninsula because it was relevant to them, but could not be accepted by the people living in higher mountain ranges in Kyrgyzstan, because it was not relevant to them. When new concepts are presented in a familiar idiom, they evoke a better response. Culture, a system of shared beliefs, values, customs, behaviours and artifacts that the members of society use to cope with their world and with one another, is transmitted from generation to generation through learning. The fundamental element or building block of culture consists of symbols - symbols which come from material artifacts like tools, house structures, art works, behavioural patterns, economic exchanges, family norms, folklore, classics etc. These symbols and meanings are understood quickly and hence can be used as tools for education and as an aid in the process of learning. This is important because new concepts presented in familiar forms can generate better ideas.²

Mulla Nasruddin³ once approached a house agent and said, "I want to sell one half of the house I live in." The property dealer replied, "But Mulla I know your house, you only own one-half of it". Mulla replied, "That's exactly the point, I want to sell my half to buy the other half with that money!"⁴ Our brain is divided into two halves - the right, and the left which do their respective thinking on aesthetic and logical matters respectively. Often, people use predominantly one half of their brain like Mulla in the above quoted story. To be able to use the other half of the brain, one should be willing to move out of one's current half. An introduction of modern theories through old classics can help young scholars to alternate freely between both halves of their brains, thereby improving the understanding of these theories and development of more relevant, useful and workable ideas. Sheikh Saadi, in one of the verses in his classical *Gulistan* says, "Wherever a spring of sweet water may be - men, birds and ants will circle around it."⁵ So a better way of learning could be through creation of such sweet water springs which by themselves attract men.

The objective of this paper is to introduce some of the modern management theories and models to the Kyrgyz young scholars in the backdrop of traditional wisdom from Kyrgyz folklore and culture. This paper has three parts. In part I, an introduction to the epic *Manas* is given. Part II attempts to establish some linkages between *Manas* and Management. Part III concludes this paper.

I

AN INTRODUCTION TO *MANAS*

Manas is an epic named after the main hero, Kyrgyz legendary batyr-khan Manas, who led his people in their struggle against foreign invaders. The epic *Manas* is a trilogy - a biographical cycle of three generations of heroes: Manas, his son Semetei and grandson Seitek. It is commonly believed to end at third generation, though it is reported that in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of China (Eastern Turkestan), one of the great living *manashcis*,⁶ Jusup Mamai, recites the epic *Manas* up to the seventeenth generation. *Manas* overtakes some of the well known classics by its sheer size. While the Greek *Illiad* has 15,693 lines, and *Oddyssey* has 12,110 lines, the most common version of the Kyrgyz epic is twenty times larger. It is even 2.5 times larger than the ancient Indian *Mahabharata*, which is known to be the largest one, and it is five times larger than Persian *Shah Nama*.

Manas has travelled down generations as a part of oral history through narrations by professional *manaschis*. For example, M. Auezov and A. Bernshtam dated it back to the 6th-9th centuries. Yunusaliev dated it back to the 10th-11th centuries, V. Jirmunsky and other scholars connect the main events of the epic with the struggle of the Kyrgyz people in the 17th-18th centuries against the Oyrat-Kalmyk aggression. There are about 60 versions of the epic available in the manuscript-stock of the National Academy of Sciences of Kyrgyzstan.

The plot of the *Manas* trilogy consists of the following main episodes:

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I. In Manas

- Birth of Manas and his childhood;
- His first heroic deeds;
- His marriage to Kanikei;
- His military campaign against Beijing;
- Death of Manas, destruction of his achievements.

II. In Semetei

- Kanikei takes Semetei and flees to Bukhara;
- Semetei's childhood and his heroic deeds;
- Semetei's return to Talas;
- Semetei's marriage to Aichürök;
- Semetei's battle against Kongurbai;
- Semetei's death or mysterious disappearance;

III. In Seitek

- Destruction of Semetei's family; capture of Aichürök and Külchoro;
- Seitek's growing up in Kiiiaz's palace;
- Fighting against the internal enemies;
- Seitek's marriage;
- His defeat of the external enemies and death.

The story line of *Manas* is quite simple. At the age of fifteen, when nomad boys normally choose a profession such as shepherding the Khan's cattle, Manas forms a band of warriors and teaches its members the ways of war. To keep his supporters united and happy, he prepares feasts and organizes games for their entertainment. The grand epic of *Manas* depicts the culture, bravery, and pride and dignity of Kyrgyz people. Traditionally, *manaschis* have sung the epic songs to generations as reminders of their great past. Each *manaschi*, interacting with his audience, creates his own version of the epic. Although these versions carry all the facts of the epic, they do not shy away from incorporating new ideas and events.

II LINKAGES BETWEEN *MANAS* AND MANAGEMENT THEORIES

As we have discussed the use of classics in learning, the classic *Manas* introduced in Part I is now used as a cultural tool to connect with modern day theories of management science. In this part, some management theories / models will be discussed and their linkages with *Manas* will be established.

Manas and Change Management

Recent past has witnessed a lot of literature on the concept of “Change Management”. It ranges from the theory of Fifth Discipline,⁷ to the bestseller *Who Moved My Cheeses*.⁸ This literature talks about the ever-changing business and administrative environment, and a need to constantly review the working methods and processes to ensure a timely and adequate response to the change. Since their first postulation and development in the early twentieth century, the business principles did not undergo a change for next fifty years. There is that oft quoted statement of Henry Ford, the founder of Ford motorcar company, “Any colour - so long as it’s black.”⁹ For many years, a Ford car was available only in one colour - and it was, indeed, the highest selling model then. Notwithstanding this, it would be an error to presume that there was no change in the environment during this period. People definitely wanted different colours. However, Ford company could manage without innovating because the demand outstripped the supply of the product. And when the demand supply balance came along, the concept of catering to specific tastes and preferences was developed and got converted into various theories of “change management”. Under the overall change management, these theories postulated the following:

- a need to recognise change;
- measure its effects or likely effects on an organisation’s activities;
- review organisation’s working structures, processes and methods;

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- adapt the structures, processes and methods suitably to respond to the change; and
- retrain people to orient themselves to new ways of thinking so that adapted processes could become more synergetic and result oriented.

While modern management recognised the relevance of change and need to manage it as late as twentieth century, *Manas* had indicated the inevitability of change centuries ago. Read the following passages.

*The mountains fell apart, turning into ravines,
Ravines shook, turning into mountains.
Many seas became extinct
Leaving only their names behind
Every fifty years, people were new,
Every hundred years, the earth was renewed*

It clearly indicates how changes of environment and change of people are correlated. It talks of new people taking over (every fifty years) even though the earth continues to be the same. And after one hundred years, even the earth changes. When seen in the context of business management it is the external as well as internal conditions of the organization, which keep changing and require people to become 'new'. This newness of people can be attained either through fresh induction or through training and retraining.

The concept of preparation (training in modern management) comes alive in the section on 'Jakip and Akbaltay prepare to move to Ala-too, Joloy launches a great attack on them' through following passages:

*For a whole six years,
These wise men had prepared for the move
By gelding their stallions,
Preparing all the mares,
Castrating their rams
Fattening their sheep,
And gelding all the oxen,*

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*They silently dismantled the yurt frames,
Crossed the river without splashing,
Prepared all the stallions
And drove in one herd
The livestock they had raised,
“Baabeding, grant us a safe journey!” they prayed
And slaughtered a gray mare.
They put together a strong army*

The passages are useful as they beautifully draw our attention to the fact that training has to take care of the smallest of detail: from gelding of stallions to castration of rams, each activity has its purpose. The very fact that this preparation is supposed to have lasted six years is a pointer towards the ongoing nature of training. This preparation also has its purposes: “these wise men had prepared for the move.” In the absence of any clarity of purpose, training is not likely to bear fruits. That is why, today’s management theorists talk of an objective for training to be successful.¹⁰

Manas and the Concept of Comprehensive Action / Systems Thinking

Maulana Jalauddin Rumi, the famous Sufi saint has propounded the concept of Comprehensive Action v/s Individual Action.¹¹ For example, if we find one man cutting the cloth, another hammering nails in the ground, yet another sewing the cloth, and yet another preparing some ropes... we see individual actions. The comprehensive action is : they are laying a tent. The inter-connectedness of individual action is often submerged and not seen till the final picture is presented to us. Peter M Senge refers to this concept of comprehensive action as “Systems Thinking”.¹² The discipline of “systems thinking” recommends looking at parts, and their inter-connectedness to form a whole. For example, a forest is a whole which has many parts (trees), these trees are of various varieties - tall, leafy, shrubs, those which grow only under a shade, those which require sunlight. Obviously a shrub requiring shade would be ‘related’ to another tree, which needs sunlight.

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All these parts (trees) of this system (forest) have their individual relevance, and their connectivity to the whole. From a distance, we see forest. When we move too close we see only a tree, but systems thinking recommends the need to see both the forest and the trees.

This concept of comprehensive action is clear in the preparations described in the passages reproduced above. When armies move, they need shelter, food, armoury, transport, and tactics. Dismantling the yurt frames so that yurts are available when needed, fattening of sheep so that food is made available when needed, gelding of stallions for transport etc. are examples of suggested actions in a systemic (conforming to systems thinking) manner. Gelding of stallions, preparation of mares, castration of rams, fattening of sheep etc. are individual actions aimed at the comprehensive action of readiness. Crossing of river without splash so that the army goes unnoticed, and driving in a herd so as to rely on mutual support are other indicators of comprehensive action.

Following passages from the chapter “Jakip gives Manas to shepherd Oshpur”, where Chiyirdi advises Jakip, again relate to long-term systemic impact of current actions. These passages indicate the need to see the consequences of the Kyrgyz people continuing to live in Altay, how those unintended outcomes of living in Altay may destroy everyone, how it was important to migrate for the sake of the larger goal and how to prepare for that migration.

Oh, dear world!
You consider Altay as your homeland,
And the Kalmyks as your own people.
This Altay isn't our homeland,
The Kalmyks can't be our people.
They will add poison in your food,
Putting the blame on your son,
These Kalmyks will tear you out by the roots!
Leave all your countless livestock behind,
With Manas as your hope,
Flee this Altay!

The above passages indicate how our current reality may seem to be comfortable sometimes though there may be unintended outcomes of living in that reality. When one falls sick and takes a medicine for sickness, it may improve the person's current reality with respect to that ailment but the same medicine may have its side effects, which are the unintended consequences of the action of having consumed that medicine.

*If you don't flee Altay,
They will take for themselves the pastures
Where your livestock graze,
And seize your son
Whom you had at an old age.
If they catch Akbaltay, your holy man,
They will slaughter him.
Thus the Manchus will teach you a lesson.
You have many livestock, your son is mischievous,
He turned twelve,
You have no strength to control Manas!
He will take out his black steel sword
From its sheath and fight.
Your Manas won't just fight with the Kalmyks,
But with Esenkhan, the khan of Kitay!*

In these passages, there is a reiteration of the outcomes of continuing to live at Altay. This repetition also confirms to the modern theory communication which recommends use of more than one means of communication to convey the message. In the passages above, we can see more than one reasons being cited to exhort Jakip to migrate to safer place for the sake of a whole civilisation - how pastures will be usurped, what will happen to the cattle, what will happen to Manas, to Akbaltay etc.

*Ah, bay Jakip, listen to me,
In order to escape these infidels
And reach our goal,*

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*Leave your worldly things behind
And flee towards our many Kyrgyz,
In order not to submit to the Kalmyks
And stay in Altay,*

“In order to escape these infidels and reach our goals” in the passages quoted above, refer to the simple concept of strategising moves to make them goal specific. There is a clear reference to leave the worldly things (current reality) to move towards the ultimate goal.

*When the horses get fat and strong,
When our men become strong and full of energy,
Castrate your rams,
Make all your sheep fat,
Geld your wild stallions,
And turn them into horses,
Make your mares travel fast.
Geld all your male animals
And quickly gather your strength,
Mark the day you will flee,
And wish for your son's safety.*

The preceding passages only highlight the need for planning: when to do, what to do ? These talk about the preparations for our moves.

Manas and Competency Modelling

The chapter ‘Jakip and Akbaltay prepare to move to Ala-too. Joloy launches a great attack on them’ has following passages.

*As his support,
The panther Manas, your hero, took
All the strong and brave men,
Courageous spearmen,
And strong axemen.
Jakip bay led the migration,
Akbaltay rode behind,
They left everything they had*

*And relied on their faith [in God],
They dispersed their countless livestock,*

Modern day managers are talking of ‘competency modelling’ which means listing of competencies required to carry out a job and selection of people in view of those competencies. The selection of strong and brave men to fight the enemy, and the selection of spearmen and axemen which fit into the required skill set for those days’ warfare are typical examples of competency modelling in *Manas*. It also highlights the aspect of ‘internalising’ goals and drawing motivation from such internal belief - “and relied on their faith in God.” The modern day competency modelling suggests that when people are chosen as a right fit for the job, much of this internal motivation comes from these peoples’ own beliefs.

Manas and Learning Cycle

Each time the French want to say the number 97, they say: “quatre-vingt-dix-sept”, which, translated in English, means four times twenty and ten and seven.¹³ That seems a rather cumbersome way of saying ninety-seven to us as we are not used to such calculation based methodology. However, for the French, it is normal. To learn counting in French, one will have to leave his existing understanding of numbers behind. Kurt Lewin,¹⁴ in his famous model of learning, has talked of three stages: unfreezing, move, and refreezing. It suggests that to achieve a change in behaviour one has to first unlearn (unfreeze) so that one becomes receptive to change. Next comes the stage of moving in the desired direction of learning, and finally freezing of that state for future benefits.

The lines, cited in the foregoing sub-section, are also suggestive of the concept of migration. “They left everything they had” is a clear testimony to the idea of ‘unfreezing’.

Following lines from the chapter ‘Jakip and Akbaltay prepare to move to Ala-too. Joloy launches a great attack on them’:

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*Having faith in their Prophet and religion,
They left Altay behind,
The forty families moved away from Altay. . .*

suggest of strategizing. Losing the battles to win the wars. That for a larger interest, you may have to let smaller assets go away.

Manas and Team Building

Following verse from the chapter 'Jakip gives Manas to shepherd Oshpur' represents how team spirit was uppermost in the mind of our hero Manas.

