

HUMANITIES INSTITUTE

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***THE KHAN TEYISH: THE DZUNGAR-OIRAT INVASION / KHAN TEYISH: JUNGAR-OIROT JAPYRYGY* (2009)
Asanbek Stamov (1938-2010)**

Reference: Stamov, A. (2012). *Khan Teyish: Jungar-Oirot Japyrygy*. Biyiktik.

OVERVIEW

Author

Asanbek Stamov, a People's Writer of the Kyrgyz Republic, was born on August 28, 1938, in the village of Murake in what is now Moscow District of Kyrgyzstan.

He graduated from the Department of Kyrgyz Language and Literature at Kyrgyz State University in 1962. That same year, he began his career as a teacher at the Toktogul Boarding School in the city of Tokmok.

From 1964 to 1966, Stamov worked as an editor and senior editor for the State Radio Committee. From 1967 to 1969, he served as a senior editor at the Kyrgyz State Publishing House. From 1969 to 1971, he worked as an instructor on the staff of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Kyrgyzstan, the republic's principal political institution within the Soviet system. From 1971 to 1973, he served as director of the Kyrgyz State Publishing House.

In 1973, Stamov was appointed First Deputy Minister of Culture of the Kyrgyz Soviet Socialist Republic (Kyrgyz SSR). From 1985 to 1987, he served as chairman of the republic's State Committee for Television and Radio Broadcasting. From 1985 to 1990, he was also elected to the Supreme Soviet of the Kyrgyzstan, the republic's legislative body under the Soviet system.

In 1987, Stamov became director of the Bureau for the Promotion of Fiction under the Writers' Union of Kyrgyzstan. In 1989, he was appointed editor-in-chief of *Chalkan* magazine. From 1990 until his retirement in 1992, he served as chairman of the *Uchkun* State Concern.

Stamov died on August 7, 2010. On September 17, 2013, the National Library of Kyrgyzstan opened a book and visual exhibition commemorating the 75th anniversary of his birth.

Writing and Literary Work

Asanbek Stamov began his literary career in 1959, when his novella *Ata (Father)* was published in the literary magazine *Ala-Too*. His first book, *Taanyshuu (Introduction)*, was published by Kyrgyzstan Publishing House in 1966. In 1975, he received the Lenin Komsomol Prize of Kyrgyzstan for his novella *Jany tuugan (A New Relative)*.

His collections of short stories and novellas, including *Taanyshuu (Introduction)*, *Kech kuzdo (Late Autumn)*, *Jany tuugan (A New Relative)*, *Noshordon kiyin (After the Downpour)*, *Ak kar (White Snow)*, *Jol boyunda jalgyz tam (The Lone House by the Road)*, *Egiz tal (The Twin Trees)*, and *Chuy Bayany (Tales of Chuy)*, were published in Moscow and included in the *Anthology of Kyrgyz Writers*.

He also translated works by Turkish writer Aziz Nesin and Tatar poet Musa Jalil. His own works were translated into several other languages.

After Kyrgyzstan gained independence, Stamov devoted nearly two decades to researching the history of the Kyrgyz people, focusing particularly on the period from the 16th century onward. Drawing on this research, he wrote the historical novel *Khan Teyish*. After his death, his family published his complete works in a 12-volume edition.

Novel

The Khan Teyish: The Dzungar-Oirat Invasion (Khan Teyish: Jungar-Oirot Japyrygy) was first published in 2009 in Bishkek by Biyiktik Publishing House. A later edition was published in 2012. The novel consists of four parts and is approximately 800 pages long.

Across its four parts, the novel depicts the resistance of the Kyrgyz and Kazakhs against the Oirat-Dzungar invasions.

The first part portrays the deeds and resistance of Er Eshim, whose struggle brings Kyrgyz and Kazakh warriors together against the Oirat forces.

The second part follows Chaa Biy, whose actions contribute to the defense, unity, and survival of the Kyrgyz people during the continuing Oirat-Dzungar threat.

The third part focuses on Khan Teyish and Talkan Biy, depicting their efforts to defend the Kyrgyz and cooperate with the Kazakhs against Dzungar expansion.

The fourth part centers on Er Koshoy and Bishkek Baatyr, continuing the resistance of the Kyrgyz and Kazakhs against Dzungar power.

Background

In the foreword to *The Khan Teyish: The Dzungar-Oirat Invasion (Khan Teyish: Jungar-Oirot Japyrygy)*, Asanbek Stamov explains the purpose behind the novel and the sources he used in developing it. He states that he spent five years writing the novel, after studying and collecting historical materials. He describes the period of the Oirat-Dzungar invasions as a largely unwritten period in Kyrgyz literature, noting that few writers had attempted to address this period in a major literary work.

Stamov refers to historical works by scholars including Vasily Bartold, Nikita Bichurin, and Gerhard Friedrich Müller. He also draws on *sanjyra*, the Kyrgyz genealogical tradition concerning ancestry and lineage, as well as pieces of Kyrgyz oral literature. These sources provided him with historical, genealogical, and traditional material for the novel.

Stamov compares his approach with Tologon Kasymbekov's *Syngan Kylych (The Broken Sword)*. He describes *The Broken Sword* as a historical novel written during the Soviet period, while *The Khan Teyish*, written after Kyrgyzstan gained independence, incorporates romance, lyricism, fantasy, and elements of oral literature. He considers these features important differences between the two works and their approaches to historical fiction.

Stamov also emphasizes that the novel was not written for the benefit of particular political groups or individuals. He dedicates the work to the spirit and memory of his ancestors and stresses his intention to write about the historical past without political censorship or political influence.

The title *The Khan Teyish* reflects Stamov's interpretation of Teyish's historical significance. In the foreword, he argues that Teyish was the only officially crowned Kyrgyz khan in the preceding six or seven centuries, placing his coronation around the 1670s. This interpretation forms the basis for Stamov's decision to place Khan Teyish at the center of the novel's title.

MAIN CHARACTERS

Bishkek Baatyr — legendary Kyrgyz warrior, military leader, swordsman, and namesake of Bishkek city.

Chaa Biy — statesman, warrior, strategist, and unifying figure.

Khan Teyish — Kyrgyz khan and defender of Kyrgyz unity.

Koshoy Biy — warrior, protector, and important political figure.

Er Eshim (Esim Khan) — Kazakh khan, military leader, and defender of his people.

Galdan Boshugtu Khan — powerful Dzungar ruler and major antagonist.

Tsewang Rabtan — Galdan's nephew and successor.

Tooke Khan (Tauke Khan) — important Kazakh ruler and ally of the Kyrgyz.

Ably Khan — important Kazakh ruler whose early life connects him with the Kyrgyz struggle.

Boom — Galdan's daughter whose relationship with Koshoy becomes important to the story.

Kokum Biy — Kyrgyz biy, warrior, and important ally of Er Eshim.

Manap Biy — Kyrgyz biy and military commander.

Talkan Biy — Kyrgyz biy, adviser, and father of Koshoy.

Baybolot — Kyrgyz warrior and respected horseman with a Kalmyk mother.

Nysha — skilled warrior, linguist, and military student.

Kojomberdi — Kyrgyz warrior and commander.

Jangir Sultan — Kazakh sultan and ally of the Kyrgyz.

Tursun Khan — ruler of Tashkent and rival of Er Eshim.

Aibokon — Oirat woman who becomes Er Eshim's wife.

Sabyrkan — sister of Er Eshim, wife of Kokum Biy and Mother of Khan Teyish
Anubaiyr — daughter of a Kalmyk leader and wife of Baitik.
Alyiman — wife of Chaa Biy and an important figure in his family life.
Aichechek — Tuba woman who becomes Chaa Biy's wife.
Janyl Myrza — noble Kyrgyz warrior woman known for her strength and independence.
Galdan Tseren — son and successor of Tsewang Rabtan.
Galdama — Dzungar warrior who kills Jangir Sultan.
Afaq Khoja — religious and political figure of Kashgar who becomes connected with Galdan.
Johan Renat — Swedish soldier and skilled craftsman who serves the Dzungars.

SYNOPSIS

Er Eshim and the Rise of the Kyrgyz Leaders

Er Eshim, the famous Kazakh khan, gathers Kyrgyz, Kypchak, and Kazakh leaders to confront the growing Kalmyk-Oirat threat. He leads the resistance and rides to war, leaving Tursun Khan to govern in his absence. During the campaign, Er Eshim and his commanders defeat the larger Oirat army through mountain warfare, ambushes, rain, and clever tactics.

Tugol, a wealthy Kyrgyz man, gives Er Eshim the young horse Sharpkula, who becomes his legendary warhorse. While Er Eshim is away, Tursun betrays him, seizes power, and abuses his people. With help from the mysterious Sharapat, Er Eshim discovers the betrayal, returns, rescues his family, and defeats Tursun.

Er Eshim's sister Sabyrkan marries Kokum Biy, who becomes Khan of Tashkent. Kokum is later poisoned by Anubaiyr, an Oirat woman seeking revenge. Sabyrkan flees to Aksy with her son Teyish, mourns Kokum, and considers her future.

Chaa Biy's Journey, Leadership, and Legacy

After Kokum's memorial feast, Chaa Biy receives the Aknur diamond, a gift from Er Eshim symbolizing unity and blessing for the Kyrgyz people. He secretly hides the real diamond and sends a false one into a lake.

Chaa Biy travels through Siberia, the Altai, Yenisei, and northern regions, seeking Kyrgyz communities and encouraging them to return to Central Asia. He meets Erinchi, son of Altan Khan, and helps establish cooperation against the Dzungar Oirats. Among the Tuba people, he marries Aichechek and has a son, Tagaiberdi.

Returning to the Kazakh lands, Chaa Biy joins Er Eshim and Jangir Sultan in war against the Dzungars. Jangir Sultan is killed, and the Kyrgyz and Kazakhs later defeat the Dzungars.

Chaa Biy returns to the Ala-Too Mountains and works to unite the Kyrgyz tribes. He develops agriculture, irrigation, metalworking, and gold washing in the Chüy Valley. Before his death, he passes leadership to his sons. At seventy, he marries Gulaiym and has a son, Tata.

Khan Teyish and Talkan Biy

The Kyrgyz tribes Jetigen and Kushchu clash after a young couple elopes. Baiseyit proves his courage by rescuing Talkan Biy's daughter Toktokan from a snake-filled pit and becomes Talkan's chief warrior. Toktokan later marries Baiseyit.

Khan Teyish is formally inaugurated as khan under the laws of Er Eshim. He appoints Alakchyn as vizier and Talkan as chief adviser. Chaa Biy gives Teyish the legendary sword of Timur, while wealthy Kyrgyz contribute horses, livestock, and gold to the khanate treasury. Teyish also strengthens ties with the Kazakh ruling family through the marriage of his daughter Shirin to Ablay.

Teyish confronts the warrior woman Janyl Myrza and arranges her marriage after defeating her in horseback archery. Talkan later marries Chachykan.

Galdan Boshugtu Khan conquers Kashgar and threatens the Kyrgyz lands. Teyish prepares for war, but Galdan eventually invades Karkyra. After fierce battles and betrayal by some Bugu leaders, Teyish refuses Galdan's demands for territory and dies defending his people. Galdan takes control of northern Kyrgyz lands.

Talkan leads his people south, while disease kills eighteen members of his family. Akkuiruk later dies from a snakebite, and Markashka becomes ruler of the Kyrgyz lands.

Er Koshoy and Bishkek Baatyr

In 1696, the Dzungar state fell into chaos as Galdan faced defeat by the Qing and opposition from his nephew, Tsewang Rabtan. Galdan died in 1697, and Tsewang Rabtan became ruler. The Dzungars strengthened their control over Kyrgyz and Kazakh lands. Er Koshoy fought them, made peace with Markashka, and became a respected Kyrgyz Biy.

Young warriors Bishkek and Nysha returned from abroad with knowledge of weapons, military skills, and enemy languages. The Kazakhs sought Russian protection after Tooke Khan's death, while Tsewang Rabtan strengthened the Dzungar state through agriculture, migration, and skilled craftsmen. Koshoy later discovered that Galdan, Boom's son, was his own son, but Galdan disappeared.

The Dzungars then launched a devastating invasion of the Kazakhs. Bishkek rescued the young Kairat, the future Ablay Khan. After Rabtan's death in 1727, Kyrgyz and Kazakh forces united against the weakened Dzungars. Bishkek captured their banner, and by 1731 Manchu forces destroyed Dzungar power in the eastern regions, including the Orkhon River basin.

SCENES

Part 1. Er Eshim and the Rise of the Kyrgyz Leaders

The Rise of the Dynasties

The Rise of the Qing Dynasty Nurhaci was a powerful 17th-century chieftain from Manchuria who united the divided Jurchen tribes. In 1619, Manchuria and Mongolia were brought together under his growing state. After Nurhaci's death, his son Abakai became ruler and proclaimed himself emperor. In 1644, his forces entered Beijing and established the Qing dynasty, China's final imperial dynasty.

The Rise of the Dzungar Khanate Dzungaria was the homeland of the Oirat Mongols, including the Kalmyks and other Oirat tribes. The Oirats were powerful Mongol clans with a long history of conflict with the Kyrgyz. After the death of Timur, the Oirat leader Esen Taishi sought to restore the empire of Genghis Khan. In 1449, he invaded China and defeated the army of the Ming dynasty, even capturing the Chinese emperor. After Esen's death, however, the Oirat tribes became divided and scattered. Later, Khara Khula, hereditary Taishi of the powerful Choros tribe, united the Oirat clans. After his death in 1634, his son Batur Taishi, known as Erdeni Batur, succeeded him. He continued his father's work and founded the powerful Dzungar Khanate.

The Dzungar Khanate Takes Shape Oirat rulers traditionally used the title *Khong Tayiji*, meaning "Crown Prince," rather than Khan. In the 1630s, Erdeni Batur was given the title *Batur Khong Tayiji*, meaning "Hero Crown Prince," by the Fifth Dalai Lama. Erdeni Batur Taishi built a powerful state that stood as a rival to Manchuria. He did not build a great capital city, but he developed agriculture, irrigation, and metalworking, strengthening the Dzungar economy and army. In 1640, the Oirats and the Khalkha Mongols made peace and formed an alliance. Together, they issued the Mongol–Oirat Code, a set of laws designed to unite the nomadic Mongol tribes and defend them against outside threats, especially the growing power of the Qing dynasty.

Er Eshim

The Gathering at Talas In the Talas region, the nobles and tribal leaders gathered to discuss the growing Kalmyk–Oirat threat. Among them were Tashkent Khan Tursun and his brother, Shamei Sultan; Kazybek of the Kypchak tribes; Kokum Biy, Manap Biy, and Chaa Biy from the Solto and Sarybagysh tribes; and other leaders from Andijan, Aksy, and the surrounding regions. The gathering was led by Er Eshim, the Kyrgyz–Kypchak and Kazakh khan. Among the Turkic peoples, the title *Er* was given to a warrior who defended his land and people, as in the name Er Manas. Er Eshim opened the council by speaking about the Kalmyk–Oirat invasion and asking how they would resist the coming attacks. The nobles answered with one voice:

they would never surrender without a fight. They would defend their lands and people for as long as they could.

Er Eshim Rides to War Er Eshim rose before the gathered nobles. “I am going to war. I thank you for choosing me as the khan of the Kyrgyz-Kypchak and Kazakh people. I am a khan who is willing to die for his people.” He mounted his horse and rode away. He was a giant of a man—tall, broad, and powerful. In the saddle, he looked fierce and almost immortal. While Er Eshim went to war, the khanate would be governed by Khan Tursun. The people watched him depart and called after him: “You are the only man who can stop this disaster!” Then Er Eshim rode toward the coming battle, while the people blessed his journey and prayed for his safe return.

Sharpkula, Er Eshim’s Horse

Tugol and His Brother Kurtka There was once a wealthy Kyrgyz man named Tugol. Among the nomads, wealth was measured in cattle, and Tugol owned great herds of horses, sheep, lambs, and goats. Yet Tugol was not greedy. Poor and weary travelers could come to his herd and take what they needed to eat. He was known as a just and honest man, and his wife was equally generous. Tugol had a younger brother named Kurtka. Unlike his brother, Kurtka owned only one horse and made his living by driving away other people’s livestock, especially their horses. Tugol disapproved of his brother’s ways. To steal from others was wrong, both according to Islam and the traditional code of the nomads.

