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Genealogical legends - Sanjyra of Kyrgyz

САНЖЫРА-ГЕНЕАЛОГИЧЕСКОЕ ПРЕДАНИЕ КЫРГЫЗОВ

Санжыра-кыргыздардын генеалогиялык уламышы

Abstract: the article considers the historical and cultural heritage of Kyrgyz - Sanjyra (genealogical chronicles), its origin, sources and historical bases, as well as studies devoted to this problem. In addition, the genealogical links of the Kyrgyz society in Sanjyra are analyzed, and the social and cultural importance of Sanjyra, recording and collection of materials as a historical source is emphasized. Particular attention is paid to the study of the Sanjyra in the post-Soviet period.

Аннотация: в статье рассматривается историко-культурное наследие кыргызов - Санжыра (генеалогические летописи), ее происхождение, источники и исторические основы, а также исследования, посвященные этой проблеме. Кроме этого, анализируются генеалогические связи кыргызского общества в Санжыре и подчеркивается социально-культурное значение Санжыры, записи и сбора материалов как исторического источника. Особое внимание уделено исследованию Санжыры в постсоветский период.

Аннотация: макалада кыргыздардын тарыхый-маданий мурасы-Санжыранын келип чыгышы, тарыхый негиздери, булактары, изилдениши, Санжырадагы кыргыз коомунун генеалогиялык байланыштары жана Санжыранын социалдык-маданий мааниси, тарыхый булак катары аны жыйноо жана айтуучулардан жазып алуу, постсоветтик мезгилдеги изилдөө маселелерине көңүл бурулган.

Keywords: Sanjyra; sources; historiography; genealogical relations; mutual relations with neighboring peoples.

Ключевые слова: Санжыра; источники; историография; генеалогические связи; взаимоотношения с соседними народами.

Негизги свздвр: Санжыра; булактары; тарыхнаамасы; генеалогиялык байланыштар; коңшу элдер менен алакалар.

The essence of Sanjyra. The nomadic culture of the Kyrgyz has deep historical roots. It is closely connected to the historical processes and events of the past. In historical science, an important role in the study of the social and spiritual-ideological foundations of the nomadic Kyrgyz society is played by genealogical legends-Sanjyra

The term *"Sanjyra"* derives from the Arabic word *"shajarat"* that means a tree. Although this term has been adopted from the Arabic language, the Kyrgyz traditional knowledge about their ancestors goes back

to the ancient time. Good evidence is the Orkhon-Yenisei written inscriptions that recorded the genealogical tree of Kyrgyz rulers. In this regard, a natural question arises: What constitutes sanjyra as a historicalcultural source and what is the role of genealogical information in the study of history of a nomadic society?

Sanjyra occupies an important place in the Kyrgyz life in terms of nomadic life, as all information about the spiritual life has been preserved in the memory of the people and has been passed on from generation to generation. It was Sanjyra (oral annals of the people) that reflected the genealogical information of separate tribes, clans and the people as well as historical events of the passed eras.

Sanjyra contains reliable information of historical and legendary character that has been the only source of information about the past of nomadic people.

Usually a patriarchal family required knowledge of genealogy up to the seventh generation of ancestors, this was the norm. The awareness of the genealogy of own ancestors as a branch of a certain clan or tribe allowed a person to identify himself with that or another group (*uruu*, *uruk*).

Genealogical legends included the stories of the acts of immediate ancestors, their deeds and the events related to them as well as the information about the origin of a clan or tribe. The composition of oral historical stories about ancestors was a tradition. Each adult had a required minimum of information about his/her ancestors. *Aksakals* (the elders) used to tell about them among their relatives and fellow tribesman, a father to his sons, forming an initial idea about the historical past of a clan. There were the experts of Sanjyra-*sanjyrachy* who collected genealogical data and knew a lot. They were usually distinguished by intelligence and good memory and were called "*kuima kulak*", or memorizing am people. Such people, although wilhout a special status, enjoyed respect of people for a deep knowledge of history, genealogy and legendary events related to the closest and farthest ancestors.