*And the favourite child of God.
Manas had gathered the forty boys
And broken all the rules.
He had slaughtered half
Of bay Jakip's numerous sheep.
The poor people and beggars
Had plenty to eat at Manas' feast.
All those who enjoyed the meat
Called Manas "My lord"
Angry and upset bay Jakip said:
"Oh, Manas, who are a pain in my neck,
You've weakened me,
Why did you slaughter my sheep in the wilderness,
You who are the bane of my existence?"
Then Manas spoke thus:
"Oh, father, what are you saying?
Why do you need to raise
This many livestock?
What's the point of it all?"
Manas spoke bluntly,
Which made bay Jakip feel proud.*

Questioning the very purpose of raising the livestock if they are not meant for the poor, and friends (team members) is actually a pointer towards making everyone a part of a big "us".

In the context of team building, modern management theorists have always talked of inclusion and exclusion. That good teams are built through a mutual feeling of 'inclusion' whereby everybody feels a part of the team. Whenever exclusion takes place, it results into teams getting stuck, or even falling apart.

Compare the team built by Manas which had spearmen, axemen with the team that Doodur had. Following lines from the chapter 'Jakip and Akbaltay prepare to move to Ala-too. Joloy launches a great attack on them' indicate that his group comprised nobles, elite, and leaders.

*Let's leave them aside for now
And talk about the numerous army
Which Döödür giant had brought.
The giant Döödür escaped and
Came to the pavilion with golden poles,
That Döödür had come
To see Döngö and Joloy.*

*A lantern was lit inside the tent.
Seeing the brave Döödür,
Many noble men came en masse,
The Tirgoots all gathered,
Bells rang loudly,
The army milled around,
Among the teeming noble men
Of the bejeweled Kitay,
Only the elite gathered,
Only the leaders gathered.*

This is an example of inclusion in one case and exclusion in the other. The outcome of the epic battles defines which team won, and why.

Another management concept in team building is that of rewards, and dilution of hierarchy. A thorough reading of the following passages from the chapter, 'Manas kills 200 Men of Esenkhan and plunders their camels and goods', tells us how rewards are being given, how all the

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forty men are enjoying together the *Kazi* and playing together.

*He gave as a prize for a horse race,
Forty two-year-old mares for each winner,
The winners slaughtered their prize,
They had killed a yearling to the south*

*And a mare to the north,
They had been devouring the kazi
And gulping black arak in the Kalmyk way,
They had been playing chatirash and making too much noise,
They were absorbed in their fun,
Playing ordo and other games.*

*He had been enjoying the ordo,
The forty boys who were with him
Were the companions of lion Manas*

*Allah Taala, the Almighty
Has indeed granted us Manas.
The booty which the hero plundered
From the victims,
Let's unload the booty,
The gold from the forty camels
And we will see tomorrow
What is the will of God.
Let's divide the booty
Which we got today.*

These are precisely the steps which go on building strong teams. See how the booty is to be divided among them. This actually indicates towards collective ownership by teams rather than ownership by individuals or team leaders.

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Few other Management Concepts and Manas

Few passages from ‘Manas kills 200 Men of Esenkhan and plunders their camels and goods’ are reviewed below to highlight many more concepts.

*Let's frighten the six sarts,
The children of Muslims,
Leading the camel caravan,
Into becoming our companions.
Akbalatay was indeed wise:
“Let's put together an army
From the Kyrgyz people of forty families
And train all the brave men.
By raising crescent-shaped banners,
And shouting the word ‘Aziret’”*

In these passages, the raising of army is advised by Akbalatay. The specific mention of ‘from the Kyrgyz people of forty families’ corroborates the concept of organising existing and known people, and training them for a new assignment. A specific banner provides the identification to this group, which would inculcate a sense of belonging; same goes for a chosen war cry. This is the concept of branding and logos in modern management.

*We should leave the numerous livestock
And flee from Altay!*

While leaving the livestock is indicative of not carrying the past, it is also a strategic move because when numerous livestock is left behind the enemy gets a sense of false win. This delays enemy's action providing crucial time to the migrating people to move forward. This stratagem is further reinforced in the following line from the same passage.

Let's use the “dog-fight” tactic with them.

This technique of dog-fight (*it urush*) where soldiers trick their enemy by running away from them and fighting with them as soon as they caught up to them, and running away again is best suited when enemies outnumber you.

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The realisation that there will always be external factors beyond one's control is highlighted when Akbaltay says that men being mortals, there is a need to provide for a cover in the form of Sultan Manas to back-up the marching forces. This is in contrast with the then practice of armies being led by their commanders. Actually, the concept of generals providing the back-up strategic support was developed many centuries later by the Western world.

*Anyway, we are mortals,
Therefore, without lamenting, Bay Jakip
We must keep the brave Manas, the Sultan
As our strong backing.
We don't need to have
These countless worthless livestock
Which are impermanent.*

III

CONCLUSION

Since most of the theories / management models described above were developed / researched in the Western world in early 20th century, it follows that the great epic *Manas* has taught these very concepts more than 1,000 years before these modern day management scientists.

However, there is a word of caution. In our efforts to find co-relations between the modern and the traditional, we must be aware of the dangers that come along going backwards. You can't move forward with your head turned backwards. There is a need to strike a balance between the modern and the classical. The use of classics is only suggested as a tool to understand the unfamiliar concepts. It will be, after using such tools of traditional wisdom coupled with modern knowledge that we would be in a position to answer the classical question: Who is the biggest of them all ? The bull, the eagle, the goat, the goatherd, the fox, the baby, or the woman.¹⁵

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CHIGU, SHANGRI LA AND 'MANAS'

Indira Musaeva

In ancient times, the Kyrgyzs were one of the most powerful nomadic tribes which made repeated incursions across the Chinese border and thus forced China to build the Great Wall. The first written evidence of the Kyrgyz people as a nation was found in Chinese chronicles dating back to second to first century B.C. According to the Chinese sources, the Western Region, which included Zhungaria, Ili district and Issyk-Kul Lake, was known as the region of nomads. For 2,200 years, Yuechji people occupied the region forcing out the Usuni people from China's north-west borders. During Emperor Wudi's reign, this region was known as Usuni's city - Chigu (at present a lost city in the territory of Kyrgyzstan). According to N. Bichurin (Iakinf), Chigu (meaning 'Red Valley' in Chinese) was located in the Ili Valley to the north-east of Issyk-Kul Lake (Issyk-Kul in Chinese is called 'Zhe-Hay', which in Kyrgyz means 'Hot Lake').

Sarybulun was the only large settlement on the Issyk-Kul basin in first century B.C. The written sources refer to Chigu – headquarter of the Usun ruler in this territory. The early information about Chigu is found in *Shitszi* (Historical Memoirs) collected from Zhang Qian, a court official of the Han Emperor Wudi (206 BC-220 AD), who was the first to travel along the fabled Silk Route. The Emperor sent Zhang on a diplomatic mission to seek support of the Usuni regents against Huns, who repeatedly invaded the Western Regions of the Han empire. In 138 B.C., Zhang Qian reached the northern border of China and escaped Hun detention for 10 years. Qian also travelled to Central Asia to persuade the local rulers to support the Han ruler. The local rulers, who were satisfied with their own position there, refused to ally with the Han empire. Zhang Qian and his delegation were captured and detained for three years while returning back home. They arrived in Changan in 125 B.C. Another interesting story about Chigu is that the

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Han rulers even used dynasty marriages as one of the methods of negotiating with the Usunis. In 107 B.C., Chinese princess married a Usuni Regent. Besides, a residential palace was built for the princess at the Regent's headquarter, which was called by the Chinese as the "Town of Red Valley" – "Chiguchan".¹ The country of the Usunis, according to Zhang Qian, was home to splendid mountains with fir and deciduous forests. People lived in rich towns with developed and original culture, indigenous script and handicraft. Lookwise, the people were not like Chinese, rather they had big prominent eyes and the men sported beard.²

Kyrgyzs and Kazakhs are descendants of the Usuni. Usuni clan remained in the Kyrgyz clan 'Sarybagysh'. As Semenov noticed during his expedition to Issyk-Kul, "people from Sarybagysh clan had European features such as blue eyes, which were eventually distinctive from Mongoloids. Usunis have a large numbers of herds. They also preferred horse breeding. They were impressed by flying horses-argymaks with long swan neck and long legs and small horses' hoofs. Moreover, they found grape's vine and juice."

Zhang Qian gave information about the location of Chigu on the bank of Issyk-Kul besides the exotic regions of the north like Ferghana, Kangiui, Sogd, Bactria, Khwarezm, Usuni etc. He said, "Usuni is situated nearly of 200 li³ from Davan (Ferghana), on the northeast. Russian scholar, N. Bichurin (Iakinf) pointed out that the state capital of Usunis was Chigu city (Chiguchan).⁴ According to him, Chigu lay in between northern-east point of Issyk-Kul Lake and south bank of Ili river. According to *Qzianhanshu* (History of the Old Han Dynasty) Chigu was situated about 8,900 li from Chanian."⁵ Another historical source informs about the government of Aksu ruler in Bynsu town, which was 8,350 li from Chanian and that Chigu was 610 li to the west of this town.⁶

We have few sources about Chigu from Chinese (Zhang Qian) and from others like Iakinf, P. P. Semenov, Ch. Valihanov, N. M. Prjevalsky, V. M. Ploskih, and also one Russian novel by Evgeny

Kolesnikov. According to Ch. Valihanov, Chi-Gu was situated about 610 li from Aksu to the north-west and to the north-east from Issyk-Kul Lake. V. P. Mokrynin and V. M. Ploskih observed: "Archaeological excavations in Issyk-Kul like stone and bronze sickles, numerous stone labour implements, boat-like corn graters, round-bottomed hand made ceramics were a surprise. Similar objects like burial mounds of the nomads were found only in the first century B.C. These facts fundamentally changed the conception of the Kyrgyz economy at that time, which was dependent on cattle-raising, handicraft and agriculture."⁷

From the second to first century BC, some of the Kyrgyz tribes set themselves free from the Hun domination and moved to the Enisei (Ene-sai- Mother River and Baikal - Bai-Kol Lake) regions. They formed their first state known as the Kyrgyz Kaganat, which existed from 6 AD to 13 AD. During this period, the Kyrgyz culture and the first written Kyrgyz language started being used which is confirmed by the unique runic inscriptions on stone monuments.⁸ The Kyrgyz people lost their written language after the collapse of the Kyrgyz Kaganat, which was due to foreign invasion.

This period witnessed the opening of the route from East to the West by Han dynasty. Zhang Qian is still considered by many to be the pioneer of travels along the Silk Route. Qian introduced Central Asia, particularly the Usuni – Pre-Saks in the territory of Kyrgyzstan and inaugurated trade along the Silk Route. Although his mission failed to achieve the original purpose, the information on Central Asia which Zhang Qian collected and conveyed to China was of paramount importance.

After a long gap, the Silk Route has once again assumed importance these days. The circle of the trade route envelops five independent Central Asian Republics (Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan), Armenia, Azerbaijan and part of Georgia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, northwest India, Tibet and Xinjiang in China, and southern Russia. In the north, the circle passes to the

north of the Trans-Siberian in Omsk. In the northwest, it crosses the Urals and descends parallel to the Volga until it crosses Georgia to the west and descends through the Turkish border towards Iraq. To the southwest, the circle crosses the Persian Gulf and traverses the Indian Ocean towards the south. In the east, it crosses Tibet and Xinjiang.

In the middle of the second century AD, the Kushan King Kanishka expanded his empire to Central Asia and went as far as Kashgar, Khotan and Yarkand, which were Chinese dependencies in the Tarim Basin of modern Xinjiang. As a result, cultural exchanges increased and Central Asian Buddhist missionaries became active in the Chinese cities of Loyang and Nanjing, where they distinguished themselves by their translation work. It is believed that there were as many as thirty-seven translators of Buddhist texts there. They promoted both *Hinayana* and *Mahayana* forms of Buddhism.

The most famous traveller on the Silk Route, Hieun Tsang had travelled 10,000 miles for sixteen years from 629 to 645 AD over three of the highest mountain ranges in Asia, and through regions that are now known as Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan and Pakistan on his way to India and back home to China. According to tradition, before Hieun Tsang left Changan (Xian), the capital of the Tang dynasty, he had a vision of the holy Mount Sumeru. Hieun Tsang travelled as a fugitive, hiding in day and travelling by night because the Tang Emperor had forbidden travel to the dangerous western regions. On his outward journey, Hieun Tsang stopped at the oasis towns of Hami, Turfan, Kharashahr, Kucha and Aksu on the northern Silk Route. During his stay at each of these towns, he travelled by horses and camels instead of following his caravan. He used to visit the Kings and preached Buddhist doctrine among merchants and warriors as well as his fellow monks on way to India. Hieun Tsang holds the distinction of having travelled both the northern and southern Silk Routes which even Marco Polo did not do.

The people in the ancient kingdom of Turfan were neither Chinese nor Turks nor Mongolians, but an Indo-European people speaking Tokharian dialect. The government institutions, however, were based

on the Chinese models. Reflecting this composite culture, modern excavations around Turfan have brought to light the remains of Christian, Nestorian, Manichean and Buddhist manuscripts, sculptures and paintings. Bezeklik monastery in the nearby mountains contained sixty-seven (some say fifty seven) caves dating from the fourth to the fourteenth century AD. From Turfan, Hieun Tsang travelled to Karashahr, Yangi and then to the kingdom of Kucha. He was impressed with the wealth and cultural richness of its civilization as well as its size. A Kuchan orchestra was introduced at the Chinese Court, which took part in imperial festivals during the entire Tang era. Hieun Tsang crossed the Tian Shan range to Kyrgyzstan amidst heavy snows. During his 40 miles travel, he lost one third of his men and animals due to inclement weather. Hieun Tsang and his depleted caravan rested at Lake Issyk Kul on the other side of the Tian Shan. In 628 AD, Hieun Tsang met the Great Khan of the Western Turks at Tokmak (Kyrgyzstan), who was at the height of his powers.

According to Hieun Tsang's observation, the languages of Sogdians from the region of Samarkand, who were specialized in caravan trade and travel, was the *lingua franca* of the Silk Route in east of Dunhuang at that time. These camel drivers also became unofficial emissaries of Buddhism. Although the King of Samarkand was a vassal of the Great Khan of the Western Turks, the local culture was that of Sassanids of Persia (226-629 AD). The religion of the Persian King was Zoroastrianism and the Sogdian language had similarity with Persian language. After Samarkand, Hieun Tsang's first important stop was Bactria, part of modern Afghanistan. He visited Balkh, a city of antiquity, which was chosen by Alexander the Great as his base from 329 to 327 BC. After Balkh, Hieun Tsang struggled through the treacherous Hindu Kush Mountains to reach the valley of Bamiyan, where he found the colossal Buddha statues carved in the cliff face.