Tugol Leaves for Talas One day, Tugol invited his brother Kurtka and his men to his home. Kurtka had gathered a small band of followers who helped him in his raids. Tugol welcomed them with a lavish feast. He offered his brother cattle, gold, silver, and bags of gifts. But Kurtka refused them all. He wanted only one thing: a young horse that he believed would grow into a great warhorse. For the nomads, a horse was more than property. It was a source of wealth, honor, freedom, and reputation. Tugol refused to give the young horse to his brother. After that, Kurtka’s sons continued to harass Tugol, threatening his family, his herds, and his way of life. At last, Tugol had no choice but to leave his homeland and move with his people toward the Talas Valley.

Er Eshim and the Young Horse In the Talas Valley stood the court of Er Eshim Khan. When the khan heard that Tugol had moved into the valley, he wondered why Tugol had not come to his court with the customary gifts. At the court was a wise man whom the Kyrgyz called a *synchy*—a critic, observer, and keen judge of people and events. He told the khan that Tugol had not come out of disrespect; he had moved because he was under pressure from his brother’s family. Er Eshim then rode to Tugol’s camp himself. “My khan,” Tugol said, “all my cattle belongs to you.” He welcomed the khan generously and presented him with many horses and cattle. But the *synchy* quietly advised Er Eshim to ask about the young horse. Tugol could not refuse his khan. He gave him the horse, which was named Sharpkula—the magnificent steed that would become known as Er Eshim’s horse.

The War of Er Eshim and Ajaan

Er Eshim and the Rainmakers Er Eshim rode to meet the Kalmyk-Oirat raid with his trusted commanders—Chaa Biy, Kokum Biy, Manap Biy, and other Kyrgyz warriors. According to Kyrgyz tradition, warriors sometimes relied on *jaichys*, men believed to possess the power to call upon the weather. Before the battle, Er Eshim asked his *jaichy* to bring rain. When the Kalmyk-Oirat army, said to number around 30,000 warriors, approached, Er Eshim divided his forces into many small groups and sent them through different hills, mountain passes, and hidden paths. The Kalmyk-Oirat commander, Ajaan, saw the scattered Kyrgyz groups and thought they were too small to pose a serious threat.

The Rain Falls Then the rain came. Rain poured down upon the Kalmyk-Oirat army. The ground became wet and difficult to cross, and the 30,000 warriors could not properly set up their tents or establish their camp. The great army was forced to struggle in the open as the rain continued to fall. While the enemy was struggling in the rain, Kokum Biy led his warriors in an attack on the section of the army responsible for food supplies. His men captured the food and other provisions, leaving the large Kalmyk-Oirat army without

the supplies it needed. The Kyrgyz had turned the mountains, the rain, and the wide steppe itself into weapons against their enemy.

The Ancient Tactics of Er Eshim The Kyrgyz from the Tekes Valley, in what is now Xinjiang, attacked the horses of the Kalmyk-Oirat army, striking quickly and disappearing. Ajaan thought they were merely horse thieves. Meanwhile, the forces of Chaa Biy, Kokum Biy, and Manap Biy remained hidden. When the Kalmyk-Oirats moved closer, the Kyrgyz suddenly attacked and defeated them. Ajaan asked, “Who is their leader?” He was told, “Er Eshim.” Ajaan was surprised that the Kyrgyz used *abyla*, an ancient method of warfare said to have been inherited from Genghis Khan. After the mass battle, both sides met face to face, and the Kyrgyz won again.

The Search for Ajaan Rumors spread that Ajaan had fled the battlefield and that Er Eshim had killed him. Other rumors claimed that Er Eshim himself had died in the fighting. Er Eshim did not return from the campaign until he had completed his mission. Yet Ajaan was never found, and no one could say with certainty what had happened to either man.

Tursun Khan’s Betrayal While Er Eshim was away, he had entrusted his court and the khanate to Tursun Khan. Tursun betrayed that trust. Instead of protecting Er Eshim’s people, he attacked the khanate, imprisoned its people, including women and children, and forced the wives of fallen warriors into marriage.

The Return of Er Eshim Er Eshim returned from the campaign with his trusted warriors—Chaa Biy, Manap Biy, Kokum Biy, and the other Kyrgyz warriors who had ridden with him. When they arrived at the village, the people rejoiced at their safe return. The warriors slaughtered a goat, marking the return of their leader from the dangerous campaign.

The village was led by Jarylgan Biy. His wife welcomed Er Eshim and performed a traditional purification ceremony called *alas*. She used fir-tree leaves to purify him, waving them around him as she recited the ritual. She then circled a cup of water around Er Eshim’s head and poured the water away. This was a ritual believed to cleanse a person and protect him from the evil eye. Horses were slaughtered for the feast, and *kymyz* was served as the people celebrated the warriors’ return.

Aibokon, the Young Oirat Woman

The Mysterious Young Woman Everyone admired the beautiful young woman sitting beside Er Eshim. She was about seventeen years old. From the way she sat and carried herself inside the yurt, it was clear that she was not Kyrgyz. Yet her beauty immediately caught everyone’s attention. She had a fair complexion, dark eyes framed by long eyelashes, and a graceful, healthy figure. She wore a long dress with a jacket and a red scarf, while her two long braids added to her charm. She and Er Eshim looked like a happy couple. She sat close to him, leaning slightly toward him as they quietly shared the celebration. Her name was Aibokon, and she was the daughter of an Oirat leader.

The Oirat Women Warriors One day, while the Kyrgyz warriors were lying in ambush, they encountered several Kalmyk-Oirat warriors. The Oirats challenged them to fight face to face. Two Kyrgyz warriors accepted the challenge, but both were defeated. After the fight, the Kyrgyz discovered something unexpected: the five Oirat warriors were young women. The two Kyrgyz warriors were deeply ashamed that they had been defeated by young women.

One of the young women then approached Er Eshim and said, “I want to become your wife. I admired your victory over Ajaan, the hero of the Oirats.” The Kyrgyz biys, however, declared that the young women could be taken only as war captives, not as lawful wives.

Aibokon’s Oath Kazybek Biy warned Er Eshim, “You cannot marry a Kalmyk girl. She is a warrior. One day, she may kill you. She came here with a mission.” Then Aibokon, the young woman, suddenly spoke in Kyrgyz. “My father is Oirat, but my mother is Kyrgyz. She was taken captive from the Altai region.” She told them that her mother had preserved the traditions of the Altai Kyrgyz and had taught them to her. Aibokon promised to swear on bread and salt, according to the custom of the Altai Kyrgyz, to prove that she spoke the truth. She also promised to cross fire as a sign of her true intentions. “My mother urged me

to escape and go to the Kyrgyz,” she said. After hearing her words and seeing her willingness to follow Kyrgyz customs, Er Eshim accepted her oath and married Aibokon.

Er Eshim Wanted to Return to His Homeland

The Journey to Talas That evening, Er Eshim told the people about the heroic deeds of his horse, Sharpkula, during the battle, along with other stories from the campaign. His wife, Aibokon, sat beside him and listened. The Kyrgyz celebrated the safe return of their heroes. They recited passages from the epic Manas and shared stories of the battle late into the evening. The next morning, Er Eshim wanted to return to his homeland and see his court in the Talas Valley. At first light, they began their journey toward Talas. As they traveled, Aibokon spoke privately to Kokum Biy, one of Er Eshim’s most trusted commanders and his vizier. “One of my friends, Anubaiyr, has fallen in love with you,” she said. “She is very beautiful, and her mother is Kyrgyz. Like me, she is the daughter of a Kalmyk leader. Would you consider marrying her?” Kokum Biy hesitated.

Kokum Biy’s Secret Love Kokum Biy did not know how to reply to Aibokon’s suggestion. Instead, he began singing old songs of love. Aibokon listened carefully and understood that his heart belonged to someone else. Kokum Biy was in love with Sabyrkan, the sister of Er Eshim. She was a widow, although she was still only in her early twenties. After her husband died, Er Eshim brought her back to his home and cared for her. Over time, Kokum Biy fell deeply in love with her, and Sabyrkan loved him as well. Er Eshim knew about their relationship and trusted Kokum Biy completely. Yet he had once told him, “If you marry my sister, you will no longer be my commander.”

Sharapat, the Mysterious Woman Er Eshim finally reached his homeland, but found only empty land. Silence lay over the grey hills and open steppe. There were no yurts, no people, and no cattle. He feared the worst. He thought Khan Tursun, whom he had entrusted with the land, had been killed by enemies, and that his homeland had fallen to invasion. Then Er Eshim met an old man. The old man told him that he owned the black mare, a mother of Sharpkula horse. He then began to tell Er Eshim a strange story. “One day, I wanted to see how you, Er Eshim, were going to raid the enemy. I rode to a nearby hill, and there I saw a yurt. Inside was a beautiful woman named Sharapat...”

Sharapat Reveals the Betrayal Sharapat told Mergenbay that her son Kaiypberdi would one day become a khan. But she regretted that Mergenbay had revealed their secret.

Then Sharapat suddenly spoke of another secret. She said that she was a mysterious woman with a special power, and told him that Khan Tursun had betrayed his friend Er Eshim. Tursun had killed many of Er Eshim’s people, married his youngest wife, and now lived in a fortress near Lake Issyk-Kul. Er Eshim’s first and second wives had refused to marry Tursun. They were guarding the yards of the fortress.

“You must meet them,” Sharapat said. “They will help you. When Tursun is asleep, you must kill him.” Er Eshim suddenly tried to raise his head, but Sharapat had disappeared.

Er Eshim Returns to Issyk-Kul Er Eshim and Mergenbay reached Lake Issyk-Kul, where Er Eshim’s army was waiting. He found his wives living in captivity under Khan Tursun. They entered Tursun’s residence disguised as merchants from Kashgar and gave gold and silver to the guards. Tursun gladly welcomed the wealthy visitors because he loved riches. Once inside, Er Eshim’s warriors attacked the guards and prepared to kill Tursun. Tursun begged for mercy. Er Eshim ordered him to kill his brother, Shamei, and he obeyed. Then Er Eshim ordered Tursun to kill Narshaiym, once Er Eshim’s youngest wife. She begged for mercy, saying she had been forced to marry Tursun. Er Eshim stopped him. “A man must not kill a woman.”

The Punishment of Khan Tursun Tursun begged Er Eshim for mercy and asked that his head not be separated from his body. Er Eshim spared him that day. “You were my friend, but you betrayed me,” he said. “Tomorrow, I will punish you in public.” The next day, Khan Tursun and his wife, Narshaiym, once Er Eshim’s wife, were executed before the people. Tursun’s body was left for wild birds, while his head was buried in a Kalmyk cemetery. His arm bone was placed upon the grave. Among the ancient Kyrgyz, khans were buried in hidden places so enemies could not find their bodies. Placing an arm bone on the grave meant that his descendants would never again become khans.

The Rise of Kokum Er Eshim returned to Talas and held a great celebration. His sister had fled to the Chatkal region with her brother, Jangir. Er Eshim brought her back, and soon Sabyrkan and Kokum were married. Kokum then became Khan of Tashkent. Baitik, a Kazakh warrior, married Anubaiyr, the Oirat woman and Aibokon's friend. Baitik became Kokum's commander. Later, Er Eshim moved to another region. Kokum ruled the Tashkent Khanate for five prosperous years. But prosperity brought envy. Some people turned against Kokum and tried to set his own commander, Baitik, against him.

Anubaiyr's Revenge Anubaiyr, the Oirat woman and wife of Baitik, secretly held a grudge against Kokum because he had once refused to marry her. She also hated Sabyrkan, the woman Kokum loved and later married. Anubaiyr became close to Sabyrkan, while Baitik and Kokum became trusted friends. During a great celebration, Anubaiyr secretly poured poison into Kokum Khan's wine. Soon he lost consciousness. The people believed he had simply become drunk, and Kokum died. Later, the Kyrgyz discovered that Anubaiyr had poisoned him. They attacked the Kazakh warriors in the palace, led by Baitik. But the Kazakhs fought back and began to win. Sabyrkan fled with her young son, Teyish. She first went to the Chatkal region and then to Aksy, in what is now southern Kyrgyzstan, where her husband's Bagysh clan relatives lived.

Sabyrkan's Year of Mourning After Kokum's death, Sabyrkan spent the year of mourning in the Aksy region. She had grown up in Oluya Ata, in what is now Almaty, Kazakhstan, and deeply mourned her husband. She remembered how much Kokum had loved her and how he had been the best man she had ever known. She often remembered the romantic songs and poems he had sung for her. During the mourning year, she spoke little to anyone and never attended celebrations, following the old custom. After the final mourning feast, she would be free as a widow to decide her future. As the year came to an end, Sabyrkan began thinking about her own future and, above all, the future of her young son, Teyish.

Sabyrkan Considers Her Future According to custom, the widow of a famous khan was often remarried by relatives or another respected man. As the end of her mourning year approached, Sabyrkan began to wonder who might propose to her. She thought of Manap Biy, an older and highly respected leader of the northern Kyrgyz and a descendant of Tagay Biy. She had heard rumors that Manap might soon be chosen as khan. But she worried that if he married her, her son Teyish's future might become uncertain. Then she thought of Chaa Biy. He was a respected leader, but he already had a young and beautiful wife, Alyiman, known for her fashionable clothes and skill as a craftswoman. Sabyrkan believed Alyiman would never accept another woman as her husband's wife. There were other men who might be interested in her. Sabyrkan was the sister of the legendary Er Eshim, and her name carried great respect among the Kyrgyz.

Sabyrkan and Nurmanbet Sabyrkan considered many men, but only Manap Biy seemed worthy of her. One day, while walking alone, Sabyrkan was singing a song her late husband, Kokum, had dedicated to her. Suddenly, a wild pig appeared, frightening her. She ran, but Nurmanbet, her brother-in-law, quickly came to her rescue and protected her from the animal. "Sister-in-law, please do not be so sad," Nurmanbet said. "We cannot bring our brother back, but we want you to remain here with us." Sabyrkan replied, "After the final mourning feast, I will be a free woman. My brother Er Eshim will decide whether I stay here or leave. But I cannot leave my son, Teyish. He is the future khan."

Sabyrkan Chooses Nurmanbet Sabyrkan had begun to notice her brother-in-law, Nurmanbet. He was strong, handsome, and younger than she was. According to nomadic custom, she could marry him. At first, the difference in age troubled her, but she soon thought, "Age does not matter." She began to seriously consider Nurmanbet as her future husband and felt that he cared for her as well. One day, Nurmanbet told her that he would marry her if she agreed. Sabyrkan had several conditions. "First, you must care for Teyish and raise him as your own son. Second, you must not marry another woman after me, even though you have been married before." Nurmanbet agreed to all her conditions.

Chaa Biy's Visit Sabyrkan had one more condition for Nurmanbet. "If one day you wish to take another, younger wife, I will tell you when the time is right. Until then, you must not marry another woman." She also told him, "My brother may want to take me back to his home, but I am a free woman, and I will decide my own future. If anything happens, however, I will tell you, and you will be responsible for me." Just before the memorial feast, Chaa Biy arrived with one hundred men. He said he had come to honor Kokum and

visited his memorial, which reminded him of the Mausoleum of Manas. Later, Chaa Biy had a long private conversation with Sabyrkan. Everyone understood that they were discussing her future and whom she might marry.

Part 2. Chaa Biy's Journey, Leadership, and Legacy

Kokum's Memorial Feast

The Preparations The memorial feast for Kokum was held in the middle of summer. Several hundred yurts were set up, and hundreds of people came to honor his memory. Sabyrkan's brother, Er Eshim, could not attend. He sent his son, Jangir Sultan, a young warrior who had recently helped resist an attack by Batur Taishi. Manap Biy led the gathering, giving orders from the main yurt. Everyone was careful to prevent arguments, scandals, or fights during the feast. Warriors were also waiting in ambush in the nearby hills in case trouble broke out. In every yurt, horse meat along with Kyrgyz handmade horse-meat sausages, made from the horse's intestines, were considered a special delicacy.