An expert orally passed on genealogical data to another person. It was required that the people reporting Sanjyra didn't distort and depart from the real clan connections and historical events. If the information accuracy prescribed by the traditional canons was not followed, the people removed such reporters and did not approve their stories. Therefore, the expert of genealogy had to follow the reliable version of Sanjyra adopted from the primary source only. The stories of separate clans and tribes were approached very carefully, since it was realized that the glorification of some tribes and the humiliation of others would prevent the consolidation of the whole people. That was why, the objectivity and stability of the information passed as well as the preservation of the oral historical knowledge were appreciated. The most objective version of Sanjyra was accepted by the society and distributed among the people.

At the same time, sometimes Sanjyra could be also biased. Conflicts and disagreements between some clans and tribes were not always objectively interpreted. In such cases, sanjyrachy of one tribe or people could report some events related to the relations between groups distorted, so that clan interests could become more important.

Covering all the events of legendary and historical nature, Sanjyra became a sort of an ideology for a nomadic society. It was Sanjyra which kin and ethnic connections in the hierarchical structure of the society from patriarchal families to tribes relied on and oriented to. Sanjyra provided for clan and tribal solidarity; based on Sanjyra people united in times of difficulties. According to the customary law, a person considered a member of a clan was supposed to go through all hardships and carry the burden along with all other members. That is, genealogy organized the system of hierarchical co-subordination of related communities at different levels:

patriarchal family "*bir atanyn baldary*" was located in the composition of a certain clan "*uruk*", and that, in its turn, inside "*uruu*", or tribe, that was included in the larger tribal unit. In this respect, the history and genealogy of separate clans and tribes were combined complementing and creating a common informational basis in accordance with the requirements of a traditional society.

Sources and Historiography. Some Persian sources of 15-16th centuries mention genealogical legends of the Kyrgyz, notably of Otuz-uul and Kyrgyz, Ak-uul ("*on kanat*") and Kuu-uul ("*sol kanat*") [1] [2] In the work of Seif ad-Din Ahsikenti, early genealogical data about the legendary division of the Kyrgyz into the right ("*on kanat*") and left ("*sol kanat*") wings are stated. Similar information can be found in Chinese sources of the 18th century [3].

A big importance in terms of source study is given to the works of Russian travelers. The documents of Ch.Ch. Valikhanov and I.A. Bardashev contain valuable data about the geographic location and borders of habitat of Kyrgyz clans and tribes, their structure and population as well as about the rulers, *biys* and *manaps* [4] [5]. The works of above mentioned authors are of big scientific interest for comparative study of Sanjyra and historical data.

N. Sitnyakovskiy composed a tribal chart of southern Kyrgyz based on their division into uezds and volosts as well as the territories occupied by clans and tribes [6]. S. M. Abramzon and L. P. Potapov studied the historical-cultural significance of oral genealogical legends in the study of ethnic, social and economic-cultural life of nomads based on the experience of Turkic nomads. According to their conclusion, oral genealogical data present "narodnaya etnogoniya" or people's historical knowledge [7].

The work of Kyrgyz historian Osmonaly-moldo Sydykov published in 1913-14 in Ufa city was based on sanjyra. It has interesting information about the tribal structure of the right wing and the role of *manaps* in the beginning 20^{th} century [8].

New historical-ethnographic data on the history of the Kyrgyz were included in the works of Belek Soltonoev [9].

S. Attokurov considers Sanjyra as annals of tribes that open the historical past of the Kyrgyz based on the genealogical table [10].

S. Zakirov studied the issues of origin and settlement of Kyrgyz tribes as well as historical events of the 17-19th centuries based on Sanjyra [11].

Ethnonyms of the Kyrgyz in the linguistic prospective became the object of research by O.K. Karataev [12].

The importance of Sanjyra as a historical source for the study of ethnosocial structure of the Kyrgyz in the 16-19th centuries and historical connections was researched by T.I. Asanov [13].

R. Joldoshev in his research on the issues of ethnic history of the Kyrgyz also relied on the materials of Sanjyra [14].

G. Salk (Germany) studied the social nature of Sanjyra and its cultural roots [15]

Sanjyra and genealogical links.

Early information about the Kyrgyz Sanjyras in terms of content and chronology are of legendary character, since historical accounts do not always coincide with the historical process of the past. An example is the legend about the origin of the Kyrgyz from forty girls (*"kyrk kyz"*).