In his search for Buddhist texts and sacred knowledge, Hieun Tsang went to India as a pilgrim. As he approached the Buddhist Holy Land (Shambhala), he venerated the stupas containing relics of Buddha. He described a small well from which the Buddha drew water

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for drinking: “A mysterious sense of awe surrounds the precincts of the place; many miracles are manifested also. Sometimes heavenly music is heard, and other times, divine odours are perceived.” After watching the Bodhi tree at Bodh Gaya, where Buddha attained Enlightenment, he cast himself down on the ground and wept.

Aurel Stein, the great Central Asian explorer and archaeologist, gives credit to Hieun Tsang for conducting the first ethnographic survey of Kashmir, where Hieun Tsang studied Buddhist philosophy for two years from 631-633 AD. As he drew closer to the Buddhist Shambhala in the north-eastern part of India, he got more ideas about Buddhist history and doctrines. He described the famous legends or incidents from the life of the Buddha as well as many tales of Buddha’s previous incarnations. He also gave a history of the Great Buddhist Councils and located the places associated with famous philosophers such as Vasubandhu and Arjuna. Like many other Chinese pilgrims, who travelled across India, he was also interested in observing the practice of Buddhism outside China. He had noted details of a number of monks and monasteries, a variety of sects, Buddhist festivals, customs and traditions. Buddhism became widespread and was adopted by a number of people in the region. The prominent were the Yuezhi people from the northern borders of the Taklamakan desert, who were driven from their traditional homeland by the Hun and had settled in northern India. Their descendents became the Kushan people. In the first century AD, they moved to this crossroads area, bringing their adopted Buddhist religion with them.

Kyrgyzstan’s ancient Silk Route connections with India have been established on the basis of the archaeological sites in Naviket, Sujab, Ak Beshim, Balasaghun etc. in Kyrgyzstan. Few Buddhist images (7th-8th century AD) have been found in Naviket town, 35 kms. away from Bishkek, the capital of Kyrgyzstan. These are preserved and displayed in the Archaeological Museum of Kyrgyz Slavic University and Historical Museum in Bishkek. Naviket resembles the findings in Adjna Tepe, Fayaz Tepe, Kara Tepe and Merv cities of other Central Asian Republics, which provide evidence about close historical-cultural

links between India and Central Asia.⁹ It can be noted here that the Great Silk Route was not only the means of transferring goods but also exchange of ideas besides being a connecting bridge between cultures and civilizations.

On the historical-cultural plane, contemporary Kyrgyzstan formed in ancient times a common territory with Eastern Turkistan, where Buddhism had taken deep roots as far back as second to fourth centuries AD and continued to have influence in neighbouring regions as well. It is known from numerous sources that the earliest pioneers of Buddhism along the Route to the East were a large group of natives of Central Asia such as - Sogdians, Parthians and Khanguis. Existence of famous icon painters of Buddhist paintings with Sogdian names and surnames indicating their Central Asian origin shows that Buddhist monuments in this region were considerably distinctive from the Indian prototypes.

Hieun Tsang, Aurel Stein and others located the geography of the Silk Route along the Himalayan range through Tian Shan and mountains of Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, India and Pakistan. All pilgrims along the Silk Route were unanimous in the idea of spiritual attraction of the Holy Land – Shangri La. Shangri La is a fictional place described in a novel *Lost Horizon* by British writer James Hilton in 1933. In the book, “Shangri La” is a mystical, harmonious valley, gently guided from a lamasery and enclosed in the western end of the Himalayas. It has become synonymous with any earthly paradise but particularly a mythical Himalayan utopia - a permanently happy land, isolated from the outside world.

The story of Shangri La is based on the concept of Shambhala, a mystical city in Tibetan Buddhist tradition. In this tradition, Shambhala (also spelled Shambala or Shamballa) is a mystical kingdom hidden somewhere beyond the snow-capped peaks of the Himalayas. It is mentioned in various ancient texts, including the *Kalachakra* and the ancient texts of the Zhang Zhung culture which pre-dated Tibetan Buddhism in western Tibet. The Bön scriptures speak of a closely-

related land called Olmolungring. Shambhala is a Sanskrit term meaning “place of peace/tranquillity/happiness.” Buddha is said to have taught the *Kalachakra* tantra at the behest of King Suchandra of Shambhala. Shambhala is believed to be a society where all the inhabitants are enlightened and are centred in a city called Kalapa. Another view associates Shambhala with the real empire of Sriwijaya, where Atisha studied and received the *Kalachakra* initiation under Dharmakirti.¹⁰

As with many concepts in *Vajrayana* Buddhism, the idea of Shambhala is said to have an ‘outer’, ‘inner’, and ‘secret’ meaning. The outer meaning understands Shambhala to exist as a physical place, although only individuals with the appropriate *karma* can reach it and experience it. There are various ideas about the location of such a society is located, but it is often placed in Central Asia, north or west of Tibet. In his teachings, Chogyam Trungpa explained that Shambhala vision has its own independent basis in human wisdom that does not belong to East or West or any one culture or religion. Ancient Zhang Zhung texts identify Shambhala with the Sutlej valley in Himachal Pradesh. Mongolians identify Shambhala with certain valleys of southern Siberia.

The first information about Shambhala that reached Western civilization came from a Portuguese Jesuit priest and explorer, Estêvão Cacella, in early 17th century. In 19th century. H.P. Blavatsky, founder of Theosophical Society, talked about the Shambhala myth. Blavatsky’s Shambhala, like the headquarters of the Great White Lodge, is a physical location on earth. Accordingly, she explained Shambhala in terms of the Hindu presentation: “it is the village where the future messiah, Kalki Avatar, will appear. The Kalki is Vishnu, the Messiah on the White Horse of the Brahmins.” Blavatsky referred Shambhala to the Gobi Desert because of the Mongols, who were ardent followers of Tibetan Buddhism, particularly its *Kalachakra* teachings. These Mongols included the Buryats of Siberia and the Kalmyks of the lower Volga region. For centuries, Mongols believed that Mongolia is the northern land of Shambhala.

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In a letter written in 1825, Csoma de Körös stated that Shambhala is like a Buddhist Jerusalem and lay between 45 and 50 degrees longitude. Although he felt that Shambhala would probably be found in the Kizilkum desert in Kazakhstan, the Gobi desert also fell within these two longitudes. Others referred it either to East Turkistan (Xinjiang) or the Altai mountains. This idea is close to Nicholas Roerich's spiritual doctrine. He led two expeditions from India through Tibet to Outer Mongolia (1924–1928) and the Altai mountain region in Siberia, north of East Turkistan (1934-1935). According to several accounts, Roerich's mission was to return to Shambhala a *chintamani* (wish-granting gem) entrusted to him by the League of Nations. His group claimed to have located Shambhala in the Altai region. Roerich dubbed Shambhala as an abode of peace. In his *Shambhala: In Search of a New Era* (1930), Roerich described Shambhala as a holy city in north of India, where the rulers revealed the teachings of Maitreya Buddha for universal peace.

French author Joseph-Alexandre Saint-Yves d'Alveidre first popularized the legend of Agharti (Asgartha) in a novel *Mission de l'Inde en Europe (Mission of India in Europe)* in 1886. He described it as an underground kingdom with a university that is a repository of secret knowledge. Originally located at Ayodhya city of India, it was moved to a secret location beneath the Himalayas 1,800 years before the Christian Era.

Esoteric writers have elaborated the concept of a hidden land inhabited by a hidden mystic brotherhood whose members worked for the good of humanity. Esoteric writers like Alice Bailey (the Arcane School) and the Agni Yoga of Nicholas and Helena Roerich do emphasize Shambhala. Bailey transformed it into a kind of extra-dimensional or spiritual reality on the etheric plane.

Each tradition describes Shambhala according to its own understanding and interpretation. For example, the legend of the Saint Grail according to *The Valencia Vessel* (in Spanish the "Santo Grail") associates it with Shangri La, as "San" in Italian, "Saint" in French is

“holy”, “Sangue” in Italian, “Sang” in French – “blood.” Saint Grail associated with Shangri La (Holy Blood), which is also a version of the Shambhala story is. The legends of the Saint Grail are woven of three strands: a Celtic tradition of otherworld vessels and supernaturally powerful weapons; Arabic or Byzantine tradition of a mysterious stone that had fallen from the heavens; and a Christian tradition, perhaps of Gnostic or heretical origin, of a mysterious talisman. The Celtic Gods of the Underworld or of the Land Beneath possessed magic vessels of inexhaustible ambrosia found in mysterious castles and hidden in mist, surrounded by water or by impenetrable forest.¹¹

Nowadays, there are many popular works on Shangri La (as modes of sacred actions) or Shambhala (as a holy place of those sacred actions would happen), which gave details of the significance of prayers and positive thoughts in our life. The myths of Shambhala were part of the inspiration for the story of Shangri La. The inner and secret meanings refer to more subtle understandings of what Shambhala represents.

Besides Shangri La, the cultural commonness of Kyrgyz and Indian people can be attributed to the similarity between epic *Manas* of Kyrgyzstan and Indian mythologies. It is almost certain that the myth of the ancestors of the modern day Kyrgyz had similar origins with Indian myths and names of mythological heroes. According to the folklores, the epic *Manas* is related to the ancient Indian myth about first man (Mana in Sanskrit - Manu). The analysis of the epic characters shows that *Manas* tells about the structure of ethnic or tribal communities, and formation of earlier sovereignty of the Kyrgyz. It has a cosmological and even cosmo-political character. In the light of the theories of scientists J. Gamkrelidze and Y. Ivanov on the birthplaces of early Asian civilizations of Indo-Europeans, the mythological sources of the *Manas* arose around the third millennium BC. During this period, the first wave of Aryans, including some ancient Aryan tribes of which the Kyrgyz ancestors were a part, moved to the East and Central Asia.

Manas was translated into Hindi by Indian scholars. Kyrgyz academics and litterateurs greatly admire Indian heroes of the

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Ramayana and the *Mahabharata* comparing these epics to *Manas* in terms of originality and world perception. Indian epic *Mahabharata* was translated into Kyrgyz language by A.Kemelbaev. Similarly, Kyrgyz epic *Manas* was translated into Hindi by Varyam Singh in the year 1997. In fact, Academician Mursev showed a copy of *Ramcharit Manas* to score his point. One found that Kyrgyz academics cherish deep admiration for the Indian heroes from the epic of the *Ramayana*.

To conclude, Chigu, Shangri-La and Manas happen to be the important basis of historical-cultural relations between India and Kyrgyzstan. Chiguchan is the evidence of the existence of Usuni's civilization, which had inaugurated trade along the Silk Route. Shangri La, one the spiritual inspirations of Buddhism, took its own way along the Silk Route through territory of contemporary Kyrgyzstan and formed a common territory with Eastern Turkistan in ancient times. Last but not the least, *Manas* and ancient Indian mythological heritages are proofs of the common origin of Indo-Kyrgyz relations.

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ON THE WAY TO INDIA VIA KYRGYZSTAN

V. Voropaeva

The beginning of the 18th century was a period of manifestation of Tsarist Russia's look East policy under Peter I. During his rule, Russia conquered the outlet to the Baltic Sea and sought to impose control on the Central Asian Khanates.

Aspirations of Peter I, who "cut a window to the Europe", pursued an active foreign policy towards the East–Central Asia, Persia and further. Peter I responded positively to the proposal of the Ambassador of Bukhara, Kulibek on the establishment of peaceful relations and trade and sent Florio Beneveni, a Secretary of the Oriental Expedition (Eastern Department) of the Ambassadorial Board, to Bukhara in 1718 AD. Beneveni showed outstanding abilities in the fulfilment of his mission. He collected information on the trade and gold-bearing sand in Bukhara. As part of this mission, his valet Nikolo Miner went to Balkh and Badakhshan under the guise of a merchant and took stock of the situation in Eastern Turkestan, on Marhiglan, Andizan and Ferghana Valley, Tashkent and the surrounding nomads. Beneveni reached Asia following the route, which had been used for some time by Afanasy Nikitin on his way to India...

In sixty years, a "nolens volens traveller" Philipp Efremov reached India through Khiva, Persia, Osh and then through England – to Russia. Efremov was the only person who was able to tell about mysterious lands of the Middle and Central Asia, including Ferghana with its ancient towns of Osh and Kashgar then unknown to Europeans.

Historical documents testify that at the end of 1812, a Georgian nobleman Rafail Danibegov arrived at the frontier Siberian town Omsk with a trade caravan. G.I. Glazenap, a former Chief of the Caucasian Line, took interest in stories of the native of Tbilisi. Danibegov travelled to Indian Kashmir and other eastern countries via Kashgar and Tien-Shan to Siberia. Rafail Danibegashvili – Rafiel in Georgian language –

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a native and an inhabitant of Tbilisi, belonged to a trading clan, which since old days engaged in trading goods from Georgia to India and vice versa. Rafail Danibegashvili's grandfather, also known as Rafail by name, had served for the Georgian Tsar Teimuraz II and was awarded with title of *dagbashi*. His father Osefa (Iosif) was at the service of Irakly II (1720-1798), who had bestowed upon him the title *khutasis-tavi* (head of five hundred troops).

L.I. Maruashvili reports in his essay *Life and Work of Rafail Danibegashvili* that Danibegashvili possessed houses in Tbilisi and its outskirts, which were purchased using his own funds, as well as gifted by Georgian Tsars. There were fruitful gardens and arable lands in the Lurdj-Monasteri area (Vera). In the 14th century, a Russian church Nikolskaya was established here. Descendants of Rafail Danibegashvili live in Tbilisi until now under the name of Danibegovs.¹

His travels, which lasted for 32 years, should be regarded as remarkable events in the life of Danibegashvili. His book *The travels of Rafail Danibegashvili in India, Burma and other Asian countries, 1795-1827*, was published in Moscow and Tbilisi five times: in 1815 and 1961 in Russian and in 1950 and 1963 in Georgian languages, and in 1969 – in Russian, English and Hindi languages.

He continued his activities as a traveller, diplomat and merchant during the period from 1795 to 1927. He covered the vast geographic spaces of South and Central Asia. He left his native land – Georgia – for the first time in 1795, at the instruction of the Georgian Tsar Irakly II. He arrived in Madras town of India via Asia Minor where he met a rich Armenian Yakov Shah-Amiryan-Shamir-Aga.