The Mourning Yurts The tables were filled with sugar crystals, candies, dried fruits, and Chinese black tea. Russian samovars stood boiling, while the finest kymyz from different regions was served to the guests. There were twelve mourning yurts, each marked by a red mourning flag edged with a thin black line. Men entering the yurts often wept loudly, while women sang laments for the dead. Skilled lament singers had been invited for the occasion, but Sabyrkan herself also sang for her beloved husband, Kokum. After all the guests had arrived and the mourning ceremonies were completed, the atmosphere changed. The mourning ended, and the traditional nomadic games began.

The Games and the Horse Race The lament singers improvised songs about Kokum's life and fame. Then the traditional horse games began: Er Enish, wrestling on horseback; Er Saiysh, spear fighting between riders; Jamby Atmai, shooting at a target from horseback; Kurosh, wrestling; and horse racing. The prizes for the horse race were offered by Jangir Sultan, Sabyrkan's nephew. He presented several bags of gold to Manap Biy. When the race began, Sharpkula, Er Eshim's famous horse, won. During the honorable dinner, Jangir Sultan was offered a choice between Chinese and Russian vodka. He said, "The Russian Empire wants to cooperate with us, so I prefer Russian vodka."

The vodka was served by a sixteen-year-old girl named Baktygul. Jangir Sultan thanked her and gave her a golden ring. Young women were usually not involved in such dinners, but the Kyrgyz nobles had secretly chosen Baktygul for the Kazakh sultan.

Sabyrkan Is Free to Remarry When the feast was over, Sabyrkan's mourning clothes were removed, and she was dressed in new clothes and a new elechek, the traditional Kyrgyz headdress worn by married women. Jangir Sultan then spoke to the gathering. "I came with a special mission. My aunt, my father's sister Sabyrkan, is now free to marry. If anyone wishes to marry her, let him speak." Manap Biy replied, "Sabyrkan is the mother of Teyish, the son of a khan. Her late husband, Kokum, had brothers, so she may marry Nurmanbet, Kokum's brother. According to our nomadic custom and law, a widow should remain under the protection of her husband's tribe."

The Bride Price The weddings of Sabyrkan and Nurmanbet, and Jangir Sultan and Baktygul, began after the feast. The Kyrgyz nobles then turned to Jangir Sultan and asked about the bride price. Sharpkula, Jangir Sultan's horse, had won the great race, and Jangir himself had offered the prizes. Now he carried a full bag of gold. "You are a sultan of noble rank," the Kyrgyz nobles told him. "Your bride price should match your status and your wealth. Our girl is worth the very best." The gathering waited to see what bride price Jangir Sultan would offer for Baktygul.

The Dispute over Kokum's death

The Kun, the Traditional Compensation After the wedding, Jangir Sultan knew that the Kyrgyz were demanding *kun*, the traditional compensation for Kokum's death, because he had been killed by Anubaiyr, the wife of Baitik, Kokum's Kazakh commander. Jangir Sultan tried to settle the matter peacefully. He said, "These are dangerous times. The Kyrgyz and Kazakhs should not fight each other while the Dzhungar-

Oirats are attacking us and other empires surround our lands.” The nobles asked Boru, a respected man, to calculate the proper kun, but he hesitated again and again. Then Chaa Biy, one of the wisest and strongest nobles, spoke: “A khan is a khan, but his death cannot be measured in compensation. He was killed by one Kazakh, not by all Kazakhs. Kokum’s time had come, and one day he would have died anyway. If we keep thinking only about lawsuits, fighting, and compensation, the Kyrgyz and Kazakhs will never stand together.”

Boru Settles in Tashkent Chaa Biy proposed that Boru settle in Tashkent, the seat of the khan’s court, where he would serve as khan in turn. Tashkent was a shared court for both the Kazakh and Kyrgyz people, and the people supported the decision. Jangir Sultan was very pleased that the dispute had been settled peacefully. He also decided to take two of his close friends with him to the Kazakh lands. After the feast in the Aksy Valley of southern Kyrgyzstan, they set out together. They would first travel to Tashkent to settle Boru there, and then continue toward the Kazakh lands. Chaa Biy went in another direction, leaving for the Chüy Valley.

Aknur Diamond

The Blessing of the Aknur Diamond When leaving, Jangir Sultan gave Chaa Biy a precious diamond stone. He explained that the diamond had once been part of the treasury of Er Eshim, who had specifically asked Jangir Sultan to present it to Chaa Biy. Jangir Sultan warned that no one should ever attempt to steal the diamond, which was called Aknur, meaning “White Ray.” He declared that anyone who tried to take it would face severe punishment. Er Eshim had given this diamond as a gift to the kind, magnanimous and noble Kyrgyz people. He emphasized that it should never be regarded as a bride price or payment for marriage. Rather, the diamond was a gift to the entire Kyrgyz people—a symbol of respect, unity, and blessing for generations to come.

The Secret of the Aknur Diamond Chaa Biy was riding and thinking about what to do with the diamond. A woman said to him, “You do not know what to do with the diamond. This is a blessing for you. Er Eshim gave it to you because he knew you as a trustworthy, kind, and honest man. “When the diamond is in your hands, some people, even your relatives, may envy you. Er Eshim gave this diamond to serve as an omen for the Kyrgyz people to remain united and strong.”

The Diamond Is Taken to the Mountain The woman gave Chaa Biy an artificial diamond and said, “There is a big difference between an authentic diamond and an artificial one. Please throw this artificial diamond into the lake, claiming that this diamond cannot be kept in our hands and that it should be kept safely at the bottom of the lake. Tell the people that it will be under the lake. Your enemies will hear this. “The real diamond you should take to the high mountain rock, where there is a hidden treasure. You should hide it.” Then the woman disappeared.

Chaa Biy

Chaa Biy and the Geopolitical Situation The Dzhungar Oirats were the main threat to the Kyrgyz at that time. They had already invaded Kazakh lands, and the Kazakhs were resisting them. Chaa Biy was thinking about the geopolitical situation. The Russian Empire was nearby and had begun settling villages and establishing fortresses, while the Chinese Empire was also expanding its influence, and the Mongolian Khanate presented another challenge.

Chaa Biy traveled to Siberia and the Altai region, where he observed how the Russian Empire governed its lands. His other mission was to migrate the Kyrgyz who were living in the Altai region. One day, he met the son of Altan Khan, who invited Chaa Biy to become his friend.

The Alliance Against the Dzhungar Oirats Erinchi, the son of Altan Khan of the Mongols, invited Chaa Biy and told him that when Chaa Biy returned to the Kyrgyz lands, he should take Teyish, the son of Kokum, to Er Eshim so that he could grow up in the palace. Altan Khan also met with Chaa Biy and offered him a girl for marriage, but Chaa Biy refused. He then proposed political cooperation between the Kyrgyz and Kazakhs, especially with Er Eshim and Jangir Sultan, to fight against the Dzhungar Oirats. He asked Chaa Biy to deliver his message to them.

Chaa Biy's Journey to the Altai and Yenisei

Trip to the Altai and Yenisei Chaa Biy tried to persuade the Kyrgyz tribes living in the Altai region, the Tom River basin, and the Yenisei River basin to migrate to Central Asia. They called themselves Kyrgyz, but they had become assimilated into Russian culture and had adopted Christianity. Some of them offered fish to Chaa Biy, but the Kyrgyz did not eat the fish, considering it water worm. He also traveled through the Irtysh River basin, where he met some people who claimed to be descendants of the ancient Yenisei Kyrgyz. However, none of them wished to migrate to Central Asia.

Chaa Biy Visits the Doolos Chaa Biy then visited the Doolos, an ancient Kyrgyz tribe living along the Chulym River in the Ob River basin. They called themselves descendants of the ancient Kyrgyz, but they had also adopted Buddhism. Chaa Biy and his people asked the Doolos to move to the Ala-Too mountains. The Doolos hosted Chaa Biy and his people. At the same time, he received a message from his men that the Kyrgyz living in the Ala-Too mountains of present-day Kyrgyzstan were safe and sound.

Chaa Biy among the Chotur and Tuba People Chaa Biy and his people met a Chotur Kyrgyz man who was known as a bad man. He accompanied the Kalmyks, collected taxes from the Kyrgyz, and betrayed his own people. Chaa Biy captured him and ordered him to show the locations of the Kalmyk camps. Chaa Biy and his people then destroyed a Kalmyk camp. Afterward, Chaa Biy went to the Tuba (Tuva) people. Their leader, Berdikashka, tried to become friends with Chaa Biy. Berdikashka had a daughter named Aichechek. Chaa Biy learned that a young man loved Aichechek, and she loved him as well. The young man said that Berdikashka would not give his daughter to him because he was poor and not of noble status. He said that if Aichechek married another man, he would kill him and marry Aichechek.

Chaa Biy and Aichechek

Chaa Biy and Aichechek by the River The young men would often play with Aichechek when she came to the river to fetch water. They would send dried dung down the river, making her wait until it passed before she could draw water.

Chaa Biy also sat by the river, gathered some wildflowers, and sent them floating downstream. When Aichechek found the flowers, she thought the young men had sent them. Chaa Biy told her, "It was me. These flowers are my heart." The girl suddenly leaned her head against his chest. Afterward, her father, Berdikashka, wanted his daughter to marry Chaa Biy.

Chaa Biy's Dilemma and Aichechek's Proposal Chaa Biy regretted that he had begun to fall in love with the young woman, even though he already had the most beautiful and skillful wife in the region. Aichechek seemed to have feelings for him as well. Whenever he saw her, she would look at him. She even began visiting his yurt under the pretext of making tea, serving kymyz, and helping with other tasks. Chaa Biy did not know what to do. He realized that Aichechek had feelings for him. One day, she came to his bed and told him that her parents had sent her to spend the night with him. Chaa Biy said, "It is not right for you to come to a man's bed. If I do not marry you afterward, it will bring great shame upon you. Aichechek replied, "Even if I spend the night with you and you do not marry me, my father will announce that I was married to you and then divorced. There are many men who want to marry me."

Chaa Biy Left Aichechek According to the customs of the Tuba people, sending a young woman to a guest's bed was an official part of hospitality. Chaa Biy was surprised because, in Kyrgyz Muslim culture, it was considered inappropriate to send a woman to a guest's bed and would be regarded as a sin. Aichechek said, "Men of such status as you obviously deserve the best girls. Chaa Biy then sent Aichechek back to her yurt. He could not understand or accept such a custom. The next day, Chaa Biy spoke with Berdikashka and said that it was time for him to leave. He then asked for Aichechek's hand in marriage, but he set his own terms and conditions: Aichechek would have to convert to Islam. Her father agreed, and Chaa Biy married her. Aichechek gave birth to a son and named him Tagaiberdi, but Chaa Biy left the region.

The Battles

The War against Batur Taishi Chaa Biy returned from the Altai and Siberia and stayed with Er Eshim in the Kazakh lands for three years. Meanwhile, Batur Taishi was angered by the Russian Empire's conquest of Kyrgyz lands in the Altai and Siberia and its collection of taxes from the Kyrgyz, who were also paying taxes to the Dzhungars. Batur Taishi therefore invaded the lands of the Irtysh River basin, and the Kyrgyz living there came under his rule. Er Eshim became angry because he considered the Kyrgyz and Kazakhs to be brotherly peoples. He began preparing for war. When the war started, Chaa Biy helped Jangir Sultan lead the war.

The Death of Jangir Sultan Ten years passed. Then the Dzhungars attacked the Kazakhs. All the Kazakh warriors, including Jangir Sultan, and the Kyrgyz warriors led by Chaa Biy fought against the enemy. During the battle, the Oirats challenged the Kazakh and Kyrgyz warriors to fight one-on-one. They especially called for Jangir Sultan. Many Kyrgyz and Kazakhs wanted to fight in his place, but the Oirats demanded Jangir Sultan and Chaa Biy. Chaa Biy refused to fight Erinchi, the son of Altan Khan, with whom he had once become friends. He believed that breaking such a friendship was forbidden. Jangir Sultan then went into battle against Galdama, the Oirat warrior. They fought on horseback with spears. Suddenly, Galdama dropped his spear, drew a large knife, and struck Jangir Sultan in the kidney, where his armor did not cover him. Jangir Sultan was mortally wounded and died. Chaa Biy was deeply saddened. The whole army mourned the loss of Jangir Sultan.

The Revenge for Jangir Sultan The Kyrgyz and Kazakhs sought revenge for the death of Jangir Sultan. A great battle took place near the Irtysh River between the Kyrgyz and Kazakhs and the Dzhungars. Eshim, the father of Jangir Sultan, arrived with his army. The battle lasted three or four days, and the Kyrgyz and Kazakhs defeated the Dzhungars. Both sides lost many warriors. Blood flowed like water across the battlefield. Although the Dzhungars were defeated, the Kyrgyz and Kazakhs remained deeply saddened by the death of Jangir Sultan. His body was embalmed and buried near the mausoleum of Khoja Ahmed Yasawi.

Chaa Biy Returns to the Ala-Too Mountains

The Honest and Just Leader It was 1652. After that, Batur Taishi died of natural causes, and for the next 20–30 years, the Dzhungars did not attack the Kyrgyz or Kazakhs. Chaa Biy returned to the Ala-Too Mountains, the Kyrgyz lands. His mission now was to unite the Kyrgyz living across the lands of present-day Kyrgyzstan. Chaa Biy was known as a very honest and just leader. Once, he met a young man who had come from the southern parts of present-day Kyrgyzstan to kill the man who had married the girl he loved. The young man was from the Adigine tribe. Adigine was the brother of Tagay Biy. The descendants of Adigine lived in the southern parts of Kyrgyzstan, while the descendants of Tagay Biy lived in the northern parts. Chaa Biy was a descendant of Tagay Biy, so he could help people who sought justice, refuge, and protection.

Chaa Biy's Dream of His Three Sons One day, Chaa Biy had a dream. In his dream, he saw his three sons standing beside a great tree. One was at the top of the tree, another was embracing its trunk, and the third was standing at the bottom. Many people with different faces surrounded them. Then those people began pressing toward his sons. People started shouting, and the enemy began attacking. Suddenly, one warrior appeared and defeated all the enemies.

When Chaa Biy told his wife about the dream, he explained its meaning: "My son Talkan will become a leader of the people. The descendants of Joochalysch will be good farmers, close to the earth. The descendants of Bolokbai will be warriors."

The Passing of Authority When Chaa Biy was over fifty, he invited all the people to a great feast. There, he said: "I am growing old, and the time has come for me to pass my responsibilities to my sons. My eldest son, Talkan, will inherit my authority and lead the people. Bolokbai will become the commander and lead our warriors. Joochalysch will take responsibility for our household and agriculture. He will oversee the cultivation of wheat, the construction of irrigation canals, and all our property and livestock.

"My people, I ask you to support this decision and stand behind my sons." The people replied, "You are the father of our nation. We will always regard you as the leader of our people."

Chaa Biy's Work in Agriculture and Craftsmanship Chaa Biy was a good leader. In addition to his military deeds, he led agricultural work and oversaw the construction of irrigation canals in the Chuy Valley. These canals helped make the fertile Chuy Valley even more productive. He also supported metalworking and established workshops for smelting iron and producing various tools. Iron was purchased from the bazaars of Khiva, Samarkand, and Andijan. The Kyrgyz traded the skins of wild animals for iron, while Kyrgyz horses and lambs were highly valued in the bazaars. Chaa Biy was also involved in mining. He led the people in washing gold from the rivers by hand, where gold-bearing sands were found.

The Character of Chaa Biy By character, he was simple, honest, and kind. He had no arrogance and never looked down on others. He could play with children, and when he experienced emotional moments, he did not hide his tears. He also sang and played the komuz. Chaa Biy knew every family and knew which girls were beautiful. He would say that every girl should be happy in her marriage.

Chaa Biy's Admonition during the Irrigation Work During the irrigation work, some women and men would entertain themselves by drinking wine or other strong drinks. It was a communal activity, so both women and men took part. Chaa Biy invited these women and men and asked them, "What does the devil look like?" They did not understand his metaphor. He then admonished them to behave decently during the communal work and reminded them that having extramarital relations was a great sin.