In one of the earliest handwritten versions of sanjyra, the prominent member of Sufi group of the 11th century in the Middle East Sheikh Mansur al-Khalaj (Shaa Mansur) was mentioned as one of the distant genealogical ancestors (*"tup ata"*) of the Kyrgyz [16] [17]. The image of this religious figure was closely connected to a popular legend that testifies a certain influence of Islam among the nomadic population. It seems that Sufi missioners were well aware of an especial value of *ancestors'* genealogy among the Kyrgyz and their devotion to such a culture. It was acceptable for Sufi people spreading Islam among nomads. Despite this, the main motive in the legend on the origin of the people is closely related to forty girls, or *"kyrkkyz"*. It is this legend with different versions in Sanjyra that represents the most ancient concept in the self-consciousness of the people about its own origin. Based on this legend, the ethnonym *"Kyrgyz"* can be understood in terms of people's etymology. Later under the influence of books, Sanjyra

included the information about legendary Turk-ata and Uguz-khan. Those data were initially used by Osmonaly-moldo Sydykov in his book published in 1913-14 in Ufa city.

The earlier versions of legend "kyrkkyz" were recorded in some written sources such as "Yuan-shi" (14 century), "Shajarat al-atrak", "Rauzat as-safa", "Badai-I at-tavarikh" (15-16 centuries). Comparing the data, it is possible to find out that the basis of the legend is almost similar to oral genealogical legends. This demonstrates that the genealogical tradition related to "kyrk kyz" has been spread among the Kyrgyz of Tien Shan long time ago.

The historical analysis shows an original successive connection of historical-genealogical data in Sanjyra. In this regard, the legend about Dolon-biy and his descendants has a stable genealogical trace. In different versions of Sanjyra, he was the forefather of the Kyrgyz right ("on kanat") and the left wing ("sol kanat"). The legend about Dolon-biy is to some extent is historical. Thanks to it, we came to know about the existence of a dual organization that played an important role in the formation and ethno political consolidation of the Kyrgyz people.

According to the legend, Dolon-biy, waiting for his younger wife delivery, prepared nine gray mares expecting good news in advance. Then a servant came to inform him about the good news and receive a gift for them. Dolon-biy finding out about the birth of a son gives him nine gray mares. But after a while another servant came with the news about the birth of the second son. Surprised Dolon-biy said: Did she give birth to another one, or adopt somebody else's baby ("*telitip aldy*")?

When Dolon-biy gave names to his sons, the first was called Ak uul, or the "true" but the second Kuu uul, or the "doubted". Gradually those names have been fixed for his sons. However, dissatisfied mother said that when the elder one was born she was relieved in the right kidney and when the younger was born, she was relieved in the left one; therefore, their names would be "On" (right) and "Sol" (left). As a result, according to the legend, the descendants of Ak uul called themselves "on kanat", while the descendants of Kuu uul called themselves "sol kanat".

If to pay the attention to this, the idea of people's interpretation in sanjyra consisted in the fact that the creation of a dual ethno political structure of the Kyrgyz was a certain historical process in terms of the nomadic society.

Consequently the ideology of a nomadic society was based on it stating the idea about its common origin in the self-consciousness of the

ethnic group. In different versions of Sanjyra, the forefather of all main branches ("*on kanat*", "*sol kanat*", "*ichkilik*") of the ethno political structure of the Kyrgyz is Dolon-biy.

According to another version of the legend, Dolon-biy divided his heritage among his sons ("*enchi boluu*"). When the herd, land and people were divided between them, Ak uul took the right side of the property and Kuu uul took the left side and since that time the people call them "On" (right) and "Sol" (left). The apportionment is an ancient tradition of Kyrgyz nomadic life that has an especial social-economic and cultural importance in the social-political environment. And it is possible that at the initial stage of the formation of the ethno political structure this issue could be one of the significant factors.