L. I. Maruashvili informs that Shah-Amiryan was a worshipper of Irakly. As a talented commander and a defender of Armenians, Shah-Amiryan in coordination with the British government proposed Irakly a project of integration of Georgia and Armenia into a strong Christian state, and to strengthen economic and cultural relations with European countries. “It is possible to suppose that R. Danibegashvili's travel to Madras was the consequence of a political contact of Shah-Amiryan

with Irakly; as is known, it appeared to be unsuccessful only because of the death of an Armenian patriot”.²

By the time Danibegashvili undertook his first travels, he had established himself as a merchant. At the same time, he undertook some diplomatic mission. The second travel of Danibegashvili took place in an altogether different political situation. In 1795, Irakly II suffered defeat in a war with the Persian Shah Aga-Magomet Khan. Tbilisi was burnt. In 1798, Irakly II died and the Tsar Georgy, who replaced him, swore allegiance to the Russian Emperor, appealed for patronage and protection against enemy. Georgia was, thus, annexed to Russia in 1801. Danibegashvili started his second journey through Asia in 1799. Before his departure for India, Tsar Georgy conferred complimentary deed on him which reads: “... We are sending you now to India, Rafail, Shamir-aga’s son. Since your father, being at the service of our blessed father, had been sent several times to India, we also send you for the same service to India...”³

Researchers and biographers of Danibegashvili think that he travelled from Kashgar to Yarkand, then to Aksu and Turfan and from Tarim depression to Semipalatinsk and Omsk. V.M. Ploskih, a scientist and academician of the National Academy of Sciences, in 1972 informs in his book *At the Cradle of Friendship* that Danibegashvili travelled through many Asian countries twice. In 1815, he published a book in Moscow, in which he mentions about the Kazakhs, Kyrgyzd and Kalmyks, whom he met on his way from Kashgar to Omsk.

Having compared the accounts of Danibegashvili with the route descriptions given in archives and records of merchants, V.M. Ploskih came to another finding. Firstly, at that time one more town was Turfan, which was known as Uch-Turfan. This town was located somewhat to the west of Aksu on the way to Issyk-Kul. L. Bubenov, who accompanied a trade caravan to Eastern Turkestan in 1813, called it ‘simply Turfan’. Uch-Turfan town was called ‘simply Turfan’ also on the map, made at the headquarters of the Separate Siberian Corps in 1841.

Rafail Danibegashvili writes in his book that he went from Yarkand to Aksu in thirteen days, from Aksu to Turfan in three days, and “there are borders in 20 versts from here, which separate local lands from the lands of the Kyrgyz.”⁴ It should be pointed out that Danibegashvili had in view just the Kyrgyz and not the Kazakhs. He calls the Kazakhs as “Cossacks.”

V.M. Ploskih underlines: “... only Uch-Turfan could be located in 20 versts from the border of Kyrgyz lands, and not Turfan town, which is located in the Tarim depression. A distance, which a traveller went from Aksu to Turfan within three days testifies also to the fact that he was in Uch-Turfan, as the distance from Aksu to Turfan in the Tarim depression is twice more than that between Yarkand and Aksu. As we have found out above, the traveller went along this route during thirteen days. Therefore, a way to Tarim depression would have occupied by no means less time. Apparently, Danibegashvili called Uch-Turfan in abbreviated form – ‘simply Turfan’ as it was usual at that time, and went just toward the Issyk-Kul. It were just these places along the stream of Djuuka River and Eastern Near-Issyk-Kul Region via Bedel pass that an ancient trade route lay, almost forgotten by the 19th century.”⁵

Danibegashvili himself described this travel in the following words: “the road was very pleasant for me, because throughout I have seen a lot of different people, namely: the Kalmyks, the Kyrgyzs, the Cossacks, people who maintain a nomadic life along the fields and who live in tents, they do not exercise in farming, use cow and mare milk for food, from which they make a lot of cottage cheese. The cattle are their main wealth. Cattle-breeding is their sole occupation. They do not use money during trade operations, they exchange things instead. Nobody knows permanent dwellings here: when they find good pastures, they stay there with their cattle. That is why they often change places for their habitation.”⁶

Danibegashvili writes about General Glazenap, the Chief of the Siberian Line: “In all fairness, he deserves great respect. He treats

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travellers very blandly. Having travelled throughout so many lands, I did not see a chief equal to him.”⁷

It is clear that a Chief of the Siberian Line was interested in all information about people, who lived in the Issyk-Kul region. The Russian authorities were keen to establish trade with India. Even before his meeting with the Georgian traveller, General Glazenap was instrumental in extending support to the Siberian merchants for starting a lively trade with the East in this direction.

In 1803, the Bukhtarma Customs was opened for trade with China and India. Philipp Efremov, who knew Central Asia well, was its Director for several years. He moved to the Caucasus where he became the In-charge of the customs in Mozdok and Kizlyar. Under the guise of a merchant, he travelled by a caravan from Central Asia to Eastern Turkestan. Efremov developed relations with the Siberians, Tatars and Caucasian merchants.

In 1808, Mekhti Rafailov travelled to Kashmir and Punjab via Eastern Turkestan. In the state of Punjab, he was welcomed by the Sikh ruler Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

V.M. Ploskih points out about Rafailov’s travels in his book *At the Cradle of Friendship*. He says, “...it is not improbable that Rafailov passed via Kyrgyz nomad areas, though there is direct data available about it.”⁸ He points out that it was possible to reach Kashgar and Yarkand from Kuldja (Ili) either along the eastern route or along the western route via Kyrgyzstan. The western route was used by the local merchants even prior to the appearance of Kokand fortresses here. V.M. Ploskih discovered the evidence of these events in the notes preserved at the Military-Historical Archives in Moscow. Besides the data on the travels of Rafail Danibegashvili and Mekhti Rafailov, there is information recorded and preserved on the trade voyages of Caucasian merchant, S. Madatov. He is believed to have travelled along the Issyk-Kul.

Having successfully sold goods along his travel route, S. Madatov arrived in Kashmir. The Kashmiri ruler received S. Madatov well and,

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expressed his desire to enter into trade relations with Russia. Besides, the Kashmiri ruler promised to patronize the Russian merchants. As a goodwill gesture, he allowed to take with him twenty pounds of the world-famous Kashmir wool. Usually export of wool out of the country was subjected to death punishment. In addition, Madatov was allowed to buy and export from the country as many as 250 superfine Kashmiri shawls. After leaving the country, S. Madatov headed two Russian trade caravans in the trade centres of Eastern Turkestan. In the spring of 1814, he met Cossacks' detachment of Sotnik (Lieutenant of Cossacks) Starkov. Merchants brought goods mainly rhubarb, tea, shawls, brocade and many rare Asian works worth one million roubles to Russia.

According to V.M. Ploskih's findings, Mekhti Rafailov also returned from Kashmir happily. His mission was to handover Glazenap's letter to the Kashmiri ruler with a proposal to establish mutual free trade relations. Rafailov himself "was treated kindly" by the ruler and he received a permit for a duty free trade. The Kashmiri ruler assured the Russian authorities that "the Russian merchants will be provided, in his lands, with all possible patronage."⁹ On his way back, Mekhti Rafailov collected extensive information on different countries and their population.

V.M. Ploskih, however, regrets that a text of the report on M.Rafailov's travels was not yet discovered in the archives. Indirect archival evidence and literature on his travels are not sufficiently conclusive. It was indicated that one of his travels took place in 1812, whereas documents show that it took place in between 1813-1814. Ploskih points out that I. Zemlyanitsin, in the *Historical Essay on Semipalatinsk* (1876), informs that one of the reports was preserved in the archives of Semipalatinsk Customs (Case No. 1, grades 545 and 613) under the title "Notes of the Kabul Inhabitant Mekhti Rafailov, Submitted to the Siberian Governor-General Chicherin on his Trip to China and Kashmir."¹⁰

Russian authorities established relations with the envoys from Kyrgyzstan who were even allowed to visit Barnaul factories. Kachibek

was awarded with a gold medal on the scarlet ribbon and Jakyp was awarded with a ring. Both were recommended to the military rank of the Captain and were given nominative sabers. The Kyrgyz envoys stayed at the cross-border line for a year and half and returned taking the reverse route in 1815 AD.

According to the archival materials, just in two-three months after the Kyrgyz envoys had left, Danibegashvili left Semipalatinsk for Kashmir and India. Ploskih writes about R. Danibegashvili's fourth travel, which was later forgotten by researchers, "We have managed to find new materials at Omsk Regional Archive. Though Sergey Markov, in the historical-biographical story about Chokan Valikhanov (*Going to the Peaks*, Alma-Ata, 1963), suggested a possible travel, but there were no concrete evidence."¹¹

A record of Danibegashvili's story about this journey, discovered in the archive, was made according to the standard clerical template by an unknown Siberian customs official, who was apparently a great formalist. But what is especially significant and valuable for the history is that a document was signed manually by a traveller, who put his signature as "Rafail Danibegov" in Russian. It is the only autograph of the famous traveller to India via the Kyrgyz lands.

According to the notes, Rafail Danibegashvili left for his regular travel on 11 October 1815 from Semipalatinsk Customs "with a permission of the principal chief", who had issued him a foreign passport. His expedition to the Kyrgyz nomadic areas was accompanied by a special detachment of the Russian Cossacks. As Danibegashvili himself noted, he left for "a foreign land with goods for trade to Kashmir town". But researchers believe that the objective of his travel was, apparently, not connected only with such trade.

As per the documentary evidence, Danibegashvili first went to the Kyrgyz Lake Issyk-Kul. Starting in Semipalatinsk, he then went to the south via rivers Ayaguz, Lepsa, Karatal, Ili and then via Ala-Tau mountains, through Santash pass to the Issyk-Kul. Here, according to a tradition, after spending some days in the Kyrgyz nomad camps,

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Danibegashvili bade good-bye to Cossacks, who had accompanied him and left for Kashmir in a trade caravan via Eastern Turkestan. Danibegashvili stayed in India for ten months. He visited north Indian towns of Lahore, Delhi, Meerut, Kanpur, Benares (Varanasi) for one month and stayed in Kashmir for nine months.

Danibegashvili has given an account of significant political events in Kashmir during that period. The English, who had their fortresses in northern India, had moved their troops to Lahore, they stopped about 300 versts¹² from it. “Last January Indians of that town Lahore ... assumed power over Kashmir town.”

V. M. Ploskih underlines that it is possible to make a conclusion from Danibegashvili’s reports that the British colonizers had directed their forces to strengthen influence in this huge and rich Asian country.

In 1814, Mekhti Rafailov, who had a title of the Counsellor at court, was sent from Petersburg to Kashmir, where he had previously performed diplomatic tasks. He went to Kashmir using a new caravan route as per a deed issued by the Russian court. A caravan, which was headed by Tashkent Caravanbashi, Mullah Mansur Mamaseitov was also protected by a special detachment of the Cossacks until the Kyrgyz territory. The Cossacks marched towards Uch Turfan and then to Aksu and Kashgar. Using a route, which had been used thirty years ago by Philip Efremov, the Cossacks reached Ladakh. Mekhti Rafailov successfully passed the Issyk-Kul areas. But just three days before reaching Kashmir, Rafailov suddenly “died from some disease.”

Moreover, a scientist noted that a traveller, who, apparently, represented not only the trade interests of Russia, was interested in information on relations established between the Turkish Sultan and the Bukhara Emir. Danibegashvili confirmed when Kashmir lost its independence in 1818, the Turkish Sultan had sent his envoy to Bukhara with a letter to the Emir of Bukhara, which openly provoked the Emir to launch war against Russia. Danibegashvili points out later that the Bukhara Emir had declined the Turkish Sultan’s offer saying that “he cannot have a war with Russia because since old times, he is

on good terms with the latter that he does not have troops to fight against Russia, and moreover, Bukhara has an uninterrupted trade with Russia”.

A return journey to Russia via the Kyrgyz and Kazakh territories was advantageous from a political point of view. During eleven days of his stay in the camps of the Kazakh nomads on Ili River, Denibegashvili won their complete favour and trust and, probably advised them to establish friendly relations with Russia. It is pointed out in the note that more than 3,500 Kazakhs wished to secure citizenship of Russia. And in the presence of mullahs, on the one side, and Rafail Danibegashvili as a representative of Russia on the other side, the Kazakh senior officers “were administered the oath of faithfulness according to Koran.”

R. Danibegashvili also intended to establish relations between the Kyrgyzs and Russia. His notes conclude, “there are no infectious diseases in people anywhere, but such a disease rages severely on the horned cattle in the Chinese town Kuldja and in the Kyrgyz people on seven rivers (in Semirechie, as this was a name of the North-Eastern Tian Shan), which resulted in the decline. In other places and in the neighbouring Kyrgyz people, no disease was observed and on the way no robberies and oppressions from nomadic hordes took place.”¹³

It should be noted that a mission of the Russian envoys to the Kyrgyz territories during that period was rather successful. Due to the diplomatic efforts of A.L. Bubennov, merchants and travellers like M. Rafailov, S. Madatov, R. Danibegashvili, a regimental doctor I. Zibbershtein and many others, this mission in 1825 was formed in Kurultai on Dzhergalan. Here the Kyrgyz leaders discussed a problem vital for the people at that time: with whom to align in future – with China, Kokand or Russia? And already at that time they “were inclined” to Russia. In 1855, leaders of the Issyk-Kul tribe Bugu were the first to swear to allegiance to Russia.

As for the Kyrgyz tribes, even in the beginning of 1814, General G. I. Glazenap had reported to Petersburg, “as a result of restoration

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of relations and confirmation of the friendship with them... with the Kyrgyzs, trade along the Siberian line will flourish, getting wealth from the sources of India, Kashmir and other neighbouring regions.”¹⁴

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10. *Ibid.*, p.74.
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12. Verst, a Russian measure of length, is about 1.1 km.
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THE KYRGYZ AS VIEWED BY AMERICAN TRAVELLERS AND EXPLORERS

(19th and early 20th Centuries)

Cholpon Turdalieva

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, two Americans travelled in Central Asia, particularly in Kyrgyzstan and left their views and observations about the Kyrgyz in their published travelogues. This paper seeks to examine the importance of their travel accounts as contemporary sources about the Kyrgyz and Kyrgyzstan. What was the reason of their travel to such a remote region? What kind of information is most useful for Kyrgyz national history and Eurasian studies? First, their description and observations are part of written sources about the Kyrgyz, who in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries had few written records of their history and culture and used to have national knowledge mainly through oral traditions. These books are sources of national identity and the reconstruction of Kyrgyz history. Secondly, the travelogues of these two Americans were written in a different socio-political situation, providing us an opportunity to assess the influences of the outside world. Undoubtedly, as a product of capitalistic and European supremacy, these books contain certain distortions and biases against “uncivilized” peoples, and we need to investigate them carefully. Third, during the above mentioned period, Central Asia, like Mecca, was visited by different travellers for various personal or public purposes. Travelogues were written by representatives of different professional and scholarly disciplines. These Americans were engaged in diplomacy and social geography, which today is important especially in respect of international regional relationships between West and East. But, who were they?