Chaa Alysh and the Irrigation Canals After the canals were finished, Chaa Biy gathered the people for a great feast. Under his guidance, the people celebrated together. There was plenty of food and drink, and traditional games continued for several days. The people were pleased with Chaa Biy's work. The canal was named in his honor, Chaa Alysh, meaning "Chaa's Canal." The people were deeply grateful to him. Afterward, Chaa Biy also led the construction of other irrigation canals in different parts of the Chuy Valley. Chaa Biy was also a skilled craftsman, and his son Joochalysh made the wooden walls of yurts.

The Late Marriage

Chaa Biy Remembers Aichechek At seventy, Chaa Biy's wife, Alyiman, died. He became lonely, spending his days singing and remembering his mother, his wife, and those he had lost. He also remembered Aichechek, whom he had left in Siberia, and their son, Tagaiberdi, who had become a respected leader. One day, a mysterious woman told him to go to the Kegeti Gorge. There, he saw boys floating dung down the river, while a young girl waited helplessly for the water to clear. As Chaa Biy looked at her, she reminded him deeply of Aichechek. He gathered some wildflowers and gently set them afloat on the river. The flowers drifted toward the girl. When she picked them up, Chaa Biy approached her. She lowered her eyes shyly. "What are you carrying in your bucket?" he asked. "Flowers," she whispered. Chaa Biy smiled sadly and said, "Those flowers are my heart."

Chaa Biy's Marriage to Gulaiym Talkan Biy, Chaa Biy's eldest son, heard that his father was lonely and spent his days playing sad melodies on the komuz. He sent a friend to ask his father whether he wanted to marry again. Chaa Biy became angry and said, "I never asked him if he wanted to marry. I arranged his marriage for him, so he should not ask me if I want to marry. He should simply look for a suitable woman and arrange my marriage." Chaa Biy then told his son's friend about the girl he had met at the spring. Her name was Gulaiym, and her father's name was Chanai. Talkan arranged Chaa Biy's marriage to Gulaiym. The wedding was celebrated with all the traditional ceremonies and nomadic customs. Gulaiym later gave birth to a son, whom they named Tata, after the warrior who had once rescued Chaa Biy and Jangir Sultan from captivity. Once, Jangir Sultan had a dream and said that he would die and that Chaa Biy would marry again at the age of seventy. In the end, his dream came true.

Part 3. Khan Teyish and Talkan Biy

The Conflict between the Two Tribes

The two Kyrgyz tribes: Jetigen and Kushchu That spring, the two Kyrgyz tribes, Jetigen and Kushchu, fought against each other after a young man from the Jetigen tribe eloped with a girl from the Kushchu tribe. They were eventually caught. The young man from Jetigen was stripped naked and severely beaten. In response, the Jetigen tribe launched a fierce battle against the Kushchu. The Kushchu were supported by several other tribes, so the Jetigen were forced to flee toward Naryn and Kemin. Baiseyit, the leader of the Jetigen tribe, remained in the Chuy Valley. He wanted to seek asylum from Talkan Biy, but he did not dare approach him. He felt that it would be rude to ask Talkan Biy to take him in as his commander.

Baiseyit's Rescue of Toktokan Baiseyit found an opportunity to prove himself when Toktokan, Talkan Biy's five-year-old daughter, fell into a deep underground storage pit filled with snakes. Baiseyit went down and rescued the girl. He laid her on his chest, believing that if the snakes' poison entered her body, it should enter his own body instead.

At that time, Chaa Biy was still alive. After this act of courage, Baiseyit became Talkan Biy's chief warrior and close friend. Baiseyit later married Turnakan, a fierce warrior woman. During their wedding celebration, the two even battled each other as part of the festivities.

Toktokan's First Marriage Chaa Biy had once said that Toktokan would give birth to a great warrior. From a young age, she had been engaged to a boy from the Kytai tribe of the Talas region. When they reached the appropriate age, the wedding was arranged. During the wedding, Toktokan noticed that her groom behaved like a child. He kept praising the boorsok, saying, "This bread is so delicious. I have never tasted anything like it." During the wedding games, he also said, "Our moon has come to your land to look at the moon." Toktokan refused to marry him. Chaa Biy loved his granddaughter, so he returned the bride price and accepted her decision.

Toktokan and Baiseyit Later, Toktokan wanted to marry Baiseyit. Her mother told her, "You cannot. He already has a wife." But Chaa Biy said, "Baiseyit is a warrior. He can marry again." When Baiseyit's warrior wife heard that her husband was going to marry another woman, she became furious and broke everything inside the yurt. But when she learned that the new bride was Talkan Biy's daughter, she realized that it would be a great shame for her to reject her. She accepted Toktokan and prepared a separate yurt for her.

Khan Teyish

The Khan's Inauguration The Kyrgyz organized a grand ceremony for the inauguration of the new khan in the Talas region. All the Kyrgyz nobles and many honorable guests were invited. Teyish, the future khan, and Kazakh Khan Tooke were among the honored guests. Teyish had two sons, Akkochkor and Kanky, and a daughter named Shirin. Khan Tooke had a son named Ablay. According to nomadic custom, a special banner representing all the tribes was prepared, along with a ceremonial throne. Teyish and Khan Tooke admired both. Before the inauguration, a council was summoned to discuss the new government. The people proposed Talkan as the khan's assistant, or vizier, but Talkan refused. "The khan must choose his own assistant," he said. The council did not discuss the budget, army, weapons, or other expenses. Teyish listened carefully to every speech but, according to palace etiquette, did not interrupt.

The Crowning of Teyish Khan The laws of the new government were based on the old code proposed by Er Eshim. He taught that the people must obey the laws and rules of the land. If they respected the law and lived by it, he said, they would remain free and would never fall into slavery.

The next day, the inauguration of Teyish Khan began. Before the young khan was raised on the white felt, a white mare was slaughtered as a sacrifice. Then young men from different tribes lifted Teyish Khan onto the white felt and raised him high above the crowd. He was crowned and given the khan's ring and seal. They then carried him into the great white twelve-boarded yurt and seated him upon the khan's throne. The people gathered outside raised their voices together: "Allahu Akbar!"

The First Speech of Teyish Khan Tooke Khan and Talkan Biy stood on one side, while Chaa Biy, Saman, the wise elder, and Jarbang Baatyr stood beside Khan Teyish. Next to Teyish Khan's main banner, the other tribes also raised their own flags in front of the yurt. Teyish Khan began his first official speech: "Dear fellow men and women, I swear to be a just khan. I will do my best in the interests of my people and my land. Thank you for trusting me and choosing me as your khan. "Our army will follow the rules established by Er Eshim Khan: the leader of ten soldiers must obey the leader of one hundred; the leader of one hundred must obey the leader of one thousand; and the leader of one thousand must obey the leader of ten thousand." Teyish Khan then appointed regional leaders throughout the Kyrgyz lands. Alakchyn became his vizier, while Talkan became his chief adviser.

The Sword of Timur After Teyish Khan's speech, Chaa Biy stepped forward carrying an ancient sword. He presented it to Teyish Khan and said: "Teyish Khan, this sword once belonged to Timur. It is said that Timur had two swords. One was buried with him, while the other was given by his grandsons to the Kyrgyz warrior Konok. When your father, Kokum, was Khan of Tashkent, Konok presented this sword to him. After Kokum's death, your mother, Sabyrkan, gave it to me. Today, I return it to you. May you carry it with honor and defend your people." Sabyrkan began to cry as she watched Chaa Biy place the sword in her son's hands. According to tradition, Chaa Biy and Teyish Khan each kissed the sword as a sign of respect for its history and for the warriors who had carried it before them.

Gifts to the Treasury After the ceremony, Talkan stepped forward and addressed the assembled leaders: "Following my father Chaa Biy's decision, I give four thousand horses, five thousand sheep, cattle, camels, and yaks to the treasury of our khanate." Then Tugol's son, one of the wealthiest men among the Kyrgyz, came forward and made an even greater contribution. He gave five thousand horses, seven thousand sheep, cattle, camels, and bags of gold to the treasury. Inspired by their example, other wealthy men and tribal leaders also came forward. They contributed horses, sheep, cattle, camels, gold, and other valuable possessions to the treasury of the Kyrgyz Khanate.

The Marriage of Shirin and the Line of Ablay In the years that followed, Teyish Khan strengthened his ties with neighboring rulers through marriage. He married his daughter Shirin to Ablay, the son of Tooke Khan. Their marriage later connected the families of the Kyrgyz and Kazakh ruling houses. Much later, when Tooke Khan established diplomatic relations with the Russian Empire, Shirin gave birth to a son named Uvaliy. Uvaliy later had a son, Abylmansur. In honor of his grandfather, Abylmansur took the name Ablay and would eventually become famous among the Kazakhs as Ablay Khan. These events took place many years after the establishment of Teyish Khan's rule and became part of the later history of the region.

Janyl Myrza

The Complaint against Janyl Myrza After taking the throne, Teyish Khan began addressing disputes throughout the khanate. One day, a nobleman named Kudayan Bek came before him with a complaint about the warrior woman Janyl Myrza. He accused her of killing several nobles and renowned warriors and demanded that she be punished.

Teyish Khan replied that he would not allow the Kyrgyz tribes to fall into conflict at the beginning of his reign. With a touch of irony, he told Kudayan, "If you cannot bring her here yourself, perhaps you should go hunting in the mountains." He then sent his son, Akkochkor, to summon Janyl Myrza to the khan's court.

Janyl Myrza of Suusamyr Akkochkor came to Suusamyr village to visit Janyl Myrza, the legendary warrior woman who had killed many warriors, including famous heroes. Janyl Myrza was suspicious that Akkochkor might have brought an army with him, so she prepared herself for battle. But Akkochkor told her that he had come alone.

Janyl Myrza then asked why her people had not been invited to Teyish Khan's inauguration. Akkochkor explained that she had killed many warriors and noblemen, so her tribe had not been invited out of respect for those who had died. Janyl Myrza replied that it was their own fault that they had died. But her father reminded her that guests must always be welcomed. They slaughtered a horse and hosted Akkochkor with great honor. That evening, Akkochkor sang one of Janyl Myrza's own songs. The song was about Tulku, the warrior she had once loved. During a tribal conflict, Janyl Myrza had killed him with her bow and arrow. Hearing the song, she began to cry. She could not sleep that night. She lay awake thinking about her life

and everything she had done. She had begun to admire Akkochkor, not only as a young man but as a brave warrior.

The Challenge of Janyl Myrza The next morning, Janyl Myrza and Akkochkor went hunting together. While they rode across the open land, Akkochkor said to her, "You frighten people. Many are leaving their homes and moving to distant lands. We must unite the Kyrgyz tribes. You are a woman, and you should marry and have a child. That is my mission." Akkochkor then offered her a challenge. "We will compete in horseback archery. If you win, I will marry you. But if you lose, I will arrange a marriage for you." Janyl Myrza accepted the challenge, but she lost. Her people were not worried simply because she had lost the contest. They were sad because they felt they had lost some of their dignity and pride. Akkochkor then arranged her marriage with Kalmatay Biy. But instead of marrying Janyl Myrza himself, Kalmatay gave her to his elder brother, Ormotoy, who was about fifty years old.

Talkan Biy and Chachykan

The Girl in Red After the inauguration of Khan Teyish, Tashkent became a region under the Chüy domain. Talkan Biy often traveled to Tashkent through the Chatkal Valley. One day, while returning from Tashkent to Chüy through the Chimkent region of modern Kazakhstan, his warriors stopped to rest. They slept while Talkan walked alone through the valley. The land was hot, dry, and almost empty. Suddenly, he saw a young woman dressed in red walking ahead of him. Talkan wondered what a young woman was doing alone in such a remote place. Curious, he followed her from a distance.

Dolu's Prediction Suddenly, Dolu, Talkan's wise man who was known for reading signs and telling fortunes, approached him. Dolu looked at the young woman and said, "She is a Kyrgyz girl from the southern Ichkilik tribe. If you marry her, she will bear you sons." Talkan was surprised, but Dolu added, "There is one problem. She is already engaged." Talkan continued following the girl until they reached a small yurt. Her father welcomed the travelers and asked them to stay for the night.

The Man from Kokand During the evening, he looked closely at Talkan and suddenly recognized him. He stepped forward, bowed respectfully, and kissed Talkan's hands, an ancient gesture of greeting and respect. The old man told Talkan that he was from a southern Kyrgyz tribe and had once lived in Kokand. There, he had seen Chaa Biy at the Kokand court and remembered the ring Chaa Biy wore. Now the same ring was in Talkan Biy's hand. The old man realized that his guest was Talkan Biy. He told Talkan about his younger days in Kokand. While serving at the palace, he had learned the gambling games played among the wealthy and powerful. After returning to his village, however, he could not forget gambling. The habit eventually changed his life.

The Gambler's Journey After his marriage, the man still dreamed of gambling. One day, he traveled to the city and entered a gambling house. Fortune favored him. He won a great deal of money and decided to leave his southern homeland. He traveled north across the Kyrgyz lands, hoping to begin a new life. Eventually, he settled in the valley where Talkan had found him. But his wife did not live long there. She became terrified by snakes that repeatedly appeared around their tent. One night, a snake came close to her while she was sleeping. The shock was too much for her, and she suffered a fatal heart attack.

A New Life in the Valley The grieving husband buried his wife and decided to remain in the valley. He began a new life by planting a garden. He grew melons and watermelons, planted apple trees, and worked the land with his own hands. His only daughter, Chachykan, grew into a young woman. She had been promised to a Kazakh young man, but tragedy struck when her fiancé died. The young man's father then wanted Chachykan to marry his six-year-old son when he came of age, according to their family arrangement. Talkan Biy objected when he heard this. "A six-year-old boy is not a man," he said. "I want to marry your daughter."

Talkan and Chachykan The old man accepted Talkan's proposal, and Talkan Biy married Chachykan. Their marriage became an important part of the story of the Chüy Valley. Chachykan's father later married again and had another child, a son named Tokoldosh. Generations later, the name Tokoldosh remained connected with the land. Today, Tokoldosh is also the name of a district of Bishkek.

Galdan Boshugtu Khan

The Submission of Kashgar Galdan Boshugtu Khan, the powerful ruler of the Dzungaria, turned his attention toward Turkistan, including the lands of present-day Xinjiang. In 1678, his forces entered Eastern Turkistan and took control of Kashgar and Yarkent. The conquest was carried out with little resistance. Afaq Khoja, a prominent religious and political leader in Kashgar, became closely associated with Galdan and was installed as a client ruler. The people of Kashgar welcomed Galdan with great honor and offered him a young daughter of Afaq Khoja as a bride. In return, Afaq Khoja received important privileges for himself and his merchants. He was allowed to travel freely throughout Dzungaria and Kashgar, while merchants under his protection could pass through the territories without being stopped or obstructed.

The Threat of Galdan Meanwhile, Teyish Khan learned of Galdan's growing power and his invasion of Kashgar. He understood that the war might soon reach the Kyrgyz lands, so he began preparing for it. Tooke Khan of the Kazakhs sent his son Ablay, who told Teyish Khan that he had gathered 3,000 warriors. Teyish Khan ordered his people to grow more grain and wheat so they would have enough food if the war lasted a long time. At the same time, workshops worked day and night to produce weapons and prepare supplies for the army.

The Kalmyk Marriage Proposal Soon, Teyish Khan received word that Aiuke Khan, the leader of the Kalmyks living in the Russian lands, was coming to visit him. Aiuke Khan brought his young and beautiful daughter and proposed a marriage alliance between their families. He asked Teyish Khan to marry his daughter to his son. But Aiuke also had another request: he wanted Teyish Khan to give him land in the Kyrgyz territories so that his people could settle there. Teyish Khan refused to give away Kyrgyz land. The marriage alliance was therefore abandoned. Instead, the two rulers agreed that if war broke out, they would not attack or kill each other.