The ideological track of Sanjyra is well traced in the formation of the hierarchical tribal structure of the nomadic society such as "bir atanyn baldary", "uruk", "uruu". As Sanjyra shows, in this hierarchical stage, *"uruu"*, tribe, was a universal category. The formation of a tribe took place despite the relationships based on blood. In the composition of uruu, different groups by origin were included and united according to a genealogical-territorial principle. The genealogical principle was rather conditional inside a clan; therefore, not all groups included in the tribe were actually of the same origin. But those groups were united by a common ideology, since without it there was not social-economic, territorialdemographic expansion and political growth of the union. Included in the tribe foreign groups or ethnic components have been integrated in its genealogy; they were usually called in Sanjyra "tonduu uul" that means "sons in sheepskin coat" emphasizing their arrival in family as teenagers or adults. Calling these groups as "tonduu uul", the society of nomads sanctioned their joining the tribe uniting under the same ideology. There are many examples in the genealogy of the Kyrgyz when the descendants of adopted children, or "tonduu uul", gave rise to a whole tribe. Such groups by clan laws were considered full members of the society by birth. It is a feature of a tribe that gave him an opportunity to build diverse groups around itself and occupy large territories. This was testified by the genealogy of Tagai descent, one of the largest branches of the right wing. "Sarybagysh", "Solto", "Jediger", "Bagysh", "Sayak", "Azyk", "Cherik". "Bugu". "Monoldor" called themselves Tagais. According to the genealogical legends, "Sayak", "Azyk", "Cherik" were adopted by the legendary ancestor of the right wing Tagai-biy. Those tribes already in the 18th century were the largest tribal unions of the wing. Based on this information, it is

possible to assume that they were included in the composition of the right wing long before the formation of the ethnopolitical structure of the Kyrgyz. There are many such examples in sanjyra that proves the ideological essence of this phenomenon.

Blood proximity among the Kyrgyz in Sanjyra, first of all, is defined by genealogical characteristics. Despite this fact, the whole group not taking into account the relationships based on blood consisted the hierarchical structure of the Kyrgyz nomadic society. It is clearly traced inside "uruk" or clan following the lowest hierarchical stage of the genealogical structure. Inside a clan, the genealogy itself had an ideological meaning. In terms of contents, it was comprised of three generations of ancestors related to each other through genealogy. They were "*berki ata*" – the closest ancestor, "*arky ata*" – distant ancestor, "*tupku ata*" – the most distant ancestor, or forefather. Based on these data, it is possible to follow the genealogical chain of ancestors preserved in the people's memory that formed the spiritual-ideological foundation of the community uniting all groups and members of the clan around itself.

In the genealogical composition, several patriarchal families were united based on blood relationship around the society calling itself "*bir atanyn baldary*" meaning the children of one father. The members of the society had actual close blood relationship and were considered the descendants of one man who for some people was the fourth or fifth close ancestor. Brought together long ago based on their genealogical proximity, they didn't separate from each other till another branch didn't appear or grew as a result of the patriarchal families increase.

The relationships among the members of the society depended much on genealogical criteria based on the knowledge of genealogy. Among nomads, the knowledge of seven ancestors was especially appreciated that juridically established the belonging of a person to a certain clan the moral code says: *"kim jeti atasyn bilbese, el bezeri"* (the one who doesn't know his seven ancestors is considered to be an apostate) It is the basic cultural code of the person in the society.

In the family, honoring seven ancestors become the spiritual relic and was designated by such terms as "*ata*", "*chon ata*", "*baba*", "*buba*", "*kubaar*", "*joto*", "*jete*". In the memory of the people, sayings and expressions that confirm deep roots of this custom have been preserved. For example, "*Jetegej jetchuu kek*" – the revenge till the seventh generation, "*Kudai kylsa kubaaryndyn akysy barby*" – if God decided, then can your *kubaar* have the right, *"Kubaaryndyn kuu chokusu"*, literally the devil could take the dry tops of your ancestors", etc.

Genealogical connections were maintained precisely in the "Uruk", or in the tribal circle. This contributed to the centuries developed norms of marriage and kinship relations, which were strictly adhered by all members of the community. "*Al kezde jeti atasyn surap kyz bermek rasim bolgon*" (Earlier girls were given for marriage after asking about seven ancestors) sanjyra said. This meant that to marry inside a clan was forbidden as long as seven generations don't pass: mutual marriages were permitted only outside of such relationship. In terms of clan isolation, in a complex natural-climatic environment, this was the only opportunity to preserve genetic cleanness of descendants to create the conditions for further growth of the population. Without such a ban, the consequences of marriages of close relatives could be unpredictable. From this point of people's genetics, nomads banned the marriages inside a clan but the knowledge of seven ancestors remained a distinctive code of a person in the society.