E. HUNTINGTON'S VIEWS ON THE KYRGYZ

Ellsworth Huntington (1876-1947) was an American geographer and author of more than twenty books and over two hundred and forty articles, focussing on modern social geography. In his books, he revolutionized the content of geographical science, its role in human history and civilization, although before him in the time of Rousseau and Humboldt, ideas about the connection of geography and human civilization were studied and developed.¹ Now in the present time of awareness about the environment and global economy and their linkages and influences on people's development, Huntington's theory and ideas live on in the works of some modern geographers and physiographic economists.² Some of his views about the Kyrgyz were critically examined by German scholar Hermann Kreutzmann. The Kyrgyz philologist T. Kabanova was the first to introduce Huntington's book *The Pulse of Central Asia* on the pages of *Meerim* journal.

Huntington's constant interest in science was growing with religious education in parallel, when he grew up in New England at the parsonage. He graduated from Beloit College in Wisconsin. In 1902, he received his M.A. from Harvard and Ph.D from Yale in 1909. In 1897, he was a tutor at the missionary school at Harput in Eastern Turkey.³ Turkey was also the place where he taught a little Turkish, which helped him, as he noted later '...pick up enough of the Kyrgyz dialect of Turkey.'⁴ In 1901, he became a student of Harvard University and studied physiography with Professor William Morris Davis, one of the founders of the Theory of Geographical Determinism, i.e., the theory of the connection between man and his physical environment in America. In 1903, Huntington travelled in Central Asia as a member of Pumpelly expedition. The aim of this expedition was to gain archaeological and physiographic research results in the Central Asian region and prove their ideas in these scholarly realms. In 1905, Huntington made a second journey to Central Asia, particularly to Kashmir and the Tarim Basin along with Robert Le Moyone Barrett. The main goal was to find evidence and arguments for his theory about pulsations of climate and their influence on the history of civilizations.

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These travel experiments were the beginning of his scholarly career at Yale University as a Professor and his achievements in social geography. In 1907, his book *The Pulse of Central Asia* was published being devoted to his mentor Professor Davis. As a text, his book is a combination of academic conceptions, thoughts and travel accounts, but at the same time, it didn't lose a feature of scientific exploration, which was a focus of intense public interest and a source of the most powerful ideological apparatuses through which European citizens related themselves to other parts of the world.⁵ He began his book with the determination of the significant role of Central Asia for the investigation of different climates and peoples. His Central Asian journey began in early April 1903, from India and passed through Bombay, Kashmir, the Himalayan mountains, Lake Pangong, and the Central Tian Shan, the Eastern Turkestani cities of Khotan and Kashgar, the Tarim Basin and the Taklamakan Desert. He travelled in the northern and southern regions of present-day Kyrgyzstan. So it seems that he met different Kyrgyz tribes, although he did not mention any tribal names. In the fifth chapter, entitled "Khirghiz Nomads and the Influence of the High Plateaus", he put his views and observations on the Kyrgyz. He also mentioned the Kyrgyz in the next chapters, which described a journey to the Taklamakan Desert in Eastern Turkestan. Throughout this chapter, some specific ideas are perceptible, which we can classify as: nomadism and the environment, nomadism and sedentary lifestyles and Kyrgyz and civilization. Through these ideas I try to examine his description and views on the economy, households, dwellings, food and women of the Kyrgyz society.

Nomadism and Environment

In the book *The Pulse of Central Asia*, we found the following ethnoterms: Khirghiz, 'Turanian Kirghiz' and Khirghiz of a race of 'Mohammedan nomads',⁶ which like "Wild" or "Mountainous Khirghiz" or "Burut", derived from the Russian and Chinese sources were unknown to the Kyrgyz themselves, or neighbouring people and tribes. Like most travel accounts of that period, his accounts give exaggerated attention to the nature of the Tian Shan and Pamir

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mountains. “The typical part of the Tian Shan plateau which I visited in 1903 lies between Andizhan on the west, Issyk Kul (Warm Lake) on the north, and Kashgar on the south. The main physiographic feature of this western Tian Shan region, as of the Karakorum, is that the so-called mountain system is in reality an area of low relief which has been uplifted to a great height, forming a broad plateau.”⁷ But unlike other Western travellers to Central Asia, Huntington tried to explain the genre of nomadism incorporating it in his own geographical and climatic conceptions. His predecessors or contemporaries paid much attention to social and economical factors of nomadism’s origins.⁸ However, he went further than his predecessors and contemporaries. He explained the indissoluble connection between environment, climate and nomadic life and history. He emphasized the role of geography in the development of nomadic society, and did not consider that the social, economic as well as cultural factors caused changes in the nomadic society. The activity of mountain climate reflected in its seasonable changes influenced the nomad’s daily life, his moral and ethical values, gender roles and children’s education. Pastoral nomadism was the only occupation for man there. Huntington wrongly wrote that Kyrgyz must migrate twice a year. In fact, during the year, the Kyrgyz nomads migrated three or four times. Seasonable pastures of the Kyrgyz were called: *kyshöö*-winter camp, *jasöö*-spring, *jailöö*-summer, and *küsdöö*-autumn. As Huntington noticed, migration was a very important fact of Kyrgyz life. It given sufficient opportunity to people to have fresh and rich source of fodder for animals, to meet other tribes and to celebrate. As a rule, in the autumn encampment *küsdöö* the Kyrgyz celebrated their wedding ceremonies or great anniversaries of deceased relatives, because at that time, their animals, fat sheep and horses, were ready for slaughter. Later, he detailed the role of migration in the development of human life, but his considerations were connected with American states and Americans.⁹

As Huntington considered, agriculture did not exist as an occupation among the Kyrgyz. However, some Russian and Western travellers left information about agriculture in the northern and southern

regions of Kyrgyzstan in that time,¹⁰ though their information reflected the unevenness of agricultural development in the different regions and among different tribes. During Huntington's travel in the central Tian Shan, Kyrgyz tribes were in a difficult economic and political situation. Russian colonists occupied fertile soils and agriculture was mostly developed by them in Issyk-Kul and Chui valleys. In 1916, in *Prjevalskiy uezd* (Northern Kyrgyzstan), Russians and Ukrainians, who made up to 24 per cent of the whole population, possessed more than 67 per cent of all arable land. Kyrgyz tribes were also involved in the settling process of Russian colonial policy in Central Asia. However, this process had much success only after the Soviet land and water policies in the 1920s. For instance, in 1923-24, in Northern Kyrgyzstan, 44,437 Kyrgyz settled households were organized on land taken away from Russians.¹¹ This fact contradicts Huntington's view about a solely nomadic occupation for the Kyrgyz.

Yurts, food, dress and even the hospitality of the Kyrgyz were described by Huntington as confirmation of his geographical and climatic opinions. He carefully characterized the wooden and felt details of yurt construction, its easy transportable necessity, but he forgot to write the national name of dwelling and substituted it with the name *kibitka*, which was popular among Russians. He described the national dress of the Kyrgyz as very simple and primitive. The Kyrgyz had quilted gowns with long sleeves, which extended five or six inches below the hands and took the place of gloves as a protection against cold. Again nature was an enemy of the nomads, who tried to make primitive protective dress due to inclement nature and climate. Huntington thought colours of Kyrgyz women's dress determined their social position, but it is not true, because colour determined the women's age. He left detailed information about Kyrgyz hats, or *kalpak*.

The men of the community wore ...black conical hats of heavy felt with brims of Astrakhan. The head-dress of the women, often a foot high, was wonderfully constructed of fold after fold of white cloth round into a cylinder. One fold hung over the ears and under the chin in such a way that it could be drawn up over

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the lower part of the face, although this was rarely done. From below, the huge headdress the black hair hung in silver-studded braids, pieced out with cords or strings of leather. At the ends of the braids, one or two silver roubles and the keys of all the family chests dangled close to the women's heels.¹²

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Kyrgyz men had different styles of *kalpak*. They differed according to tribal and regional modes of manufacture and usage, but Huntington mostly mentioned *kalpaks* made from white felt.¹³ In this case, Huntington completes the table of Abramson and reflects another type of men's hat for Kyrgyz settled in the Son-Kol Lake district. But we can get more exclusive information about the woman's hat, or *elechek*. It was of great interest to all Western travellers. *Elecheks* are made from fifteen metres of cotton or silk fabric, which is wrapped up in several layers. It formed into a very big and heavy cylindrical turban. Huntington also noticed Kyrgyz women's braided jewellery, silver coins tied up in braids. Probably, he saw the national jewellery *cholpu*, which was popular in the Issyk-Kul, Central Tian-Shan and Talas regions.¹⁴

As Huntington argued, Kyrgyz food was a result of the environment too. He found the Kyrgyz food being simple and 'limited in variety' in contrast to the 'civilized' food of the Europeans. Contrast between the culture of the Kyrgyz and the culture of 'civilized' Europeans was observed in traditions of nutrition as well. Sitting in the yurt with group of Kyrgyz, he observed one tradition. The host of the yurt cut off morsels of roasted fat and put them into the mouth of each guest.¹⁵ Huntington was a representative of European individualistic culture. He didn't understand that this tradition was a sign and reflection of social equality in the patriarchal Kyrgyz society, when the chief or old man of the tribe should share with others, taking responsibility for the feeding and survival of all members of the tribe. This tradition also displayed the philosophy and ethics of Kyrgyz hospitality. The host had to display equal relationship with every guest in spite of age and social position of those present. Nowadays during big public celebrations or anniversaries, we can see this tradition with very little changes, but its

meaning is the same, to share food with everyone. But Huntington evaluated this autochthonous and old national tradition as an unpleasant spectacle.

In Huntington's view, Kyrgyz hospitality has some sources of origin. The Kyrgyz live in the mountainous isolation and any encounters with strangers make them hospitable and talkative. In contrary to 'cosmopolitan villagers', the Kyrgyz met strangers with less suspicion and were ready to host them and share food and shelter with them. Thus, the environment formed the nomad's respect for other people. The hospitality of the Kyrgyz was also a result of their possessing 'an abundance of animals' and his third opinion based on the 'abundant leisure of the nomadic life.' Hospitality as a moral and ethical category is formed during many generations of people. It was influenced by internal and external social and economic changes more than by the environment. But the main characteristic of hospitality is to make the guest content. The Kyrgyz were attentive to every stranger and were ready to serve him, to assist him in dismounting from horse, to guide and show him the local landscape. The honourable and warm place in the yurt, called *tör*, belongs to the guest. Of course, now as a result of the poor market economy, the complication of social relationships, the dangerous crime situation and the influence of mass media culture, modern Kyrgyz have become less trustful of strangers, but the importance of the guest still remains unchanged.

In general, Huntington was building a chain of images of the Kyrgyz, which negatively characterized all people. From one bad person, another is born and so on. Laziness leads to dishonesty, and both lead to insolence and vulgarity.¹⁶ It reflects that he did not have any prior knowledge about Kyrgyz nomads. Moreover, during a short period of three months, it was impossible to review and understand the essence of nomadic life in its mobile form. Most Western travellers considered nomadic life a light-hearted pastime. However, the Kyrgyz nomads were doing every day duties including tending flocks, managing cycles of migration, and improving the breeding of cattle and saving them from epizootic and wild animals. As compared with the sedentary

and industrial society, nomadic life and households differed greatly. The fruits of nomadic labour were not so immediately visible and obvious; they come at specific times, such as having sheep give offsprings or making felts for the yurt, which is better if one uses the wool of the autumn shearing.

Nomads and Sedentary Life

Huntington examined nomadic life in parallel with the sedentary society. His observations and views about the Kyrgyz women have some positive and some inconsistent facets.

Nomadic woman must work in semi-publicity, and cannot be bothered with a trouble some veil, especially when both hands are more than occupied in milking some of her many sheep. She is in the habit of meeting strangers, whether men or women, and she does it modestly, though without timidity. Indeed, she makes the most admirable hostess. Her freedom from seclusion does much, both morally and mentally, to elevate her above her less fortunate sisters of the villages. All these differences between the women of nomadism, and all of them tend to make the Khirghiz wife stronger, more capable, and more self-reliant, and hence a better mother.¹⁷

Huntington was partly right. His views reflect some misunderstanding of the important reasons for the different conditions of women in nomadic and sedentary societies. Nomadic households were formed in an open environment and both men and women were responsible for outside labour - that is, gender labour specialization had no place in the nomadic labour, especially in tending flocks. Along with men, women were equal producers of nomadic wealth: domestic animals, dwellings, utensils for housekeeping and other things. Sometimes, when men were absent, women took care of everything. Gender specialization did not have such strong features and borders as in sedentary societies. Of course, men and women's handicraft specialization consisting on the base of processing of cattle-breeding raw material existed and developed, but the previous labour of tending herds was general. Flocks are not kept in closed indoors, so woman's

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labour was visible, even her inside home labour activity like making carpets or preparing wool for thread mostly took place in the open air.

In sedentary societies, gender specialization was strictly obvious. Male workers went to the field and female workers stayed at home and carried out all duties within the domestic sphere. Her family and social role was restricted by her husband and by society. But, it is necessary to say that Huntington forgot about the role of the patriarchal laws and Islam, although it did not have such a strong influence on Kyrgyz women in both societies. For instance, married Kyrgyz women never mentioned the names of the seven most recent ancestors of her husband, the names of living male relatives, even if he was younger than her, as well as the name of her husband's tribe, substituting them with names of sacrificed animals and things. We can remember Chingiz Aitmatov's tale *Jamilya*, where the main hero Jamilya called her brother-in-law *kichine bala*, or "little boy." The influence of Islam is reflected in family life too. After the death of a married woman, the Kyrgyz did not celebrate her yearly anniversary, and her husband could marry in a year.¹⁸ Both the nomadic and sedentary women had more restrictions by religion and had no rights to possess, distribute, or dispose of family or clan property, though the Islamic law gave women the right to inherit, own, and sell property including land. She also did not have the rights to decide her destiny when she became a widow. Levirate tradition existed in both societies. Of course, in the Kyrgyz society we have examples of powerful women such as Kurmanjan Datka, who was a leader among Pamiro-Alai Kyrgyz at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries. When she was young, she refused to marry an old man and married the chief of the powerful Adigine tribe Alymbek, and became his adviser and helper.