Eshboldu One day, Teyish Khan received a horseman dressed like a Kalmyk warrior. The man was cold and exhausted. Teyish Khan welcomed him, gave him food, and ordered that he be given warm clothes. After he had rested, the horseman revealed his true identity. He was Eshboldu, a Kyrgyz man and the son of Tata. Long ago, Tata had saved the lives of Jangir Sultan and Chaa Biy. Eshboldu told Teyish Khan that he was still living among the Kalmyks and had come with an important warning. Galdan might attack soon, he said, and his army numbered nearly 30,000 warriors. He also gave Teyish Khan a warning about the animals: "When the cuckoo begins to sing, do not castrate the young male animals. If the males are weakened and unable to stand, Galdan may attack." Teyish Khan was worried that Galdan would discover Eshboldu's secret and kill him. But Eshboldu remained calm. "They believe I drowned in the river," he said.

The Scouts of Galdan One day, about fifty of Galdan's scouts entered the Kyrgyz lands. They attacked and captured shepherds and drove away their cattle. Teyish Khan soon learned what had happened and received even more troubling news: Galdan had an army of nearly 40,000 warriors. The news worried the khan, but Talkan Biy remained calm. "Galdan may think we are afraid of him," he said. "Let us speak to him." They sent envoys led by Baybolot, Talkan's son, whose mother was Kalmyk. Baybolot spoke fluent Kalmyk and could communicate with Galdan's people. They told Galdan that Teyish Khan wished to meet him.

The Challenge and the Battle Teyish Khan proposed a duel with Galdan. "Let us fight each other," he said. "Whoever dies will surrender, and our people will be spared a great war." Galdan refused the challenge. Soon afterward, the battle began. Teyish Khan did not send his entire army into the fight, keeping part of his forces in reserve. The fighting was fierce, but the Oirat army suffered heavy losses. Before the battle, Teyish Khan gave his warriors kuchala, a traditional plant known in Kyrgyz lands. The plant was considered poisonous but was also used traditionally in folk medicine. For the warriors, it was believed to give strength and endurance.

The Prisoners of War and the Blood Drinker After the battle, Teyish Khan gave the captured Oirat warriors to Ablay Khan. Among them were men who had fought for Galdan. Ablay had a personal reason to hate Galdan: Galdan had killed his grandfather Tooke Khan's brother, Jangir Sultan. Ablay wanted revenge, and among the Oirats he became known as "Ablay the Blood Drinker," a name that spread through

their camps. For the next three years, Galdan did not attack the Kyrgyz or Kazakhs. Instead, he rebuilt and strengthened his army, preparing for a much greater campaign. He planned to bring the Khalkha Mongols and other Mongol peoples under his rule. Even the Qing emperor had become concerned about Galdan's growing power.

The Dalai Lama's Message The Qing emperor therefore sent envoys to the Dalai Lama, carrying gifts of gold and silver, and asked him to persuade Galdan to stop his campaigns. The Dalai Lama told them that while he was still alive, Galdan would not attack China. He then sent his holy man, Saya Bandit, to Galdan with his greetings and a message: Galdan should not attack either the Khalkha Mongols or China. Galdan listened and asked, "What should I do with my sixty or seventy thousand warriors? How can I simply send them away?" Saya Bandit replied, "To the west are many nomadic peoples. Go there and live among them. You can move among the Kyrgyz and Kazakhs." Galdan listened silently.

The Battles in the Autumn

The Battle of Karkyra In the autumn, Galdan began his campaign against the Kyrgyz and Kazakhs. His army moved toward Karkyra, a vast pastureland in the Issyk-Kul region, near the borders of present-day Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and China. The battle was fierce, and Galdan's army had to fight hard to defeat the Kyrgyz. Khan Teyish challenged Galdan to a personal duel, but Galdan refused. Instead, his brother Gunjan fought the Kyrgyz warrior Kojomberdi in a spear duel. Kojomberdi defeated Gunjan, and the battle continued. The Kyrgyz army was much smaller than the Oirat force. Khan Teyish lost about 3,000 warriors that day. Among the fallen was Alakchyn, one of Teyish's leading warriors. He was severely wounded, and the healer said there was no hope for him. Alakchyn died from his wounds.

The Betrayal of the Bugu Some members of the Kyrgyz Bugu tribe went to Galdan and offered to show him hidden mountain paths leading toward Khan Teyish's army. They told Galdan that if he defeated the Kyrgyz, a member of the Bugu tribe should become khan. Galdan agreed and followed the paths they showed him. When Khan Teyish saw the Kalmyk-Oirat soldiers appearing through the mountain passes, he immediately understood that someone among the Kyrgyz had betrayed them. Galdan sent those same Kyrgyz as envoys to Khan Teyish. They claimed they had been captured and forced to serve Galdan. Teyish listened carefully, knowing that their story was probably a lie.

Teyish's Final Challenge Galdan sent Teyish his terms for peace. He demanded the lands around Issyk-Kul, the Ili Valley, and Kegen region of modern Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Xinjiang. He also offered to marry his daughter Boom to Teyish's son, Akkochkor. Teyish answered with his own terms: "Tomorrow, let Galdan and I fight in a personal duel. If I win, all Oirat warriors must leave our lands. If Galdan wins, I will give him the lands he has demanded." Then Teyish ordered the betraying Kyrgyz to be killed. Before the battle, he appointed his sons Akkochkor and Kanky, together with Baiseyit, as commanders. He told them, "If I die, take our people away. Do not let the Kyrgyz be destroyed."

The Last Stand of Teyish Khan In the final battle, the Kyrgyz army was far smaller than Galdan's, but they fought with fierce courage. Khan Teyish ordered his warriors, "Never allow yourselves to be taken alive." Again and again, he challenged Galdan to face him in single combat, but Galdan stayed away from the battlefield and never accepted the challenge. The battle became a tragedy. Teyish's sons, Akkochkor and Kanky, were killed. Teyish himself was severely wounded, and by the end, only fifty Kyrgyz warriors remained alive. He was carried home, wounded and exhausted, knowing that his life was coming to an end. His people gathered around him in silence.

The Last Words of Teyish Khan Teyish looked at his people and spoke his final words: "The Kyrgyz never die. The Kyrgyz will never surrender. I will die here, fighting for my people." He asked that his body be buried among the rocky mountains, where no enemy could easily find his grave. Soon afterward, Khan Teyish died. The people mourned deeply. Across the valley, the sound of lament songs rose into the evening air. Men and women remembered the heroic deeds of Teyish, his sons Akkochkor and Kanky, and the warriors who had fallen beside them. Their names were spoken again and again, so that their courage would not disappear with their bodies. The mountains remained silent, holding the memory of the fallen.

The Dzungar Era in Kyrgyz Life

Galdan Boshugtu Khan After Erdeni Batur's death, conflicts broke out among his sons and relatives. His younger son, Galdan, had been living in Tibet as a Buddhist monk. After the death of his brother Sengge, Galdan returned to the Oirat homeland and entered the struggle for power.

After defeating his rivals and establishing control over the Oirats, Galdan received the title *Boshugtu Khan* from the Fifth Dalai Lama in 1678. The title strengthened his religious and political authority and marked his rise as the leading ruler of the Dzungar Khanate. From his new position, Galdan Boshugtu Khan expanded the Dzungar Khanate across Central Asia and eventually invaded the Kyrgyz lands.

The Message from Saya Bandit Galdan was pleased that he now controlled much of the Kyrgyz and Kazakh lands. He received a letter from the Buddhist holy man Saya Bandit. The letter contained a simple message: "Defeating your enemy does not make you happy." Galdan understood what Saya meant. He had defeated the Kyrgyz and Kazakhs, but now they were suffering and mourning. Saya was warning him not to oppress them. Galdan welcomed the messenger and promised that he would not go against the teachings of Buddha. But in his heart, he thought, "I will say these words in public, but I will pretend not to see those who oppress the people."

Galdan's New Lands After his victory, Galdan extended his control over the northern Kyrgyz lands and neighboring Kazakh territories. His power now reached across a wide region, including Karkyra, Kegen, the Ili Valley, Uch-Almaty, the Chuy Valley, Talas, and Naryn.

For the people who lived there, however, these were not simply lands on a map. They were their pastures, their valleys, their homes, and the graves of their ancestors. Galdan had won the battle, but the people were left with grief and uncertainty. His army stood across the valleys and mountain passes, while the Kyrgyz and Kazakhs waited to see what their new ruler would do next.

Galdan's Demand for Submission The following week, Galdan gathered the people and declared that Khan Teyish should have surrendered without a battle. Teyish had refused, and both sides had lost many warriors. Galdan then announced that Baybolot, Talkan's son, and Kojomberdi would remain at his court and marry Oirat women. If the Kyrgyz refused to obey or protested, both men would be killed. Galdan ordered Talkan Biy to come and submit.

Talkan was relieved when his sons Begish and Chegish told him that Baybolot was still alive and had married an Oirat woman. Galdan also ordered Talkan to tell his people to submit to the Oirats. Talkan replied, "I may have influence over my own tribe, but the other Kyrgyz tribes will not listen to me."

Galdan's Marriage Alliance Baybolot's Oirat wife told him that she would soon be taken away because she was pregnant. She feared that the Oirats would raise their child among them and teach him to fight against the Kyrgyz in the future.

The following summer, Galdan invited the Kyrgyz to the wedding of his daughter, Boom. The Kyrgyz were ordered to set up their yurts and prepare for the celebration. Galdan was marrying Boom to Gender, a young Oirat leader who commanded 3,000 warriors. He was also the son of another Oirat Taishi who ruled in the Kok-Nuur region. Galdan was pleased with the marriage because it would strengthen his influence in the Kok-Nuur region and deepen his alliance with the Oirat leaders there.

Baybolot under Galdan's Rule During the wedding celebration, the Kyrgyz tried not to take part in the traditional games. They were afraid that Galdan might punish them if they appeared too proud or victorious. Galdan ordered Kojomberdi to fight a tiger. Kojomberdi bravely defeated the animal, but instead of celebrating, he remained quiet. Galdan became uneasy and wondered if the Kyrgyz had some unseen protectors. Later, during the horse race, Baybolot's horse finished first. Fearing Galdan, Baybolot did not celebrate. Instead, he bowed and said, "My horse is your horse. We are your people." After the wedding, Galdan ordered Baybolot to build a road through the Boom Gorge. As Galdan's representative among the Kyrgyz, Baybolot promised to complete the road within one year. The road became an important route toward the Issyk-Kul region.

Boom and Young Koshoy While the road through the Boom Gorge was being built, Galdan's daughter, Boom, began to take an interest in Baybolot. Although she was married to Gender, who had gone with Galdan into the Kazakh lands, she still admired Baybolot. Baybolot, however, refused to betray his principles. He told her that such a relationship would go against Kyrgyz customs and honor.

One day, while walking near the road construction, Boom saw a group of teenagers. One young boy dismounted from his horse and greeted her, saying, "Esender," a traditional greeting. He introduced himself as Koshoy, Talkan's youngest son. He was about thirteen or fourteen, while Boom was seventeen. She was impressed by his kindness, courage, and cleverness. Koshoy told her that he admired her and that, if they had been closer in age, he would have wished to marry her.

Boom and Koshoy at Issyk-Kul Koshoy's friends began saying that he would become a great leader one day. They admired his courage because he had dared to speak with Boom, the daughter of Galdan. Boom, meanwhile, told Koshoy that he would serve as her guard and sleep near her yurt to protect her. After the new road through the Boom Gorge was completed, Galdan moved some of his Oirat people into the Issyk-Kul region. Boom had also moved there because Galdan had given the region to her. One day, she told Koshoy, "Let us run away from here." Another day, Boom walked into the waters of Issyk-Kul. Koshoy was surprised and told her that Kyrgyz women did not enter the sacred lake without first bathing and cleansing themselves. To the Kyrgyz, Issyk-Kul was a holy lake and had to be treated with great respect.

Koshoy Saves Gender One day, while the Oirats were hunting, Gender suddenly faced danger. A wolf came toward him, ready to attack. Before he could react, a sudden flood swept through the area, and Gender was thrown into the rushing water. Koshoy saw what happened and immediately rescued him. Gender was deeply grateful. He told Koshoy, "From this day forward, you are my brother." He also promised that if he died, Boom would become Koshoy's wife. Koshoy accepted his words.

The Naryn Ambush The Naryn region was a good place to rest, so the Oirats stopped there with their horses. They believed they were safe, but about five hundred local Kyrgyz warriors had been watching them from a distance.

When the moment was right, the Kyrgyz surrounded the Oirat camp. They attacked from different directions, cutting off every escape route. The Oirats were caught by surprise. The Kyrgyz seized their horses and rifles and defeated the Oirat warriors. They then drove the captured horses toward the southern Kyrgyz lands. The bodies of the fallen Oirats were carried far away from the battlefield and buried there. Water was brought to the burial place, and over time, a small lake appeared beside the graves.

The Secret Plan in Karkyra Galdan was furious after the Kyrgyz resisted his forces. He ordered Gender to prepare another attack on the Kyrgyz of the Naryn region. Gender was to secretly train his army in the Karkyra Valley, and only Galdan, Gender, and another commander, Akkuiruk, were supposed to know about the plan. But Gender told Boom, and Boom secretly told Koshoy, who warned the Kyrgyz.

Gender marched toward the Kyrgyz lands, and another fierce battle followed. Both sides suffered heavy losses, including Er Tabyldy, a legendary Kyrgyz warrior. Yet the Oirats still could not defeat the Kyrgyz. Galdan was unhappy because he was preparing for a much larger campaign against China. After the battle, Gender decided that the Oirats should no longer attack the Kyrgyz.

Gender's Journey with Koshoy Gender took Koshoy on a journey across Mongolia, eventually reaching the Ili region. During the journey, Gender spoke openly with him about Galdan's plans. He believed Galdan was preparing to challenge the Qing Empire, but he feared that such a war would be impossible to win. Gender also worried that the Chinese emperor might eventually destroy Galdan and threaten the Oirat people living around Kok-Nuur. For this reason, Gender told Koshoy that he would not take part in Galdan's war against China. He also promised that he would not return to the Kyrgyz lands to fight them. Then he said to Koshoy, "If I keep my word, you may marry Boom." The future of Boom and Koshoy now depended on that promise.

The Wedding of Galdan's Son The following year, Boom gave birth to a boy and named him Galdan. When the elder Galdan saw the child, he noticed that the boy looked very much like Koshoy. Boom quickly replied that Koshoy was only her guard and nothing more. That summer, Oirat commander Akkuiruk married his daughter to Galdan's son as his second wife. Before the wedding, the mysterious woman Sharapat

warned Koshoy that a conflict might break out. She advised him not to attend the celebration and instead to gather and strengthen his warriors. Her warning came true. During the wedding games, tensions rose during a horseback spear fight. Er Soltonoy, fighting for the Kyrgyz, defeated Acha Amatay. Then Baybolot defeated Chykykty in wrestling and stepped over his head and he died. Chykykty's death insulted and angered Galdan, and the joyful wedding suddenly turned dangerous.

The Challenge from Tsewang Rabtan The Oirats moved their camp near Talkan Biy's village. Among them was a man named Emchi, who wanted to marry a Kyrgyz woman, but he was often drunk, and no woman wanted to marry him. One day, Emchi was found dead. The Oirats became furious and blamed the Kyrgyz. Soon afterward, Koshoy heard that five hundred Oirat warriors were approaching. He went out to meet them. Their commander, Akkuiruk, demanded, "Why did you kill an innocent Emchi?" Koshoy answered, "You killed him yourselves, and now you blame us. If you want a battle, we are ready." But Galdan soon received even more troubling news. Tsewang Rabtan, the son of his deceased brother Sengge, was challenging his authority and claiming that Galdan had taken power by force. Tsewang Rabtan had already established his own power in Dzungaria while Galdan was campaigning farther east.

Galdan's New Strategy Galdan feared that if Tsewang Rabtan defeated him and took control of the Dzungar Khanate, he would lose everything. For that reason, Galdan ordered his forces to expand their attacks into the southern Kyrgyz lands as well. He wanted to remain powerful among the Kyrgyz while preparing for his larger confrontation with China. The Qing emperor also saw an opportunity in the growing conflict. Tsewang Rabtan had already been in contact with the Qing and provided information about Galdan's movements. The Qing court understood that Galdan was preparing for war in the east, and his growing conflict with Tsewang Rabtan made his position even more difficult.