The transition from the legendary to the historical part of Sanjyra begins with those events when the division of the Kyrgyz into the right (on kanat) and the left wing (sol kanat) from the descendants of the sons Dolonbiy Ak-uul and Kuu-uul occurs.

The historical part of genealogical legends of the right wing also contains the names of legendary rulers. According to historical legends, Tagai-biy among other personalities was probably a real historical figure. Such a version was expressed for the first time by historian Belek Soltonoev [18]. Relaying on some similar moments in the biography of two figures, he identified Tagai-biy with the ruler of Mogolistan Kyrgyz Muhammed-Kyrgyz.

All the genealogical names of the right wing following Tagay biy belong to the active historical figures of the 17th-18th centuries. Sanjyra tells their names in the connection to the events of the mentioned times when Kyrgyz defended their independence. The names of the same individuals are mentioned in the events of the Kyrgyz-Kazakh relations of this period. The cycle of historical legends about the resistance of the Kyrgyz to the invasion of the Dzungars covers a whole historical period. The comparative study demonstrated that the events of those times mentioned in Sanjyra very much coincided with the written sources. In the cycle of people's legends, Sanjyra includes a complete historical chronicle of those events.

The information of Sanjyra of a historical-legendary nature is of big importance in the study of the issue of the Kyrgyz people ethnogenesis.

Based on these data, it is possible to trace the creation of an ethnopolitical dual organization and the formation of the ethnic composition of the Kyrgyz.

Based on the materials of Snjyra, all ethnic groups and tribes played a certain role in the formation of the modern Kyrgyz people.

All these materials were carefully studied by S. M. Abramzon based on which the scholar proved an exceptional importance of ethnic data. Relying on the information from Sanjyra [19], he made an important conclusion dividing the Kyrgyz ethnic names into three layers. He dated the first layer as 6-11th centuries and included ancient Turkic and early medieval tribes there "Teeles", "Munduz", "Kypchak", "Kandy", "Kushchu". "Uighur", "Bugu", "Azyk" as well as "Solto", "Arvk". "Savak". "Bagysh", "Sarybagysh", "Chon bagysh", "Karabagysh", "Djediger" and others. The second layer was dated by 12-14th centuries and he attributed there the tribes of "Noigut", Bargy", "Konurat", "Katagan", "Baaryn", "Naiman", "Kereyit", Merkit", "Kytai". The third layer covers 15-18th centuries and in the view of the scholar, it contained such tribes and clans as "Jetigen", "Alakchyn", "Kolpoch", "Monoldor", 'Cherik''. "Sarttar". "Mangyt", "Sarai", "Chertike", "Kalcha" and others. In this regard, the studies are still not complete. It is worthy of note that the ethnic picture of the modern Kyrgyz people is clearly reflected in Saniyra but not any other source. It proves that Sanjyra as a spiritual-ideological foundation covers all aspects of nomadic Kyrgyz people life.

Relationships with neighboring peoples by Sanjyra materials

Sanjyra also represents reliable historical data about the relationships of the Kyrgyz with neighboring peoples in the 16-19th centuries. Of particular interest are historical legends about the resistance of Kyrgyz to the invasion of Jungar-Kalmaks that include the whole period of the heroic struggle of the Kyrgyz people. A comparative study of these materials shows that the events of those times recorded in Sanjyra almost coincide with written sources.

The materials of Sanjyra also reflect the activities of Kudayan-Khan [20]. Some Sanchy-synchy (predictor Sanchy) predicting the future said that his path would bring misfortune to the people. His prediction came true and the difficult path of the Kyrgyz from the north to the south began. The analysis of legends from the chronicle of genealogical data with reliable historical track shows that the basic part of the population in northern Kyrgyzstan in the late 18th century under the pressure of Kalmaks moved deeply to the Fergana Valley. Moreover, in Sanjyra, there are materials about the relations of the Kyrgyz with local rulers and their resettlement in

Fergana, the struggle of people's heroes against Kalmaks and their return to their territories.