Kyrgyz and Civilization

In Huntington's views, Russian colonization brought civilization to the Kyrgyzs. So, the Russians were able to influence and change the life of the Kyrgyz, putting them in the process of civilization. The Kyrgyz were able to get goods and food from them. A new colonial

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order gave them safety and peace, as well as providing a market for cattle-breeding products. Again Huntington made his conclusions hastily and wrongly. Kyrgyz nomads never were a closed society in the past up to Huntington's days. The Silk Road network was a visible testimony to the openness of the Kyrgyz and their ancient Turk ancestors. The epic *Manas* is also a source of spreading and disseminating Kyrgyz traits in the vast geographical and ethno-cultural space. In that period, the Kyrgyz people were also involved in trading, political, diplomatic and cultural relationships with their neighbours. They were one of the most important customers of goods from Eastern Turkestan, the Middle Asian Khanates and south Siberia. As A. Khazanov says 'nomadic societies need sedentary cultures as a source, a component, and a model for comparison, borrowing, imitation, or rejection.'¹⁹ But at the same time, the Kyrgyzs were producers of domestic animals and cattle-breeding goods and products for sedentary societies. Many travellers underlined the inclusion of Kyrgyz tribes into trading exchange with Eastern Turkestan. The Swedish explorer Sven Hedin saw Kyrgyz women in their big white hats at the market next to Kashgar.²⁰ Russian colonization had two sides of influence on the subjugated Kyrgyz. Among Kyrgyz tribes' safety and peace were mostly spread by perfidious and sly politics. The Russians supported one tribe and suppressed another. For instance, in the struggle between two big tribes, the Boghu and the Sarybaghysh in the 1850s, they sent military expedition in support of the Boghu tribe. In the 1870s, the Sarybaghysh tribal leader Shabdan Batyr, as a captain of the Russian army, helped to align the Adigine tribe to Russia. So, under Russian colonization, Huntington saw economic and political advantages of civilization for the Kyrgyz people. However, when Huntington examines relationships between the Kyrgyz and the environment his views were contradictory. These people cannot know much about architecture or the ceramic art; but they can and do enjoy bright-coloured rugs and felts, gaudy leather boxes, gay screens or handing door-ways and gorgeous robes or delicately embroidered head-dresses for the woman. The environment of the Khirghiz limits and controls, but by no means stifles, the aesthetic sense.²¹ He considered that 'dampness' and 'coolness' restricted and

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limited the aesthetic sense of the Kyrgyz. But, creative feelings were realized in spite of the suppression of nature. Kyrgyz nomads tried to develop their creativity contrary to the environment. Nature was a source of Kyrgyz creativity and aesthetic feelings. All images on fabric, stone, wood, and later on, paper are connected with mountains or plain surroundings.

A 'DIPLOMATIC' VIEW ON THE KYRGYZ LAND AND CULTURE

Eugene Schuyler (1840-1890) was an American diplomat in Russia in 1867-1876. His childhood was spent in Ithaca, New York. From 1859 to 1861, he studied at Yale and received his Ph.D. He also studied law at Columbia University. He was interested in studying the Russian language and political issues of the new capitalistic Russia along with Europe and Central Asia. In 1867, he went to Russia and held diplomatic positions for eleven years, including Consul in Moscow (1867) and in Revel (Tallinn) (1869), and as a Secretary of Legation in Saint Petersburg (1870-76).²² In 1873, he travelled to Central Asia, where he spent eight months observing and analyzing Central Asian reality at the beginning of the Russian colonization. Schuyler's opinion on Russian rule and administrative and military authorities, such as General M. Chernayev and Kaufman, the first Governor-General of Turkestan, raised some polemics in the 1960s in the pages of *Slavic Review*.²³ We have focused our investigation on his views about the Kyrgyz people and Kyrgyzstan.

First, we would like to mention some peculiarities of Schuyler's travelogue. He often uses the Russian and Chinese sources for confirmation or to make more accurate definitions regarding to the past history of nomadic Kyrgyzs.

He wrote about the origin of the Kyrgyz and called them "true Khirghiz." He supposed that Russians used these words to distinguish the Kyrgyz from the Kazakh people.²⁴ In the early nineteenth century, the questions about the origin of the Kyrgyz were raised among Russian and German scholars. In 1827, Russian scholar I. O. Levshine (1799-

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1879) wrote that the Kyrgyz were different people from the Kazakhs and the Kyrgyz people were the autochthonous population of the Tian-Shan.²⁵ German geographers, engaged in the Russian Academy of Sciences, such as Henrich Julius Klaproth (1783-1835) and Karl Ritter (1779-1859) thought that the Kyrgyz had migrated from South Siberia to Central Tian-Shan in the seventeenth century and there formed the Kyrgyz people.²⁶ But, most of the nineteenth century Western travellers paid no attention to these polemics and views. They only described what they adopted from Russian descriptions or heard from their interpreters. So, in the nineteenth century, in Western oriental studies, the Kyrgyz were not distinguished from Kazakh people, and no mention was made of the fact that their ethnic name appeared in different ancient sources, mostly in the Chinese, or formulated new ones from the Russian language. Otherwise, terms “Kara-Kirghiz” or “Wild Mountainous Kirghiz,” coined by Russian travellers and explorers, were adopted by Westerners and offered to the Western readership, creating an odd image of the Kyrgyz. But at the same time, Western travellers articulated ‘geographical’ ethnoterms like “Sarikoli Khirghiz”, “Pamir Khirghiz,” “Mintaka Khirghiz” or “Turanian Khirghiz” and disseminated knowledge about the vast geographical settlement of Kyrgyz tribes in Russian and Chinese Turkestan.

In Schuyler’s *Turkistan*, the tribal system of the Kyrgyz is reflected sporadically. In his accounts we do not find any indication that he had some previous knowledge or notions about “tribe” and “tribal system” among nomadic peoples. However, many handbooks giving some instruction for travellers in the remote non-European world were published in France and England at the beginning of the nineteenth century. For instance, the book *What to Observe?* by Colonel Julian Jackson was published several times in Europe.²⁷ Moreover, some travellers and scholars of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century such as Mungo Park and Alexander Humboldt left information about local tribes of Africa and South America.²⁸ In this table, we put tribal information of Schuyler, English traveller Earl of Dunmore (1841-1907) and Kyrgyz Professor S. Attokurov.²⁹ Dunmore’s information about the

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tribal system of Pamir-Alai Kyrgyz reflects hierarchy of few tribes and their kith and kin. As we see on this table, he rightly fixed names of big tribes (The *Niaman*, the *Kipchak*, the *Tai-it*, (Teit) and the *Kissak*, (*Kesek*), but among twelve kin's names, only four names have coincided. Probably that information he received from the interpreters or the Russian administration in Pamirs, who had relationships with heads of Kyrgyz tribes.

Kyrgyz Tribes named by American traveller Eugene Schuyler (1873)	Kyrgyz tribes named by English traveller Earl Dunmore (1882)	Tribes Named by Sabyr Attokurov (1995)
	Niaman: Kon, Busturogas, Mirza, Kiak	Naiman: Kara naiman, Chapkyldak, Tuuma Tukum, Shyrgoo, Kurgak Naiman, Urkunchu, Bostorgoi, Myrza Naiman, Koko Naiman, Kojo Naiman, Boo Naiman, Kiyik Naiman, Kok Naiman
	Kipchak: Sart, Kirghiz Kipchak, Kalta-baital	Kipchak: Toruaygyr, Hodjashukur, Karmysh, Omonok, Sakoo kypchak, Atkachy, Jamanak, Jartybai, Kyzyl-Ayak, Sherden, Taz kypchak, Alike
	Tai-it: Kara Ta-it, Sart Ta-it	Teit: Bai-Teit, Aryk- Teit, Chal-Teit, Kara- Teit , Tokum-Teit, Sary-Teit, Uygur-Teit, Chapan-Teit, Kynarsha

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	Kissak: Bostan, Kiddarshah, Khangdeh	Kesek: Sibergi, Ala- Too, Karamoldo, Baykesek, Mojai, Altynchy, Saryusun, Mala, Chuuldak, Kyzylayak, Karausun, Boloksary, Kara Kesek, Eshkara
	Taghay	Taghay
	Andigina	Andigine
Bogu	Boghu	Boghu
Sry-Bagysh	Sarighbaghish	Sarybaghysh
Tcherik	Cherib	Cherik
Tchon-bagysh	Chungbaghiz	Chongbagysh
Kontche (Kutchu)	Kochi	Kushchu?
Sult (Solty)		Solto
Sayak		Sayak
Bassyz		Bassyz
Saru		Baru
Munduz		Munduz
Ktai		Kytai

He also reflected the geographical localization of those tribes and clans throughout Russian (Eastern part) and Chinese (Western part) Pamirs. He wrote the names of tribes and marked them as “important” tribes, localized in Ili in the Chinese territory and in Russian Turkestan. They were: Taghay, Andigine (Adigine), Boghu, Sarighbaghish, Cherib (Cherik), Chungbaghiz, (Chon-bagysh), and Kochi (probably, Kushchu).³⁰ As compared to Dunmore, Schuyler’s information includes almost all main northern and southern Kyrgyz tribes, which was an influence of Valikhanov’s notes. Schuyler wrote that, the Kirghiz were divided into two divisions: *On* (right) and *Sol* (left) wings. He had assigned the Bassyz tribe to the right division, but according to Attokurov’s genealogy structure it belongs to the left division.³¹

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He also missed some chief tribes of two big wings. Probably bad translation of interpreters caused some dismissal and unsatisfactory fixation of that information. The tribal system constructed by N. Aristov, or Ch.Valikhanov is more complete, because it was necessary for the advance of Russian colonization among the Kyrgyz tribes. The tribal system of the Kyrgyz was closely linked to their social structure, which was stratified by different social positions and titles among the northern and the southern Kyrgyz tribes. This fact is confirmed by Western travel accounts. As travellers visited Kyrgyzstan in different years of the period mentioned, they met social stratification which influenced the administrative apparatus of the dominant authority: Russian and Chinese empires.

We note the influence of Chokhan Valikhanov's accounts on him again. *Manaps*, or tribal and family chiefs, *biis*, actual judges, *bukharas*, common people, and *kuls*, slaves have stratified the patriarchal Kyrgyz society of the northern tribes.³² The latter one do not appeal in the notes of Chokhan Valikhanov,³³ probably it was Schuyler's observation. We can see important information when Schuyler describes his presence at the council of *biis* of Tokmak and Issyk-Kul, in order to consider cases between the two districts. Schuyler considered that the *bii* judge system was going in the wrong way, because between the local judges and Russian authorities stood an interpreter, who mostly lied and played a poor role as a linguistic and political mediator. Schuyler thought that the *bii* democratic institution of Russian administration was a "dangerous one among uneducated local people."³⁴ But in reality, this new elective *bii* institution was a key to restraining and restricting the role of another social class, the *manaps*, who had boundless economic, political, military, and even religious³⁵ power and role in the Kyrgyz society. So, gathered or adopted information reflects some social changes in the duties of tribal authorities and institutions, which came up with a new political order of Russian colonial administration.

Schuyler's opinion on the politics of the Russians revealed some important approaches. After his seventeen-page description of the

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Kyrgyz national revolt in 1876, he concluded that for the Russians, it was necessary to regulate the warlike character of the nomads by better Russian administration and by the improved treatment of the natives in their Asian province. In Schuyler's book, we found that the cruel politics of Kokandi Khudayar Khan caused discontent among nomadic Kipchaks and Kyrgyzs. Schuyler considered the neutral politics of the Russian administration at the beginning of that revolt a mistake. "When the Russians declined to interfere on the side of the nomads, it was believed that they maintained the side of the Khan, and as the feeling grew more and more bitter against Khudayar Khan, it increased proportionally against the Russians."³⁶ This insurrection was a beginning of a *ghazavat*, or holy war. In the modern history of Kyrgyzstan, there is no information about the Kyrgyz who, under the national leader Pulad Khan, fought against Russians.

*All the bridges had been broken, and Pulad Bek, who had been proclaimed Khan by the Kirghiz, was encamped in the neighbourhood with 15,000 Kirghiz, for the purpose of attacking the Russians in the rear and cutting of connections.*³⁷

From 1873 to 1876, the Russians captured the Kyrgyz tribes of the Ferghana and Pamir-Alai valleys, and the tribes became residents of Western or Russian Turkestan. Though the native revolts were suppressed, but these shaped the politics of the Kokand ruler, and soon the Kokand Khanate became the Ferganskaya region, together with other regions (*oblasti*) of the Turkestan Governorship: Samarkandskaya, Semirechenskaya, and Syrdar'inskaya. Provinces were separated into *uyezdy* (districts) and *volosti* (counties). Provinces and districts were headed by Russian administrators, but *volosti* by Kyrgyz tribal chiefs and they were called by the tribal names such as: Sarybagyshskaya or Atekinskaya *volost*. They were supposed to be the eyes and ears of the Tsarist colonial administration. Colonial Russian authorities trusted native chiefs to collect the taxes from the nomadic households and harvest. Fertile lands became the property of new owners. In 1873, on the northern and eastern shores of the Issyk-

Kul Lake and Tokmak, Eugene Schuyler met two types of Russian colonists: Russian farmers, who cultivated soil and were 'freed from tax and duties over the years.' The second group of Russian population was made up of Cossack settlers, who were supposed to keep the Kokandis away. Both populations had personal independence and this condition attracted more and more Russian colonists from the internal Russian regions.³⁸ But the American diplomat paid more attention to Russian external politics in Asia as well as to famous Russian writers such as Ivan Turgenev and Leo Tolstoy,³⁹ than to the condition of the Kyrgyz tribes during Russian land colonization.

CONCLUSION

Both these travelogues reflect a combination of personal experiences with professional integrity. Travellers constitute impressive evidence on the American exploration in Central Asia and they can contribute seriously in the oriental discourse. Their travel accounts can be used as sources for studying the historical past of the Kyrgyz and their incorporation into relationships with neighbouring people and tribes. Americans' fictionalized travel experiences centralizing environment and politics individualize their contribution in the image formation of the Kyrgyz people in the West. Among the Western travellers, nobody gave detailed views on the Kyrgyz lifestyle. Most of the travellers had just described what they saw or gathered ready information during the travel. Huntington has contextualized a new theoretical approach in social geography. He tied three important factors, which were environment, nomadic people, and occupation. Schuyler's descriptions focusing mostly on the colonial policy of Russia among the Kyrgyz tribes reflect abundant facts of counteraction of the Kyrgyz against old Kokand and new Russian authorities. However, the information they provide is of varying content, quantity and quality. But, as representatives of Eurocentric thinking, they had seen the Kyrgyz through the mirror of Russian colonization, and considered that it was the sole way to establishing among the Kyrgyz tribes peace and safety.