The Migration to the Southern Lands Boom warned Koshoy that Galdan's commander, Chagan Erchik, was preparing to attack the Kyrgyz. She urged Koshoy to lead the people south, away from the coming danger. Talkan Biy gathered his people to discuss what they should do. Baybolot argued that they should stay and fight the Oirats, but Talkan disagreed. He feared that if they fought a much larger army, the Oirats might destroy the Kyrgyz completely. He decided that the people should leave the northern lands and migrate south. Koshoy, Er Soltonoy, and their warriors remained in the Chuy Valley to resist the Oirats and slow their advance. Talkan led his people south toward Aksy and Ala-Buka in the Fergana Valley, seeking safety in the southern Kyrgyz lands.

The Death of Talkan's Sons Talkan and his people were safe in the southern lands. They had settled in Aksy and Ala-Buka, and for a while, life became peaceful again. Then terrible news reached Talkan: his sons Begish and Chegish had died in the Gissar and Kulyab regions. His sons Baybolot and Baiseyit traveled to the funerals, but when they returned, they too became sick and died. The disease spread through the family. In all, eighteen members of Talkan's family died from smallpox. Talkan was devastated. Baybolot had been his favorite son, and losing him broke his heart. He mourned not only his sons, but also the northern homeland he had been forced to leave. Grief slowly turned into anger, and he began to think of revenge against the Oirats.

The Death of Akkuiruk When Chagan Erchik reached the northern Kyrgyz lands, he found them almost empty. Most of the Kyrgyz had already migrated south, leaving behind only scattered herds. His warriors managed to seize some cattle belonging to the migrating families, but they found no large population to attack. Chagan Erchik spent the night at the yurt of Akkuiruk. Soon afterward, Akkuiruk prepared to join the campaign to destroy the remaining Kyrgyz in the Chüy Valley. But fate overtook him. While burying the head of one of his dead horses, a snake suddenly came out of the grave and bit him. Akkuiruk died from the bite.

The Kyrgyz fortune-teller Kachy had predicted his death a year earlier. Afterward, a young man named Markashka came from Dzungaria and was appointed khan over the Kyrgyz lands. Kachy warned him, "You will die thirty years from now at the hands of a Kyrgyz warrior."

Part 4. Er Koshoy and Bishkek

The Fall of Galdan's Power

Taishi in the Karkyra Valley As Kalmyk forces moved into the region, many Kyrgyz fled south, toward Andijan and Aksy, and into the Alai and Pamir valleys of Central Asia. His court remained hidden, following the ancient Dzungar Oirat tradition; only a few knew where the taishi's camp stood. Once a lama in Tibet, Galdan loved warm climates, though years in Siberia, the Altai, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan had hardened him to every climate. At fifty, he remained lean, dark, and strong, drinking kymyz and Chinese spirits and eating raw lamb or horse meat in the Kalmyk manner.

Galdan's Illness in the Karkyra Valley Among Galdan Boshugtu Taishi's trusted servants were a Kyrgyz man named Mamen and his wife, Sono. Mamen claimed that his mother's family descended from Kalmyk ancestors, perhaps explaining his loyalty to the Taishi. When Galdan fell seriously ill with a severe cough, Sono prepared traditional remedies. She fried the meat of wild animals — badger and marmot, and made fresh kymyz, the fermented mare's milk of the Kyrgyz. Galdan was deeply suspicious of poison. He never tasted food first. Mamen and Sono would taste everything before he ate or drank it. Eventually, the Taishi recovered. During his time among the steppe peoples, Galdan also kept the company of Kazakh women. Among the Kalmyk soldiers, it was considered an honor to marry a woman who had spent a night with their Taishi.

The Chaos through the Dzungar state In 1696, chaos spread through the Dzungar state as people became uncertain about who truly held the khan's authority. Galdan's plans to attack the Manchu Qing state had become known, while his nephew, Tsewang Rabtan, the son of Galdan's brother Sengge, declared himself Khan of Dzungaria. Meanwhile, Koshoy, the son of Talkan, traveled to the Kazakh Khan Tooke to ask for help in restoring the Kok Ordo, or "Blue Horde." Talkan, who was living in the southern Kyrgyz lands, longed to see his homeland in the Chüy Valley. When he finally returned, however, Markashka, the Oirat khan, and Belek, the local Kyrgyz representative from the Bugu tribe, humiliated him. Heartbroken, Talkan returned to Aksy. Soon afterward, he died of a heart attack, far from the homeland he had loved so deeply.

The Dream of Fire and the Dragon Galdan Taishi prepared to travel toward the Siberian and Altai regions. That night, however, he had a terrible dream. He saw the Dzhungar villages lying in darkness. There was no fire, no lamp, and no light anywhere. Then, far away, he noticed a single glow and rode toward it. There he found a Kyrgyz village and a great khan, Khan Teyish, sitting inside a Kyrgyz yurt. Galdan asked for a little fire. Khan Teyish called upon Umai Ene, the ancient mother spirit, and ordered her to give Galdan some flame. Galdan carried the fire back to his villages and kindled it. Suddenly, the small flame became an enormous fire. It spread across the land, burning every Dzhungar village. Then Galdan saw a great dragon rising from the flames, opening its jaws to swallow him. He awoke in terror, troubled by the dream and fearing that it carried a warning of things to come. Galdan Boshugtu Khan, after seeing that ominous dream, became determined to fight the Chinese emperor.

The Fall of Galdan In 1696, Galdan was forced to retreat after suffering a crushing defeat at the hands of the Manchu Qing emperor Kangxi. At the same time, his nephew, Tsewang Rabtan, the son of Galdan's brother Sengge, was growing stronger and challenging Galdan's authority. Galdan was now surrounded by enemies. The Qing emperor ordered that Galdan's family be brought to Beijing and demanded that Tsewang Rabtan capture Galdan and, if he were already dead, send his head to Beijing. Tsewang Rabtan had already been in contact with the Qing and had helped block Galdan's return to his western territories.

The Last Days of Galdan Tsewang Rabtan also faced pressure from the Dalai Lama's circle, while Markashka, the Oirat leader, and Belek, the Kyrgyz representative, wanted to capture Galdan. With his power collapsing, Galdan wrote to Emperor Kangxi seeking a way to surrender. In the spring of 1697, after years of war and retreat, Galdan died. After his death, his head was taken to Beijing by order of the Qing court, while Tsewang Rabtan eventually became the ruler of the Dzungar state.

The Tragedy of Boom After Tsewang Rabtan came to power, he prepared to invade the Kazakhs. Tooke Khan angered him because he had captured and married Bayan, the daughter of Kalmyk Khan Aiuke, who was on her journey when she was captured. Meanwhile, Boom, who lived in the Kyrgyz lands, still loved Koshoy and waited for him. Markashka visited her and told her that she was to be taken to Beijing because the emperor wanted her. Boom asked for some time. She then visited the Kyrgyz villages, asking about Koshoy. She waited for him throughout the night, but he was away on a special mission. In despair, Boom threw herself from a rock. Her body was found by Kenjekara, a road worker in Boom Gorge. Kenjekara was a skilled melodist who had composed a melody about Teyish Khan. After Boom's death, he composed a sorrowful melody in her memory.

The Spirit of Boom The Dzungars attacked the Kazakhs, and Er Koshoy joined the Kazakhs in the battle. At last, a duel took place between Er Koshoy and the Oirat warrior Esen Taishi. Koshoy defeated him, and the battle ended that day. Both sides returned home. Koshoy soon learned that Boom had died. He was heartbroken and wanted to visit her grave. When he reached the place where Boom was buried, he heard a sorrowful melody. It was Kenjekara, who showed him Boom's grave. Koshoy felt guilty, believing that Boom had died because of him. But Kenjekara told him that it was her destiny. He also said that Boom's spirit would always watch over Koshoy and his descendants, and that her spirit would give strength to his sons, who would become great warrior heroes.

Tsewang Rabdan's Battles and Er Koshoy

Markashka and Belek After the Kyrgyz-Kazakh war, Markashka, the Dzungar khan, made his residence at Ak-Suu in the Chuy Valley. The valley was now filled with Kalmyk-Oirat people. His Kyrgyz representative, Khan Belek, held his court in the Issyk-Kul region. Markashka married Upol, Belek's sister, and the two rulers became very close. The Oirats believed they would now live in the Chüy Valley forever. Some Kyrgyz also moved to Issyk-Kul, but they did not recognize Belek as their khan. They called him a "puppet" of the Dzungars. This deeply angered Belek, especially when the sons of Mamatkul, descendants of Manap Biy, openly insulted him and refused to drink the cup of kymyz served by his wife. Their disrespect made Belek furious.

The Fall of Er Tabyldy Er Tabyldy was the leader of the Naryn region. Meanwhile, in the Karkyra Valley of the Issyk-Kul region, Chanjar warrior was training his troops. Er Tabyldy believed the Oirats would not attack during the summer. Naryn was a mountainous region, and he thought the enemy could defeat them only in winter, when the roads and valleys were easier to control. But that summer, the Oirats attacked Naryn and destroyed many villages. Some people fled south to escape the fighting. Er Tabyldy fought bravely against the invaders but was seriously wounded in battle.

The Young Oirat Warriors Tsewang Rabdan wanted to occupy the entire northern part of the Kyrgyz lands and bring it under Dzungar control. The Kyrgyz, led by Er Koshoy, once again had to face the enemy. Among the Oirats were groups of young and very brave warriors. One of them was a young boy named Esen, who was known for winning every battle he entered. Before the battle, Er Koshoy ordered some people to recite the *Manas* epic, sing old Kyrgyz songs, and play ancient melodies on the komuz. The warriors did not understand why. Koshoy explained that many of the young Oirat warriors were Kyrgyz by their fathers. During Galdan's invasion, brave Kyrgyz warriors had been forced into marriages with Oirat women. When the women became pregnant, they were replaced by other wives, leaving their Kyrgyz sons among the Oirats.

Koshoy Biy and the Peace After the battle, the Kyrgyz held a great victory feast. In recognition of his justice, wisdom, and bravery, Er Koshoy was appointed Biy of the Left and Right Wings of the Kyrgyz people. Koshoy then invited Markashka to meet with him. He told him that the Kyrgyz and Dzungars should live in peace. Markashka replied, "We did not do anything." Koshoy answered, "You started the battle, and you lost all your troops." After speaking openly about what had happened, the two sides agreed to live in peace.

Bishkek

Bishkek's Wisdom One day, two old men were going to Er Koshoy Biy to settle a dispute about a camel calf. Both men owned female camels, and one of them had given birth. But the camel calf followed both mothers, so each man believed that his own camel was the mother. A young boy told them, "It is very easy to solve your dispute." He tied the camel calf tightly with a thread until it began to cry. One of the camels immediately ran toward the calf and tried to rescue it. The dispute was settled. Koshoy saw the boy and asked what had happened.

Bishkek and Nysha When the boy told Koshoy the story, Koshoy admired his wisdom and asked his name. The boy said his name was Bishkek. He was the grandson of Joochalysh, one of the sons of Chaa Biy, making him Koshoy's cousin. Bishkek asked Koshoy to send him to Russia, among the Nogais, to learn how to make weapons. His friend Nysha also asked to go. He wanted to learn the languages of the Mongols, Oirats, and Kalmyks so that he could use this knowledge against them one day. Koshoy agreed and sent them with merchants.

The Return of Bishkek and Nysha At that time, Koshoy was in the Ketmen-Tobo Valley, a central place between the northern and southern Kyrgyz lands. Bishkek learned how to make weapons, especially swords. When he returned, he brought the sword he had made himself. Koshoy tested it and found it very well made. Nysha learned military exercises from an old Manchu man. He also studied the languages of the Mongols, Oirats, and Kalmyks. Both young men returned with valuable knowledge that could help the Kyrgyz understand their enemies and prepare for future battles.

The Fall of Belek Khan Meanwhile, the Kyrgyz had a deep grudge against Belek, the puppet khan who ruled the Kyrgyz for the Dzungars. They wanted to punish him for humiliating the Kyrgyz people. Koshoy, Mamatkul, and their warriors came and punished the people of Belek who had humiliated their own nation. But Koshoy stopped them from going further. He said, "Belek is our relative, from a closely related tribe. I do not want hatred between our tribes. Let him go." Belek asked for forgiveness. Koshoy spared him, but Belek was no longer recognized as khan.

Bishkek among the Kalmyks Bishkek and Nysha were visiting the Kazakhs when they suddenly lost their way. Hungry and tired, they saw a yurt in the distance and went toward it. Inside, they met a young Kalmyk girl. She quickly fell in love with Bishkek, and the two were married. Her father asked Bishkek to stay with their family, so Bishkek remained with them for several years. One day, Bishkek decided to visit his homeland. When he returned, he learned that his wife had died. His father-in-law wanted him to marry his wife's sister, but Bishkek refused. He left the family and returned to the Kyrgyz lands.

The Kazakhs Seek Protection from Russia

The Death of Tooke Khan In 1715, Tooke Khan died after years of fighting the Dzungars. He had fought them five times and was remembered as a brave khan. The Kazakhs mourned his death deeply. Knowing that the Dzungars would not easily accept peace, Tooke had already sent envoys to the Russian Empire, seeking protection for his people. After his death, his son Bolot was chosen as khan. Bolot was not strong enough to keep the Kazakh tribes united, and the three major Kazakh Zhuzes gradually became divided. Still, their leaders continued to seek Russian protection against the growing Dzungar threat.

The Dzungar Attack of 1717 In 1717, Tsewang Rabdan again attacked the Kazakhs. The Kazakh leaders understood that they needed a stronger ally and continued their efforts to establish relations with Russia. Envoys were sent to Russia, seeking protection from the Dzungars while preserving the authority of their own khans and tribal leaders. Russian officials discussed the possibility of cooperation, while the Dzungar attacks continued to place increasing pressure on the Kazakh steppe. The Kazakh rulers struggled to maintain unity after the death of Tooke Khan and faced a growing threat from the Dzungars.

Abulkhaiyr Khan and Russia In 1718, negotiations with Russia became more serious. Abulkhaiyr Khan, leader of the Kishi Zhuz, sought Russian protection against the Dzungars. Russian diplomats promised protection while saying they would not interfere with the traditional authority of the local khans. Abulkhaiyr

accepted these terms and signed the documents. He then sent them to Kaiyp Khan in Turkestan. But soon after the envoys left, Kaiyp Khan died. Russian diplomat Davlet also died with his companions while traveling from Khiva toward Turkestan. No one knew who had killed them, but it was clear that someone opposed the Kazakhs joining Russia.

The Warning of Er Koshoy Er Koshoy also warned the Kazakhs that the Oirats were preparing for another great war. He warned that a major battle could come in 1721 and again in 1723. But many Kazakh leaders did not believe that the Dzungars could launch such a devastating campaign. They continued to hope that diplomacy and alliances would protect their people. Meanwhile, the Dzungars were preparing their forces and watching the divisions among the Kazakhs. The danger was growing, but the warning was not fully understood until the great invasion finally came.

The Strengthening of the Dzungar State Tsewang Rabtan continued fighting the Kazakhs, while many Dzungars were becoming tired of constant wars and leaving for Inner China and Mongolia. Rabtan understood that a long war required food, clothing, and supplies. He therefore organized the migration of Uyghurs from Kashgar and Turfan into Dzungar lands. He provided them with homes and encouraged them to grow wheat, vegetables, and fruit. He also made use of skilled captives. Among them was Johan Renat, a Swedish craftsman who helped the Dzungars produce weapons and other goods.

Renat and the Dzungar Workshops Renat became an important craftsman in the Dzungar state. He helped manufacture cannons and other military equipment and taught people useful skills in metalworking. Other captives and foreign specialists were also put to work producing cloth, paper, and other goods. Over the years, these efforts strengthened Dzungar agriculture, industry, and military production. Rabtan understood that an army could not fight without a strong economy behind it. By developing agriculture and crafts and bringing skilled people into his state, he created a stronger foundation for continued war and expansion.