Genealogical legends contain the data on ethnic contacts of Kyrgyz with other peoples during Jungar period. Under different conditions, some groups of Kyrgyz found themselves in Kalmak environment or vice versa. These events did not significantly affect the ethnic picture of the Kyrgyz. Nevertheless, genealogical legends are of big interest for the study of history of some ethnic groups among Kyrgyz, or the destiny of common nomadic population in those unstable times. For instance, Kalmaks somewhat forced to move some families from Jantav clan of Sarvbagysh tribe. Later, they escaped and returned to their relatives. Despite the long period of absence (two or three generations passed), they were not forgotten and were able to prove their origin according to the genealogy of their ancestors based on material evidence. They were later called "kalmaaky" or "besh kalmaaky" which means five brothers who stayed among the Kalmaks. Another example when the Kyrgyz moved deep into the Fergana Valley, Bugu raided the Khiva Khanate and captured several boys. Later, they returned them except one. That one gave rise to the descendants who called themselves "Kalcha" or "Kalchins". This group did not differ from the Kyrgyz in terms of lifestyle and culture, although their appearance was similar to Tajiks [21]. Probably the ancestors of this group were the natives of mountainous Tajik territory, so-called Galchins. Such examples are many and in this respect Sanjyra is an unquestionable source from which the detailed information about the late ethnic processes taking place in the nomadic environment of the Kyrgyz can be received.

On the bases of Sanjyra, it is possible to trace the relations of the Kyrgyz with Kazakh tribes in the period of Ablai-Khan rule (second half of the 18 century). By legends, the Kyrgyz and Kazakh fought together against the Kalmaks. However, after they were destroyed, the conflict broke out between the neighbors because of pastures and border territories. There are important moments in the legends which speak about the Kyrgyz and Kazakh separating their territories of roaming during the negotiations and coming to an agreement by the decision of the Council of *biys* ("biylerdin tobu") and rulers. Such data could not be found in any source of that time. As Sanjyra shows, the neighbors found a common language and in accordance with the ancient custom of nomads cut the twig ("chybyk kyrkyp") promising each other to "be cut as twigs if they violate the oath" ("chbyktay kyrkylyp kalaly"). Besides, the Kyrgyz sent their representative Tyuleberdi-biy for "akuiluu" [22] («Ak uiluu» literally means "with white

house", that is one of the institutes of nomadic diplomacy. K. K. Yudakhin in his dictionary gave the following reliable meaningful translation of the term: "akuiluu" is "a hostage from the members of nobility at the court of a ruler from the opposite side") [23] to Ablay-khan.

Collection and record of genealogial legends. In the mid 19th century with the help of some influential Kyrgyz rulers (Manaps) Sanjyra was recorded. However, this Sanjyra was in fact the genealogy of a certain ruler, or in some cases, that of another clan. According to Soltonoev, Ormon-khan entrusted Namangan mullah to write Sanjyra of the Kyrgyz on the right and the left wings. Till nowadays some genealogies of Manap Baygazy-baatyr and Koqand rulers have been preserved [24].

Since the second half of the 1920s, a purposeful collection of folklore and ethnographic materials took place. With the creation of the Academy of Sciences in the republic, a mass-scale work was conducted and a lot of materials on Sanjyra were collected. There materials, provide an opportunity to study the ethnic history of the Kyrgyz people in more detail, as well as the relationship of Kyrgyz with neighboring peoples.

The study of Sanjyra in the post-Soviet time. In the mid 1980s with the changes in the political course of the country researchers got an opportunity to study the historical-cultural heritage. The materials of Sanjyra began to be published in periodicals. Since the late 1990s, the monographs on Sanjyra based on the oral stories appeared. The genealogy and history of certain clans and tribes, their contemporary distribution, the list of historical-cultural objects in the places of their geographically concentrated living as well as the biographies of famous tribesmen were recorded in the published works.

During this same period, many representatives of the local elite increased their interest in their ancestors, as well as with specific known personalities of the past. An intensive work on Ichikilik group has been taking place, since there were no any social studies on the problem before [25; 26].

Today, there is a loss of tradition in the dissemination of the Sanjyra traditions in oral form. Most of the modern scholars of Sanjyra began to describe the events of the past and the genealogy of their ancestors, based on historical sources.

Summarizing the above, it can be concluded that Sanjyra is an important historical-cultural monument of the Kyrgyz people that requires to be preserved and studied further as a scientific source. In this aspect, it is important not only to popularize Sanjyra in the cultural aspect but to carry out a more fundamental study in this field.

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