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KYRGYZSTAN: A PROFILE

Official Name: **Kyrgyz Republic**

Area: 199,900 sq km

Population: 5,166,000

Capital: Bishkek (formerly Frunze) is the capital and industrial centre of Kyrgyzstan with a population of more than 900,000. This is the only town in the world named after a wooden plunger - a *bishkek* is a churn used to make fermented mare's milk.

GEOGRAPHY

Kyrgyzstan is a landlocked country in Central Asia, bordering Kazakhstan, China, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. 94 per cent of the country is covered with 88 mountains including the Tien Shan covering the majority of the nation, and the remainder made up of its valleys and basins. Issyk-Kul in the north-western Tian Shan is the largest lake in Kyrgyzstan and the second largest mountain lake in the world after Titicaca. The highest peaks are in the Kakshaal-Too range, forming the Chinese border. Pik Pobedy (Victory Peak), at 24,400 feet (7,439 m), is the highest point and is considered by geologists (though not mountaineers) to be the northernmost 23,000 foot (7,000 m) peak in the world. The runoff from the mountains is also used for hydro-electricity.

The climate varies regionally. The south-western Ferghana Valley is sub-tropical and extremely hot in summer, with temperatures reaching 40°C (104°F.) The northern foothills are temperate and the Tian Shan varies from dry continental to polar climate, depending on elevation. In the coldest areas, temperatures are sub-zero for around 40 days in winter, and even some desert areas experience constant snowfall in this period. The principal river is the Naryn, flowing west through the Ferghana Valley into Uzbekistan, where it meets other major rivers of

Kyrgyzstan, the Kara Darya and forms the Syr Darya, which eventually flows into the Aral Sea. The Chui river also flows through Kyrgyzstan before entering Kazakhstan. Kyrgyzstan has significant deposits of rare metals including gold and also some coal, petroleum and natural gas. Less than eight per cent of the land is cultivated, and this is concentrated in the northern lowlands and the fringes of the Ferghana Valley.

DEMOGRAPHY

The country is mainly rural; only about one-third (33.9 per cent) of Kyrgyzstan's population live in urban areas. The average population density is 69 people per square mile (29 people per km²). The nation's largest ethnic group is the Kyrgyz comprising 69.5 per cent of the population. Kyrgyzs have historically been semi-nomadic herders, living in yurts and tending sheep, horses and yaks. This nomadic tradition continues to function seasonally as herding families return to high mountain pastures or *jailoos* in the summer. The retention of this nomadic heritage and the freedoms that it assumes continue to have an impact on the political atmosphere in the country. Other ethnic groups include ethnic Russians (9.0 per cent) concentrated in the North and Uzbeks (14.5 per cent) living in the South. Small, but noticeable minorities include Tatars (1.9 per cent), Uyghurs (1.1 per cent), Kazakhs (0.7 per cent) and Ukrainians (0.5 per cent).

POLITICAL STRUCTURE

Form of State

The Kyrgyz Soviet Socialist Republic declared its independence in 31 August 1991 and changed its name to the Kyrgyz Republic. Its constitution was approved on 5 May 1993. The President's powers were enhanced by a referendum held in February 1996. Further changes to the presidency were made in a referendum held in February 2003. The present President, Kurmanbek Bakiyev, took over from Askar Akayev, who was President for about fourteen years from October 1991 to March 2005. The President appoints a Prime

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Minister, who forms the government. The present Prime Minister is Felix Kulov.

National legislature

The *Jogorku Kenesh* was turned into a 105-member bicameral parliament in 2000. Elected for a five-year term, it consisted of the Legislative Assembly (Lower House with 60 Deputies) and the Assembly of People's Representatives (Upper House with 45 Deputies). After the February 2005 parliamentary election, the *Jogorku Kenesh* became a unicameral chamber of 75 Deputies, elected for a five-year term.

Main Political Parties

Alga (Forward), *Kyrgyzstan*; *Adilet* (Justice); *Ar-Namys* (Dignity); *Asaba* (Banner); *Democratic Party of Women of Kyrgyzstan*; *Erkindik* (Freedom); *Mekenim* (Fatherland) *Kyrgyzstan Movement*; *Moya Strana* (My Country); *Communist Party of Kyrgyzstan* (KPK); *Progressive-Democratic Party Erkin Kyrgyzstan* (ErK); *Party of Communists of Kyrgyzstan* (PKK); *Protection Party*; *Republican People's Party*; *Social Democratic Party of Kyrgyzstan*; *Socialist Party Ata-Meken* (Fatherland)

Administrative Divisions

Kyrgyzstan is divided into seven provinces (*oblast*) administered by appointed governors. The capital, Bishkek, is administratively an independent city (*shaar*). The provinces, and capital city, are as follows: Bishkek, Batken, Chui, Jalal-Abad, Naryn, Osh, Talas and Issyk Kul. Each province comprises a number of districts (*rayon*), administered by government-appointed officials (*akim*). Rural communities (*ayýl ökmötü*) consisting of up to twenty small settlements, have their own elected mayors and councils.

ECONOMY OF KYRGYZSTAN

The Kyrgyz Republic has had to face economic difficulties following independence, mainly due to the breakup of the former Soviet
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trading bloc and resulting loss of markets. The nation's economic performance in the early 1990s was worse than any other former Soviet republic except war-torn Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Tajikistan, as factories and state farms collapsed with the disappearance of their traditional markets in the former Soviet Union. The government has reduced expenditures, ended most price subsidies, and introduced a value-added tax. Overall, the government appears committed to the transition to a market economy. Through economic stabilization and reform, the government seeks to establish a pattern of long-term consistent growth. Reforms led to the Kyrgyz Republic's accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO) on 20 December 1998. While economic performance has improved considerably in the last few years, and particularly since 1998, difficulties remain in securing adequate fiscal revenues and providing an adequate social safety net.

Agriculture is an important sector of the economy in the Kyrgyz Republic. By the early 1990s, the private agricultural sector provided between one-third and one-half of some harvests. In 2002, agriculture accounted for 35.6 per cent of GDP and about half of employment. The Kyrgyz Republic's terrain is mountainous, which accommodates livestock raising, the largest agricultural activity. Main crops include wheat, sugar beets, potatoes, cotton, tobacco, vegetables, and fruit. Wool, meat, and dairy products also are major commodities.

Agricultural processing is a key component of the industrial economy, as well as one of the most attractive sectors for foreign investment. The Kyrgyz Republic is rich in mineral resources but has negligible petroleum and natural gas reserves; it imports petroleum and gas. Among its mineral reserves are substantial deposits of coal, gold, uranium, antimony, and other rare-earth metals. Metallurgy is an important industry, and the government hopes to attract foreign investment in this field. The government has actively encouraged foreign involvement in extracting and processing gold. The Kyrgyz Republic's plentiful water resources and mountainous terrain enable it to produce and export large quantities of hydro-electric energy.

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At the local level, the economy is primarily kiosk in nature. A large amount of local commerce occurs at bazaars and small village kiosks. A large number of homes are quite self-sufficient with respect to food production. There is a distinct differentiation between urban and rural economies.

The principal exports are nonferrous metals and minerals, woolen goods and other agricultural products, electric energy, and certain engineering goods. Imports include petroleum and natural gas, ferrous metals, chemicals, most machinery, wood and paper products, some foods, and some construction materials. Its leading trade partners include Germany, Russia, China, and neighboring Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan.

Annual Economic Indicators

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
GDP at market prices (Som bn)	73.9	75.4	83.9	94.1	98.7
GDP (US\$ bn)	1.5	1.6	1.9	2.2	2.4
Real GDP growth (per cent)	5.3	0.0	6.7	7.1	-0.6
Consumer price inflation (av; %)	6.9	2.1	3.0	4.0	5.2
Population (million)	5.0	5.1	5.0	5.1	5.2
Exports of goods fob (US\$ m)	480	498	590	733	661
Imports of goods fob (US\$ m)	-450	-572	-724	-904	-981
Current-account balance (US\$ m)	-57	-80	-99	-101	-134
Forex reserves excl gold (US\$ m)	264	289	365	528	576
Exchange rate (av) Som:US\$	48.38	46.94	43.65	42.65	41.01

Tourism

In early December 2005, Russia signed an agreement on tourism with the Kyrgyz Republic, focused on increasing bilateral travel. Tourism is considered to have the greatest potential in terms of investment and job creation in the Kyrgyz Republic, after mining. Lake Issyk-Kul is the country's main tourist destination. Situated at a height of 1,600m (5,250ft) above the sea level and wedged between the 4,000m (13,123ft) peaks of the Küngey Alatau and the Terskey Alatau ranges, it is 170 kms (105 miles) long and 70 kms (43 miles) wide,

making it the second-largest alpine lake in the world after Lake Titicaca in South America. The main attraction to come here is to soak up the lakeside ambience, enjoy the thermal springs and spas, and explore some of the best hiking trails in Central Asia (from the town of Karakol). The other important tourist destinations of the country are Kyrgyz Ferghana Valley, Ala-Archa Canyon and Osh. In 2004, 398,000 tourists visited the Kyrgyz Republic, of which 40 per cent came from neighbouring Kazakhstan; 62 per cent of all tourists came from countries in the former Soviet Union.

CULTURE OF KYRGYZSTAN

Kyrgyzstan has a number of ethnic groups with the Kyrgyzs being in the majority. It is generally considered that there are 40 Kyrgyz tribes, which is symbolized by the 40-rayed yellow sun in the centre of the Kyrgyz national flag. The lines inside the sun are said to represent a *yurt*.

Dominant religion of Kyrgyzstan is Sunni Islam (91per cent). The Russian population is Russian Orthodox. The main Christian churches are Russian Orthodox and Ukrainian Orthodox. The Kyrgyz language became the official national language in all commercial and government uses by 1997. However, Russian language is still spoken extensively among the non-Kyrgyz population. Kyrgyzstan has a high literacy rate (99 per cent), and a strong tradition of educating all citizens.

Compiled by: Mahesh Ranjan Debata

Sources: *Wikipedia Webpage, Eurasianet and Country Reports* by Economic Intelligence Unit.

BOOK REVIEW

The Post-Soviet Conditions: Chingiz Aitmatov in the 90s

by Rashmi Doraiswamy

Aakar Books, Delhi, 2005, 107 pp., Rs. 250/-

The collapse of the Soviet Union was a cataclysmic event that shook the world in the 1990s. It resulted in a paradigm shift that could neither be foreseen nor accounted for. While it had obvious political and cultural ramifications transcending countries and continents, it affected literature and culture in no insignificant way. While the economic and political ramifications are too obviously seen, discussed and documented, the latter have not been so visible. Perhaps being a part of the 'superstructure', literary and cultural modes often work in indirect and tangential ways that cannot be accounted for that easily.

With the change, the position of the writers within the Soviet Union – both in Russia and other Republics – became particularly piquant. The paradigm shift made it imperative for them to relocate positions, to shift stances and to be more in tune with the changing currents. Kyrgyz writer Chingiz Aitmatov is one such writer who, steeped in 'socialist' tradition during the Soviet days, had to make moves to fit in with the changing times. Obviously, he was not alone and there were many like him who faced the same dilemma. Aitmatov's case is thus symptomatic of a much wider dilemma that hundreds of writers, artists, intellectuals, literary cognoscenti and cultural activists went through groping for a politically correct position. Was Aitmatov able to get over the dilemma? What was his response and how did he manage to cope through? – that is the question.

Born in 1928, Chingiz Aitmatov came from an impeccable communist background. His father was an active member of the Communist Party but later became a victim of the Stalinist purge. At the age of fourteen, he became a secretary of the village Soviet. Later, he worked as a taxman, a clerk for tractor drivers harvesting wheat, a livestock specialist, etc. By this time, he had realized that he had a creative mind. He started doing translations and writing articles that

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were published. He later turned to short stories, novellas and finally to novels and displayed his talent in ample measures. Since he was a Kyrgyz and wrote both in Kyrgyz and Russian languages, he was hailed as the poster-boy of Soviet socialism and a product of its benign policies towards the Central Asian Republics. He then became an editor of *Literary Kirghizstan* and later *Pravda's* correspondent from his republic. Aitmatov, who became known nationally and internationally within a decade, was predictable enough, feted, lionised, given the Lenin Prize for Literature and his works were adapted into films, operas, ballets and plays.

But all this while there was a streak in him that remained dissatisfied with the socialist dispensation. He often came out to be a 'critic' of the Soviet state. Perhaps this had something to do with the way his father was treated in the Stalinist era and the hardships that his family had to go through. In his writings, Aitmatov criticized the state and its functionaries even though he lived and occupied positions in close proximity with them. Often he had to face censorship when he was asked to 'rewrite' portions of his works. But he continued to be a 'critical insider' rather than an open, external enemy. How he managed to do is evident in this self-confessionary statement: "... But all writers did not have to be dissidents. Most of us remained at our posts, in our milieu, dealing with real historical situations and atmosphere. We found that our own forms of confrontation – and literature and art – were effective ways of defending our positions."

Besides taking a stand on some of the ills plaguing the system – especially Stalinism – Aitmatov found yet another literary device of distancing himself from it and that was locating his narratives in native Kyrgyz cultural modes. Being a Kyrgyz, he was heir to a rich folk tradition – myths, legends, songs, oral literature, and an alternative world view – that was a part of his 'collective unconscious'. Through the literary modes of allegory, parallelism, symbolism, metaphors, he used this native cultural tradition to criticize, albeit indirectly, what he thought were the negative trends in the socialist system. To quote the author, "Aitmatov found a way of moving into the chronotope of

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legends and myths to create parallel worlds that held up mirrors to this world.”

The collapse of the Soviet Union was a source of discouragement for writers, including Aitmatov. It brought them face to face with a crisis of ideas as well as of form. How did Aitmatov cope with the crisis? Did he execute a somersault to position himself in an advantageous position in the radically enfolding situation? Or did he hold on too rigidly to his previously held positions?

Critics' assessment of Aitmatov on this score varies from being too harsh to being too patronizing. The author holds the view that he held the 'middle' ground and “evolved his own distinct methods of balancing the canons of socialist realism ... and a local realism, deeply tied to the narrative modes of his own nation.” From a close scrutiny of his *Collection of Works* published in 1998, which contains a whole lot of essays, dialogues and presentations by Aitmatov, she concludes that the shift is neither radical nor opportunistic. It lays rather “in the nuance, in the shift in tone, in the elaboration.”