The Kyrgyz Migration to Issyk-Kul Rabtan also succeeded in moving Kyrgyz people living in the Altai region toward Issyk-Kul, while dealing with the Russian authorities. This migration brought more Kyrgyz into the lands around Issyk-Kul and strengthened Rabtan's control over the region. During his reign, the Dzungar state expanded its power across Central Asia and continued its wars against the Kazakhs and other neighboring peoples. His efforts to strengthen agriculture, industry, and population helped make the Dzungar Khanate a powerful state in the early eighteenth century.

Koshoy Meets His Son Galdan The Oirats held a great wedding celebration, and a Russian diplomat also attended. There, he met Er Koshoy, who told him about himself and his people. Koshoy asked how many Kyrgyz lived in the region. Rabdan replied that the Kyrgyz and Kazakhs were few and had no history. During the celebration, Koshoy suddenly learned that the young and brave warrior Galdan was his own son, the son of Boom. Koshoy took Galdan to see his mother's grave. But Galdan blamed Koshoy, saying, "I cannot be an Oirat among the Oirats, and I cannot be a Kyrgyz among the Kyrgyz."

The Mystery of Galdan Koshoy told him, "Come with me. I will take you to your people, and you will become khan of the Kyrgyz." Galdan refused. He said, "If I become khan of the Kyrgyz, I might have to fight the Kazakhs alongside Rabdan." Instead, he decided to enter a temple and become a Buddhist monk, like his grandfather, Galdan Boshugtu Khan. Koshoy then showed him his mother's grave. Galdan stood quietly beside it and said that he could not leave the Kyrgyz lands. After that, he disappeared, and no one knew where he had gone. But many years later, after Koshoy died, people spoke of a wandering dervish who traveled through the Kyrgyz lands. He claimed that he was the son of Koshoy. No one knew for certain who he really was, but the story remained among the people.

The Great Kazakh Tragedy

The Oirats Attack the Kazakhs Rabdan began a major war against the Kazakhs, bringing one of the greatest tragedies in their history. Knowing that the Oirats were preparing to attack, the Kazakh khans sent their families to other tribes living in the northern Kazakh lands near the Russian border. Still, the invasion brought terrible destruction. Hundreds of thousands of people died, women were taken captive, and countless herds of cattle were driven away. It became one of the darkest periods in Kazakh history. During the

chaos, Bishkek saw a twelve-year-old boy inside a palace and rescued him. The boy was actually the grandson of Ablay Sultan, but he hid his identity and told Bishkek that his name was Kairat. He boldly said that one day he would become khan of the Kazakhs. When Nysha ordered him to fetch water, Kairat refused. Bishkek and Nysha could not understand his behavior because they did not know who he really was.

Koshoy and the Young Kazakh Prince Nysha and Bishkek came to Tashkent with 500 riders, while Koshoy and the other Kyrgyz prepared for Rabdan's attack with 15,000 troops. In Tashkent, the Oirats could not defeat the Kyrgyz. Instead, they invited Koshoy to negotiate. Rabdan proposed that Tashkent should become a shared city for both the Kyrgyz and Oirats. Koshoy accepted the proposal. Koshoy then took the young Kazakh boy with him to Ketmen-Tobo. But Kairat did not help with the cattle and often kept to himself. One day, he fled to a cave and told Koshoy, "I cannot sleep in a doorway. I am not a slave." When Koshoy asked about his family and lineage, Kairat refused to reveal his identity. Koshoy ordered one of his men to make sure the boy was well fed. Kairat continued to say that one day he would become khan of the Kazakhs.

Kairat's Answer to Rabdan Nysha taught Kairat, the future Ablay Khan, military tactics. One day, Kairat asked permission to return to the Kazakh lands. On his journey, he was stopped by Rabdan's son. A fight broke out, and Kairat killed him. Rabdan ordered Kairat to be arrested and brought before him in a yurt. He asked, "Why did you kill my son?" Kairat answered bravely, "I did not kill your son. The curse and tragedy of the Kazakhs killed him. The cries of the Kazakh women who suffered in this war killed him." Rabdan was deeply impressed by the boy's courage and wit. Instead of punishing him, he released Kairat and allowed him to continue his journey toward his homeland.

Koshoy and Ablay Prepare for the Oirat Defeat In 1727, Tsewang Rabtan died, and the Dzungar state became weakened by a struggle for power. Taking advantage of the Oirats' scattered condition, Kazakh Khan Jolbors visited Er Koshoy together with Ablay, whom he introduced as the grandson of Ablay Sultan. They discussed how the Kyrgyz and Kazakhs could use the weakness of the Oirats to drive them from their lands.

Jolbors did not know that Ablay had spent three years among the Kyrgyz. Koshoy admired the young man and remembered that he had dared to kill Rabdan's son. Ablay explained that he had learned military tactics and the art of warfare from Nysha.

The Fall of the Dzungars in the Kyrgyz and Kazakh Lands Cheban Dondok was the Dzungar commander. Jolbors Khan, Er Koshoy, Er Soltonoy, Nysha, Bishkek, and the other Kyrgyz and Kazakh leaders gathered their warriors and prepared for battle. Bishkek led 200 warriors in the first attack. Soon, thousands of warriors from both sides were fighting. During the battle, Nysha told Koshoy that he had met the Manchu-Chinese emperor, who said he had 100,000 troops near their lands. He also opposed the Oirats and was ready to help if they needed him. The battle ended with the defeat of the Oirats. Bishkek reached the Dzungar flagstaff and pulled down their banner. From that day, he became known as Bishkek the Banner-Taker. The Oirats were driven out of the Kyrgyz and Kazakh lands.

In 1731, the Manchu-Chinese forces finally destroyed the power of the Dzungars in the eastern regions, including the Orkhon River basin

CHARACTER ANALYSIS

Er Eshim

Er Eshim, historically known as Esim Khan, was a Kazakh khan who ruled the Kazakh Khanate from 1598 to 1628. He was the son of Shygai Khan and became one of the important rulers of the Kazakh Khanate during a period of political rivalry and military conflict. Historical sources associate him with military campaigns, the reunification and strengthening of the Kazakh Khanate, and the legal tradition known as *Esim Khan's Old Path*. He is remembered as a strong ruler who combined military leadership with political authority and concern for maintaining order among the Kazakh tribes. His historical reputation provides the foundation for portraying Er Eshim as a powerful and complex leader in the novel.

Courageous Er Eshim is fundamentally courageous. His courage comes from an inner willingness to face danger rather than from a desire to appear heroic. He does not easily surrender when confronted by powerful enemies or difficult circumstances. As a leader, he understands that fear is natural, but allowing fear to control his decisions can endanger an entire people. His courage therefore has both physical and moral dimensions. He is willing to accept personal danger, make difficult choices, and stand firmly behind his principles. This trait makes him a commanding figure, but it also gives him a serious sense of responsibility. His bravery is controlled, purposeful, and connected to his duty as a ruler.

Determined Er Eshim is highly determined. Once he believes that a goal is necessary for the survival or stability of his people, he does not easily abandon it. His determination gives him endurance during periods of political uncertainty, military danger, and personal difficulty. He is not a leader who changes direction simply because circumstances become unfavorable. At the same time, his determination is more than stubbornness. He evaluates situations, considers his responsibilities, and then commits himself to a course of action. This makes him persistent without making him careless. His strong will is one of the qualities that allows him to maintain authority when others become discouraged, divided, or uncertain.

Just Er Eshim is just. He believes that leadership requires fairness, responsibility, and respect for established law. His sense of justice is not limited to rewarding loyalty or punishing enemies. It reflects his understanding that a stable society requires rules that apply beyond the personal interests of individual rulers. He expects people to respect authority, but he also recognizes that authority itself must serve a larger purpose. This quality gives his leadership a moral foundation. He is not simply interested in winning battles or gaining territory. He wants order to exist among the people he governs. His commitment to justice also strengthens his reputation as a ruler whose authority rests on more than fear.

Unifying Er Eshim is deeply unifying. He understands that divided tribes are vulnerable, while cooperation gives them greater strength and security. His leadership therefore reflects a strong instinct toward bringing different groups together around common interests. He does not view tribal differences as reasons for permanent hostility. Instead, he sees unity as essential to political stability and survival. This quality makes him particularly important in a historical setting where alliances can determine whether a people remains independent or falls under outside control. His unifying nature also reveals his broader vision as a ruler. He thinks beyond individual victories and personal authority, seeking a stronger political community that can survive challenges from both internal rivals and external enemies.

Chaa Biy

Chaa Biy is remembered in Kyrgyz historical tradition as an important leader and ancestor of the Solto people. Sources connect him with the political and military struggles of the seventeenth century, including the conflict between Esim Khan and Tursun Khan. He is also associated with resistance against the Dzungars and with the development of the Chüy Valley. Traditional accounts portray him not only as a warrior but also as a strategist, land developer, and community leader. His descendants became an important ruling lineage among the Solto. These traditions present Chaa Biy as a powerful figure whose influence extended beyond warfare into politics, agriculture, leadership, and the long-term strength of his people.

Strategic Chaa Biy is highly strategic. He understands that survival depends on more than physical strength and that a leader must think beyond the immediate battle. His political and military decisions show an ability to recognize changing circumstances and choose the right moment to act. He understands the value of alliances and cooperation, especially when facing stronger enemies. His connection with Esim Khan reflects this wider political thinking, as Kyrgyz leaders participated in broader struggles against common enemies. Chaa Biy therefore represents the kind of leader who studies the situation before making a decision. His strength lies not only in fighting but in understanding how people, territory, alliances, and political power are connected.

Resourceful Chaa Biy is resourceful. He does not depend entirely on warriors or weapons to strengthen his people. Traditional accounts associate him with irrigation and the development of land, including a canal remembered as Chaa Alysh. This shows a practical understanding of what a community

needs to survive and prosper. He recognizes that fertile land, water, livestock, and organized settlements are as important to a people's future as military victories. His resourcefulness also appears in his ability to respond to changing political and military circumstances. Rather than relying on one method of leadership, he uses whatever knowledge, skills, relationships, and resources are available to him.

Resilient Chaa Biy is resilient. He belongs to a generation that faces repeated warfare, political instability, and pressure from powerful neighboring states. Yet his character is defined by persistence rather than surrender. He continues to protect his people and maintain their position even when circumstances become dangerous. His resilience is also connected to the survival of the Solto leadership tradition. Later generations continued to regard Chaa Biy and his descendants as an important ruling lineage. This gives his character a deeper meaning: he is not simply a man who survives hardship himself, but a leader whose decisions help create continuity for those who come after him.

Industrious Chaa Biy is industrious. His reputation is not based solely on warfare or political authority. Traditional accounts remember him as someone who worked to make the land more productive, particularly through irrigation. This quality gives him a practical and constructive side that distinguishes him from a leader whose only purpose is conquest. He understands that protecting a people also means creating the conditions in which families can live, raise livestock, cultivate land, and build stable communities. His work on irrigation symbolizes this attitude: he leaves something useful behind rather than seeking only personal glory. Through this quality, Chaa Biy becomes a builder as well as a warrior and political leader.

Khan Teyish

Khan Teyish, also known as Teyish Khan or Teyish Biy, was an important Kyrgyz leader of the seventeenth century. Historical sources identify Teyish with the Kyrgyz leader Ties who was associated with the rule of Kazakh Khan Tooke (Tauke). Shokan Valikhanov viewed the friendship between Tooke (Tauke) and Teyish Khan as a reflection of Kyrgyz–Kazakh unity. Kyrgyz genealogical traditions identify Teyish with the Solto lineage, although sources differ about his exact parentage. In the 1670s, Kyrgyz groups are traditionally said to have recognized Teyish as their khan. His period of leadership came during increasing Dzungar pressure, making unity, political cooperation, and the defense of Kyrgyz interests central to his historical importance.

Patriotic Teyish is deeply patriotic. His leadership is closely connected with the protection of the Kyrgyz people and the preservation of their homeland during a period of growing external pressure. He understands that being khan is not simply a position of authority but a responsibility toward his people. His relationship with Tauke Khan also reflects a broader form of patriotism because he recognizes that Kyrgyz interests can be protected more effectively through cooperation with neighboring peoples. His loyalty is directed toward the survival, dignity, and future of the Kyrgyz community. This makes his patriotism active and purposeful rather than merely emotional. He sees the protection of his people as the central duty of his leadership.

Decisive Teyish is decisive. As a leader facing political instability and powerful enemies, he cannot afford to remain uncertain when important choices must be made. He accepts the responsibility of making difficult political and military decisions and understands that hesitation can endanger his people. His alliance with Tauke Khan demonstrates his willingness to act when cooperation serves a larger purpose. Teyish does not wait for every difficulty to disappear before making a decision. Instead, he evaluates the circumstances and chooses a course of action. His decisiveness gives his leadership direction and helps others understand where they stand. This quality is particularly important for a ruler responsible for maintaining unity during a dangerous period.

Steadfast Teyish is steadfast. He remains committed to his responsibilities even when circumstances become increasingly difficult. His period of leadership coincides with serious pressure from the Dzungars, and his historical image is connected with the effort to preserve Kyrgyz political strength. His steadfastness means that he does not easily abandon his principles, his people, or his political commitments. He understands that a leader's strength is tested most severely when circumstances are unfavorable. Rather than allowing fear, pressure, or political uncertainty to determine his actions, he maintains his

position. This gives him a dependable quality as a leader. His people can look to him for stability when the surrounding political world becomes unpredictable.

Diplomatic Teyish is diplomatic. His close relationship with Tauke Khan is one of the clearest examples of this quality. Historical sources describe their friendship as representing the unity of the Kyrgyz and Kazakh peoples. Teyish understands that military strength alone cannot guarantee political security. Strong relationships with neighboring rulers can create additional protection and opportunities for cooperation. His diplomacy therefore comes from recognizing common interests rather than simply seeking personal advantage. He is willing to work beyond tribal boundaries when cooperation benefits his people. This ability to build political relationships makes him more than a military leader. It shows that he understands the importance of negotiation, alliances, mutual interests, and long-term political stability.

Koshoy Biy

Koshoy Biy is an important Kyrgyz leader whose historical and epic traditions preserve two closely connected images: the historical Koshoy Biy, son of Talkan, and the older heroic Koshoy of Kyrgyz oral tradition. Historical sources identify Koshoy Biy as a Solto biy who lived approximately from 1674–75 to 1754–55. After the Dzungar and Kalmyk invasions scattered Kyrgyz communities, he helped gather people in Ketmen-Tobo and, together with Mamatkul Biy, led resistance against the Kalmyks. He also raised the children of his deceased brother Konurbay, including the future hero Jaiyl Baatyr. These traditions present Koshoy as a powerful figure of protection, endurance, loyalty, and leadership.

Loyal Koshoy is deeply loyal. His loyalty is directed toward his family, his people, and the leaders whom he considers worthy of trust. He does not easily abandon those who depend on him, even when circumstances become dangerous. Historical tradition remembers him as someone who cared for his deceased brother's children and raised them as his own, including Jaiyl Baatyr. His loyalty therefore goes beyond words or temporary alliances; it is expressed through long-term responsibility. In the larger Kyrgyz tradition, Koshoy also remains committed to restoring scattered Kyrgyz communities and protecting their connection to their homeland. His loyalty makes him a dependable figure whose relationships are built on trust and lasting obligation.

Protective Koshoy is strongly protective. His leadership is closely connected with defending people who are vulnerable to invasion, displacement, and political instability. After Kyrgyz communities were scattered, historical tradition associates him with gathering people together and helping them resist the Kalmyks. In the epic tradition, his protective nature becomes even stronger: he organizes warriors, prepares weapons, and thinks about the safety of families and the future of the Kyrgyz people. Protection is therefore central to his understanding of leadership. He does not see strength as something meant only for personal honor. He believes a powerful man should use his strength to defend his people, preserve their homeland, and protect those who cannot defend themselves.

Patient Koshoy is patient. His character is not built around impulsive decisions or the need for immediate results. He understands that rebuilding a scattered people and preparing for future struggles can take years. In the epic tradition, he gathers people, consults elders and experienced men, prepares warriors, and waits for the right circumstances before taking major action. This patience is especially important because his enemies are often stronger and more numerous. He understands that survival requires endurance as well as strength. His patience also appears in his willingness to guide younger generations and wait for the right leader to emerge. Rather than seeking quick personal glory, he thinks in terms of long-term survival and continuity.