Quoting from a wide range of sources, the author brings out how Aitmatov held on to his middle ground by holding on to his Kyrgyz identity which linked him to his roots and being respectful to his links with Russian literary and cultural tradition which was his passage to the outside world. In an analysis of his works, especially in its post-Soviet phase, she highlights how smoothly Aitmatov adjusted himself to new realities. This adjustment is there in his views on socialist system, on literature and culture, on Kyrgyz roots in a cosmopolitan world and on a host of issues affecting him as a writer in a radically changed political context. But, more importantly, she traces it through his works and creativity of the '90s after the demise of the system.

In a sense, Aitmatov stands out as a metaphor for the dilemma of a writer who, in a changed political context, essays to adjust his creativity to changed circumstances. Such contingencies have taken place earlier and shall be there in future too. How far should a writer go depends on his predilections and his own creative ability in

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harmonizing the contradictory pulls? “It is to Aitmatov’s credit,” to quote the author, “that despite being ‘dehomed’, he found a way of metaphorising and theorizing this state and translating it into creative works.” Rashmi Doraiswamy’s work is indeed the first serious effort in analyzing Aitmatov’s works in the 1990s and laying bare the typology of this transformation.

Pankaj Bhan

The Argumentative Indian: Writings on Indian History, Culture and Identity

by Amartya Sen

Allen Lane, Penguin Books, London, 2005, pp.432, Rs. 650/-

This book by Professor Amartya Sen has produced happy interest in India and worldwide. The book has a sub-title for Indian History, Culture and Identity. Nevertheless, the canvass of discussions and ideas attracts a wider world order. India is a large multi-cultural, federal State. It is comparable to the world, which by and large, comprises of various states in a federation and is interdependent. India is a miniature world. In recent times, there has been a growing need to assess the entire world order based on multi-culturalism and pluralism. Professor Amartya Sen says that the world comity of nations is looking upon India, which is progressing well because of multi-culturalism and pluralism. As a student of international law, the reviewer looks upon this book with all the ideas to help shape a new world order and international understanding. The global community is looking eagerly to promote global peace and brotherhood.

Professor Sen has extensively analysed Indian history, culture and identity in contemporary and historical perspectives. He has extensively drawn from Buddha, Asoka, Mughal Emperor Akbar and Rabindra Nath Tagore. He also sees a role for saints, like Kabir and Mother Teresa, who represent multi-cultural and multi-religious heritage of India. Professor Sen takes an overall integrative view of Indian culture

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based on federalism. Tagore had said that there is unity in diversity for Indian culture. Sen agrees with it and supports it with cultural federalism. Heterodoxy for diversity, Sen says, helps India present its overall progress as it contains all the variations of literature, art, science etc. Diversity and heterodoxy are a source of strength. Margaret Mead, a distinguished anthropologist, has said so convincingly that diversity of culture helps strengthen unity of human kind. The world is to realize this truth again. Sen feels Tagore, who is considered as a mystic, is not exposed enough to the West as much as he should be. However, Western scholars have realized the importance of Tagore much more during the last few decades. Mysticism is now seen with a new perspective. Albert Einstein, Pregogine, Capra, C.G.S. Sudharsan among others have analyzed mysticism as a means to comprehend nature and its laws. The United Nations made a Charter for Nature in 1982 wherein it is stated that man is a part of nature and depends on nature for moral, physical and spiritual growth. Margaret Mead calls all of mankind belonging to one species – *Homo Sapiens*. That being so, mankind is relearning lately to have harmony with nature, and plan an ecological approach to life. Ecology means relationship of living beings and their adaptation to the environment. Ecology goes along with federalism. An eco-system approach to natural resources management has become a global norm and practice. Similarly, a federal arrangement of governance, as seen in India, promotes harmony with nature and between cultures.

Sen points out that an individual has other identities based on language, literature and political beliefs. He says we are not identified on religion alone. Identity is a plural concept, says Sen (p.352). However, there is a common national identity shared by all Indians, which is a profound identity. World consists of a number of nation-states. Even people belonging to the same religion have differences. Referring to Tagore, Sen states that the history of India has at times been wrongly interpreted, and many areas of art, culture and science have not been represented properly (p.59). Although there have been Muslim rulers who did not treat Hindus properly, Sen refers to Emperor

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Akbar (1556-1605), who was deeply interested in Hindu philosophy. Dara Shikoh, Aurangzeb's elder brother, learnt Sanskrit and Hindu philosophy and translated *Upanishads* into Persian language (p.61).

The main theme of Sen's book is that Indians like argument and open-mindedness. Most of the religious books like *Bhagwad Gita* are dialogues in which reason plays an important role. Therefore, secularism is easily accepted by the people of India. Sen says secularism is good for a pluralistic society (p.295). Secularism means separation of religion and politics. People in India including Muslims are secular (p.311). Sen says, "The principle of secularism, in the broader interpretation endorsed in India, demands ... symmetric treatment of different religious communities in politics and in the affairs of the state" (p.313). Sen does not have the same views as Ashis Nandy that modern progress brings discord among communities. Any observer will agree with Sen when we see that modern technologies and science can provide to all communities enough to live and eat. Sustainable development can provide a creative life for all provided mankind is educated on these issues. Nobody can ignore the environment movement of our time which has provided a new hope for mankind to live in peace and harmony.¹ Nag Chaudhuri and present reviewer have submitted that "Laws and institutions have to take note of the major tenets of our policy (on environment) – of freedom, knowledge, development and harmony".² In regard to science policy, it is submitted that: "Science policy should look to selective application of technology. It should increase knowledge and enlightenment of man. It should help environment policy to provide a new vision of life in towns, villages and cities".³

The emphasis on reason for decision-making by Sen finds a universal acceptance. The judicial process works on the reasonableness. Myres McDougal of Yale Law School enunciated this doctrine of reasonableness to help mankind find laws of outer space (see his *Law and Public Order in Outer Space*, 1963) and in other domains of international law. Justice Benjamin N. Cardozo says that while making judicial decisions, precedents are important. But where reason demands seeking justice, rules are altered. Cardozo says, "The rules and

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principles of case law have never been treated as final truths, but as working hypotheses, continually retested in those great laboratories of the law, the courts of justice”.⁴

Sen makes a strong reference to the practice of reason followed in India, even ignoring tradition at times. He says that Asoka had codified rules after public discussions involving reasonableness. Emperor Akbar called his ministers for discussions on matters of state policy – where he listened to reason. As Sen cites, Akbar told Abul Fazal, a scholar in Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian that “The pursuit of reason and rejection of traditionalism are so brilliantly patent as to be above the need of argument” (p.288). Sen refers to Akbar’s efforts to have discussions between various scholars – Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Jews, Parsees and Jains (p.288). Sen points out that “Akbar’s ideas remain relevant – and not just in the subcontinent, but have a bearing on many current debates in the West as well. They suggest the need for scrutiny of the fear of multi-culturalism ...” (p.289). In a dialogue between M.S. Swaminathan and Daisaku Ikeda (see his book *Revolutions*, 2005), Ikeda stresses the need to have dialogue between Prophets of various religions in the world to help human happiness and welfare (p.91).

During last few years, the world is realizing the merits of harmony in cultural diversity and multi-culturalism. Scholars in USA speak for a multi-cultural world. The Prime Minister of Canada said recently that Canada was for diversity of cultures. Sen refers to a federal view of cultures in Britain. In the *Report of Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain*, as cited by Sen, there is a partial and qualified backing to a federal view of contemporary Britain as “a loose federation of cultures held together by common bonds of interest and affection and a collective sense of being (p.356).

Sen has a role for the saints and sages of India to promote spiritual and cultural harmony (p.11). Sen recalls the role of “medieval mystical poets” which was well established in India by the 15th century. Sen refers to the egalitarianism of the Hindu Bhakti movement and that of

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the Muslim Sufis with their rejection of social barriers (p.11). He highlights the harmony provided by saints like Kabir, Ravidas, Mira Bai etc.

The reviewer wishes to recall here the role of saint poetess Lal Ded of Kashmir who lived in Kashmir during 14th century. Her *vaaks* or sayings are rich in spiritual and mystical wisdom. These *vaaks* are remembered even today by Muslims, Hindus and other communities in Kashmir. Lal Ded helped develop love for a common spirituality of mankind. A National Seminar on the relevance of Lal Ded in modern times was held on 12 November 2000 by Kashmir Education Society, in Pamposh Enclave, New Delhi, and the proceedings were edited by Dr. S.S. Toshkhani. The *Dawn*, a Pakistani daily newspaper gave an excellent review of this book and sought revival of harmony based on the role of such saint-poetesses like Lal Ded, Mira Bai etc.

The world needs to look forward to many more Sufi, Sikh and Christian saints (Mother Teresa in this context) to help mankind live in peace. Professor K. Warikoo, the editor of this international journal *Himalayan and Central Asian Studies* has brought forth many publications and seminars highlighting the role of saints and poets of Kashmir. Gulam Ahmed Mehjoor, who was a friend of Rabindra Nath Tagore was a great poet of Kashmir who he wrote on harmony and love of the multi-cultural heritage of Kashmir. It may be mentioned that Sheikh Nooruddin Rishi of Chrar-i-Sharif was a follower of Lala Ded. Professor Mohammed Afzal Wani, Dean of Law School in Indraprastha University, New Delhi compared him with Mahatma Gandhi. The reviewer also recalls a great king of Kashmir, Zain-ul-Abidin, who lived in the 15th century. He was a creative king who revived multi-culturalism in Kashmir. Many scholars in Kashmir in recent times have called for revival of multi-cultural heritage of Kashmir also called *Kashmiriat*. In his book titled *A Fresh Approach to the History of Kashmir*, Professor Akhtar Mohiudin writes about Lal Ded: "In time past we were, In time future we shall be, Throughout the ages, we have been – Lal Ded, 14th century poetess". The reviewer was witness to a TV discussion in around 2002 on Kashmir TV between Akhtar Mohiudin, Gulam Nabi Khayal, Professor Rahman Rahi and one more

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scholar. They discussed what was *Kashmiriat*. Professor Mohiudin concluded with a tribute to many Kashmiri Pandits including Jayalal Kaul who along with Muslim scholars helped promote multi-culturalism in Kashmir. He concluded that *Kashmiriat* was located in Srinagar, Kashmir and not in Lahore. The people of Kashmir are looking forward to the revival of the multi-culturalism and *Kashmiriat*. Professor Amartya Sen's book will be read with great interest in Kashmir as in other parts of India.

Sen has, therefore, called for the revival of the Indian sainthood for the harmony of mankind. Arnold Toynbee, while delivering Maulana Azad Memorial Lecture before late Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, recommended the Indian habit of contemplation and meditation on nature's mysteries. He hoped that the West will learn this spiritual art once again which West knew in the Middle Ages, as he said. Toynbee also wrote a book on *Civilization on Trial* reflecting on the global problems of technology, environment and armament race. Towards the end of his life, he also wrote a book on *Mother Earth* where he said that humankind has to treat this planet with care and love. Barbara Ward and Rene Dubos made thoughtful report for the UN Conference on Environment in 1972 called *Only One Earth: The Care and Maintenance of a Small Planet*. Al Gore, former US Vice-President, has cautioned recently that mankind is running short of time to save earth from the problems related to environment and international terrorism.

In his preface to the book, Sen says that his selection of focus in the book is on three aspects: "the long history of the argumentative tradition in India, its contemporary relevance, and its relative neglect in ongoing cultural discussion". Sen wants to promote Indian heterodoxy as that makes India greater. Heterodoxy includes the contributions of all cultures and communities. Sen stresses the need to take an overall integrative view of India, and not to isolate it from global mainstream. He refers to Tagore as well to whom India was not limited to one culture or tradition. Sen asks for tolerance of cultures and love and harmony among people in India and the world at large.

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In regard to current global problems on terrorism, the readers can very well see that a multi-cultural and secular world is better able to overcome global terrorism. According to Sen, the Hindutva movement was helpful in combining various Hindu castes in a global diaspora.

It may be said here that global terrorism is born due to some Muslim fundamentalist groups like Al Qaeda, which have spread terror across the world. Many Muslim countries have condemned these acts of terrorism. The world community is totally united to eliminate this threat to world order. The UN is concerned about it. Institutions that help terrorism cannot function for long. Mankind has a need to develop national and global institutions that helped in bringing harmony through multi-culturalism, and secularism. The second need is to curb terrorism by states through international cooperation. States need to eliminate terrorist training camps and use adequate force to eliminate terrorist organizations. Many writers have compared terrorism with the spread of HIV/AIDS. They suggest that this virus will be destroyed in a decade or so. K. Subramaniam has said recently that all terror groups have perished in the past, and that the present terror groups will also perish in due course.

The book by Professor Amartya Sen will be read by all those who seek world peace and happiness of humankind. Sen has made an in-depth and updated analysis from history and produced a thesis for a multi-cultural and progressive India. The book also makes profound contribution to the road map for peace and world order. Professor Samuel Huntington may be right initially in his apprehensions for a clash of cultures or civilizations, yet the world has realized since 9/11 incidents that how fragile the world order can be unless world reacts with a plural and secular view. Even Huntington feels that global problems are due to inadequate governance and political corruption. He does not expect wars based on conflict of cultures. He feels that there is one global multi-cultural civilization that we need to strengthen. Adequate force and global cooperation are needed to eliminate terrorism. Above all, we need to revive the creative philosophy of a multi-cultural world, as Sen has put forth in this book. The world, it

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seems, has lately accepted the multi-culturalism and heterodoxy of cultures as part of one global civilization of mankind. Terrorism will die its natural death. The environmental problems, however, need our attention. We do not have to colonise the Moon or Mars as scientist Stephen Hawking has said recently. The Mother Earth has everything for us.

S. Bhatt

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1. See B.D. Nag Chaudhuri and S. Bhatt, *The Global Environment Movement: A New Hope for Mankind*, Sterling Publishers, New Delhi, 1987.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 59.
3. *Ibid.*
4. See Benjamin N. Cardozo, *The Nature of the Judicial Process*, Yale University, 1961, fifth Indian Reprint, Universal Law Publishing Co. Pvt. Ltd., Delhi, 2004, p. 23.



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Office: 91-11-41450446

Kumar Sambhav

Manager

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**CONTRIBUTIONS FOR PUBLICATION AND ANY ENQUIRIES
SHOULD BE ADDRESSED TO :**

Prof. K. WARIKOO

Editor and Secretary General

Himalayan Research and Cultural Foundation

B-6/86, Safdarjung Enclave

New Delhi - 110029 (India)

Tel. : 0091-11-26162763, 0091-11-41651969

Fax : 0091-11-26106643

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Central Office : B-6/86, Safdarjung Enclave, New Delhi-110029 (India)

Tele : 0091-11-26162763, 0091-11-41651969, Fax : 0091-11-26106643

E-mail: kwarikoo@gmail.com Website: www.himalayanresearch.org