Magnanimous Koshoy is magnanimous. He possesses a broad sense of generosity and greatness that allows him to think beyond his own position. He is willing to support others, recognize their abilities, and place the interests of the larger community above personal pride. His relationship with younger heroes, particularly his support for Manas in the epic tradition, demonstrates this quality. He does not see the rise of a younger leader as a threat to his own importance. Instead, he prepares to support and strengthen that person for the benefit of the people. This makes his leadership unusually generous. His greatness comes not only from his own strength but from his willingness to help others become strong.

Bishkek Baatyr

Bishkek Baatyr is remembered in Kyrgyz oral tradition as a warrior who fought against the Dzungar and Kalmyk invasions and became associated with the liberation of Kyrgyz lands. Traditional accounts describe him as a Solto warrior who fought alongside other prominent Kyrgyz heroes and helped defeat invading forces. He is especially remembered by the title “Tuu Jygaar,” meaning “Banner-Taker,” because of his defeat of an enemy standard. Later traditions also connect him with settlement and agriculture in the Chüy Valley, where he is said to have built a settlement, practiced farming, and encouraged others to develop the land. His historical existence and exact biography remain debated, but his place in Kyrgyz historical memory is significant.

Fearless Bishkek is fearless. He is willing to enter dangerous situations when his people are threatened, and he does not allow the strength of an enemy to determine his actions. His reputation as a warrior comes from his willingness to confront powerful invading forces directly. In traditional accounts, his role in major battles demonstrates a readiness to accept personal danger for a larger purpose. His fearlessness is not simply physical bravery. It also reflects confidence in his own abilities and in the strength of the people fighting beside him. This quality makes him an inspiring warrior whose presence can strengthen the determination of others during difficult battles.

Resourceful Bishkek is resourceful. His abilities extend beyond fighting, and traditional accounts portray him as someone who understands how people can survive and prosper after years of warfare. After the Dzungar threat weakened, he is associated with settlement, farming, gardening, craftsmanship, and the development of permanent homes in the Chüy Valley. He recognizes that defeating an enemy is only one part of rebuilding a community. People also need land, food, houses, and productive work. His ability to move from warfare toward settlement shows practical intelligence and adaptability. He can respond to changing circumstances and use his knowledge to create a more stable future for his family and community.

Adaptable Bishkek is adaptable. His character develops through different environments and experiences, allowing him to learn from people outside his own community. In the traditions surrounding him, he is associated not only with military activity but also with craftsmanship, agriculture, settlement, and contact with different peoples. This ability to adjust is especially important for a warrior living through decades of political and military change. He does not remain limited to one role. He can fight when necessary, learn when knowledge is useful, and later turn his attention toward productive community life. His adaptability makes him a more complete leader because he understands that the needs of his people change with circumstances.

Influential Bishkek is influential. His reputation extends beyond his own lifetime and became powerful enough that later Kyrgyz tradition connected his name with the capital city of Kyrgyzstan. Traditional accounts also remember him alongside other major Kyrgyz warriors who resisted the Dzungars and Kalmyks. His influence therefore comes not only from individual military achievements but from the meaning attached to his name by later generations. He represents the ideal of a warrior who protects his homeland and then contributes to its development. Even though historians continue to debate the details of his biography, his place in Kyrgyz memory demonstrates the lasting influence of the Bishkek Baatyr tradition.

THEMES

Marriage: Tradition, and Family

Marriage appears throughout the novel through relationships between Kyrgyz and Kazakhs, Kyrgyz and Oirats, and between powerful men and women from ordinary families. These marriages are not always based simply on love. They can connect families, strengthen relationships between communities, protect children, and shape the future of a family.

Sabyrkan's story is one of the clearest examples. She is the widow of Kokum Biy and the mother of Teyish, who will later become khan. After Kokum dies, she spends a full year mourning him in Aksy. During this time, she stays away from celebrations and remembers the life they shared. She thinks about his songs and poems and about how deeply he loved her. When the mourning period ends, she must begin thinking about what will happen to her and her young son.

The novel connects Sabyrkan's situation with the old Kyrgyz custom of *amangerdik*, known in Kazakh as *amengerlik*. This was a form of levirate marriage in which a widow could marry her deceased husband's brother or another close male relative. The custom was connected with keeping the widow and her children within the husband's family and preserving family and property ties. Kazakh sources describe *amengerlik* specifically as a traditional levirate custom, while Kyrgyz customary law also recognizes levirate as part of its traditional marriage and inheritance practices.

Sabyrkan knows that her future marriage will be important not only for herself but also for Teyish. She considers several possibilities, including Manap Biy and Chaa Biy, but she does not simply allow others to decide her future. Her thoughts are especially focused on what kind of man could care for her son and provide stability for the family.

Her feelings gradually turn toward Nurmanbet, her brother-in-law. One day, while Sabyrkan is walking alone and singing a song Kokum once dedicated to her, a wild pig suddenly frightens her. Nurmanbet comes to her aid. He tells her not to remain trapped in grief and reminds her that the family wants her to stay with them. This encounter changes the way she sees him.

When Nurmanbet later tells Sabyrkan that he wants to marry her, she does not accept immediately. She sets her own conditions. He must care for Teyish as his own son, and he must not take another wife. Nurmanbet agrees to her conditions. Sabyrkan's decision shows that *amangerdik*, despite being an old custom, does not erase her personal judgment. She considers her feelings, her dignity, her relationship with Nurmanbet, and above all, the future of her child.

Illustrative moment: When the feast was over, Sabyrkan's mourning clothes were removed, and she was dressed in new clothes and a new *elechek*, the traditional Kyrgyz headdress worn by married women. Jangir Sultan then spoke to the gathering. "I came with a special mission. My aunt, my father's sister Sabyrkan, is now free to marry. If anyone wishes to marry her, let him speak." Manap Biy replied, "Sabyrkan is the mother of Teyish, the son of a khan. Her late husband, Kokum, had brothers, so she may marry Nurmanbet, Kokum's brother. According to our nomadic custom and law, a widow should remain under the protection of her husband's tribe."

Love: Love in a Time of War

The story of Boom and Koshoy shows that even in a time of war, people from opposing sides can develop genuine feelings for one another. Boom is the daughter of Galdan, the powerful Dzungar ruler, while Koshoy is the young son of Talkan, a Kyrgyz leader. Their peoples are caught in conflict, yet their personal relationship develops beyond the boundaries created by war, politics, and family loyalties.

They first meet while the road through the Boom Gorge is being built. Boom is seventeen, while Koshoy is about thirteen or fourteen. When Koshoy approaches her, dismounts from his horse, and greets her with the traditional "Esender," Boom is impressed by his kindness, courage, and intelligence. Koshoy tells her that he admires her and that, if they were closer in age, he would wish to marry her. His friends are surprised that he has dared to speak so openly with Galdan's daughter.

Their relationship grows after Boom moves to the Issyk-Kul region. She asks Koshoy to become her guard and stay near her yurt. At one point, she even asks him to run away with her. Their different traditions also become part of their relationship. When Boom walks into Issyk-Kul, Koshoy reminds her that the Kyrgyz regard the lake as sacred and that their customs require people to cleanse themselves before

entering its waters. Instead of separating them, these differences allow them to learn about each other's worlds.

Their connection becomes deeper after Koshoy saves Gender, Boom's husband, from a wolf and a sudden flood. Grateful for being rescued, Gender calls Koshoy his brother and promises that, if he dies, Boom will become Koshoy's wife. Later, while traveling with Koshoy, Gender tells him that he will not participate in Galdan's war against China and will not return to the Kyrgyz lands to fight them. He then tells Koshoy that if he keeps his promise, Koshoy may marry Boom.

Their relationship eventually leads to the birth of a son. The novel makes clear that the child is Koshoy's and Boom's, although Boom must hide this from Galdan. When the elder Galdan notices that the child resembles Koshoy, Boom quickly explains that Koshoy was only her guard. Their love has become something private that must be protected from the political world surrounding them.

The story ends tragically. After Tsewang Rabtan comes to power, Boom remains in the Kyrgyz lands while Koshoy is away on missions. When Markashka comes to take her to Beijing, Boom asks for some time and travels through the Kyrgyz villages looking for Koshoy. She waits for him through the night, but he is away. In despair, believing that she will be separated from him, Boom throws herself from a rock. Kenjekara, a road worker in the Boom Gorge, finds her body and later composes a sorrowful melody in her memory.

Boom and Koshoy's story does not ask the reader to judge one people against another. Instead, it shows something deeply human: even when communities are divided by war, individuals can still meet, care for one another, and fall in love. Their story is tragic because their world does not allow that love to have the peaceful future they hoped for.

Illustrative moment: During the celebration, Koshoy suddenly learned that the young and brave warrior Galdan was his own son, the son of Boom. Koshoy took Galdan to see his mother's grave. But Galdan blamed Koshoy, saying, "I cannot be an Oirat among the Oirats, and I cannot be a Kyrgyz among the Kyrgyz." Koshoy told him, "Come with me. I will take you to your people, and you will become khan of the Kyrgyz." Galdan refused. He said, "If I become khan of the Kyrgyz, I might have to fight the Kazakhs alongside Rabdan." Instead, he decided to enter a temple and become a Buddhist monk, like his grandfather, Galdan Boshugtu Khan. Koshoy then showed him his mother's grave. Galdan stood quietly beside it and said that he could not leave the Kyrgyz lands. After that, he disappeared, and no one knew where he had gone.

Heroism: Service to the People

The theme of heroism and service to the people is embodied most clearly by Khan Teyish and the warriors who place the survival of their people above their own lives. When Eshboldu arrives disguised as a Kalmyk warrior, Teyish does not question or reject the exhausted stranger. He welcomes him, gives him food and warm clothing, and listens when Eshboldu reveals that he is a Kyrgyz man living among the Kalmyks. Eshboldu risks his life to warn Teyish about Galdan's coming invasion and the size of his army. His courage shows that service to the people can require living among the enemy and risking death to deliver important information.

Teyish also tries to protect his people before the fighting begins. When Galdan's scouts attack shepherds and seize cattle, Teyish sends envoys rather than immediately committing his entire army to war. He even challenges Galdan to single combat, offering to settle the conflict between the two rulers and spare their peoples from a larger war. Galdan refuses.

When battle finally comes, Teyish fights strategically and keeps part of his army in reserve. At Karkyra, however, his smaller force suffers heavy losses. About 3,000 Kyrgyz warriors are killed, including Alakhchyn, one of Teyish's leading warriors. Teyish continues fighting despite the growing danger and later discovers that members of the Bugu tribe have betrayed the Kyrgyz by showing Galdan hidden mountain paths.

In the final battle, Teyish again puts his people before himself. He appoints his sons Akkochkor and Kanky as commanders and tells them that if he dies, they must take the people away and prevent the Kyrgyz from being destroyed. Even after his sons are killed and he is severely wounded, Teyish repeatedly challenges Galdan to single combat. Galdan refuses. By the end, only about fifty Kyrgyz warriors remain alive.

Teyish's heroism therefore comes not only from fighting bravely, but from accepting responsibility for his people. His final concern is not his own survival but the survival of the Kyrgyz.

Illustrative moment: Teyish looked at his people and spoke his final words: "The Kyrgyz never die. The Kyrgyz will never surrender. I will die here, fighting for my people." He asked that his body be buried among the rocky mountains, where no enemy could easily find his grave. Soon afterward, Khan Teyish died. The people mourned deeply. Across the valley, the sound of lament songs rose into the evening air. Men and women remembered the heroic deeds of Teyish, his sons Akkochkor and Kanky, and the warriors who had fallen beside them. Their names were spoken again and again, so that their courage would not disappear with their bodies. The mountains remained silent, holding the memory of the fallen.

Solidarity: Unity of the Turkic Peoples Kyrgyz and Kazakhs

The novel portrays the unity of the Kyrgyz and Kazakhs through their shared resistance to the Dzungars. This relationship is especially clear in the story of Er Eshim and Chaa Biy. After Chaa Biy returns from Altai and Siberia, he spends three years with Er Eshim in the Kazakh lands. When Batur Taishi attacks the Irtysh region and the Kyrgyz living there come under Dzungar rule, Er Eshim does not see the conflict as a struggle affecting only the Kazakhs. He considers the Kyrgyz and Kazakhs brotherly peoples and prepares to fight. Chaa Biy then joins Jangir Sultan in the war.

The same unity appears again when the Dzungars launch another attack ten years later. Kyrgyz warriors led by Chaa Biy fight alongside the Kazakhs and Jangir Sultan. The Dzungars demand single combat and call for both Jangir and Chaa. Chaa refuses to fight Erinchi, the son of Altan Khan, because the two men had once been friends. Jangir accepts the challenge instead and faces Galdama in a mounted spear duel. When Galdama drops his spear and attacks with a knife, Jangir is mortally wounded. His death becomes a shared tragedy for the Kyrgyz and Kazakh warriors.

Instead of separating after Jangir's death, the warriors of both peoples unite in revenge. They fight the Dzungars near the Irtysh River for several days. Eshim, Jangir's father, arrives, and the battle continues until the Kyrgyz and Kazakhs defeat the Dzungar forces, although they suffer heavy losses themselves. Jangir's body is later embalmed and buried near the mausoleum of Khoja Ahmed Yasawi.

Through these events, the novel shows Kyrgyz–Kazakh unity through friendship, military cooperation, shared mourning, and a common defense of their lands. The two peoples do not simply fight the same enemy separately; they repeatedly stand beside one another when the survival of their communities is at stake. Historical scholarship also recognizes the importance of Kyrgyz–Kazakh cooperation during the Dzungar conflicts of the seventeenth century.

Illustrative Moment: During the Oirat invasion of the Kazakh lands, Bishkek rescued a twelve-year-old boy from a palace. The boy called himself Kairat, but secretly hid that he was the grandson of Ablay Sultan and a member of the Kazakh ruling family. He refused to work with the cattle and insisted that he was not a slave, repeatedly saying that one day he would become khan of the Kazakhs. Koshoy protected him and ordered that he be well fed, while Nysha taught him military tactics. Later, Kairat killed Rabdan's son and was brought before Rabdan. When asked why, Kairat blamed the suffering of the Kazakh people. Impressed by his courage, Rabdan released him.

Resistance: Foreign Invasion

The novel presents the long struggle of the Kyrgyz and Kazakhs against Oirat-Dzungar expansion through the actions of warriors, biys, khans, and ordinary communities. Resistance takes many forms: open battles, ambushes, military alliances, strategic retreats, and the defense of families and ancestral lands.

The theme is established through Er Eshim, who brings Kyrgyz and Kazakh forces together against the Oirat threat. His resistance is not presented as the struggle of one ruler alone. Leaders such as Chaa Biy, Kokum Biy, Manap Biy, and other warriors participate in the defense of their people. The scenes of warfare emphasize the use of the landscape itself as a means of resistance. Kyrgyz warriors move through valleys and mountains, attack suddenly, destroy enemy supplies, and withdraw before the larger Oirat forces can respond. Their knowledge of the land becomes an important advantage against a more numerous enemy.

The resistance continues through Khan Teyish, whose rule is shaped by the growing Dzungar threat. He attempts to unite the Kyrgyz and maintain cooperation with the Kazakhs. In the scenes surrounding his final battle, his refusal to surrender demonstrates that resistance is presented not simply as a military choice but as a matter of dignity and collective survival.

In the later parts, Er Koshoy and Bishkek Baatyr continue this struggle. Bishkek's development as a warrior and his knowledge of weapons and military methods contribute to the continuing defense of the people. Koshoy likewise represents endurance during a period when the Kyrgyz are scattered and under pressure.

Through these scenes, resistance becomes a collective historical experience. The novel portrays the Kyrgyz and Kazakhs as repeatedly confronting a stronger Oirat-Dzungar power while preserving their communities, traditions, homeland, and independence. The struggle therefore extends beyond individual battles: it becomes a continuing effort to prevent the loss of the people's identity and freedom.

Illustrative Moment: A particularly powerful moment occurs during Khan Teyish's final confrontation with the Dzungar army. The Kyrgyz forces are greatly outnumbered, and the enemy demands submission. Teyish refuses to surrender his people or their land. He continues fighting even after his commanders and close warriors, including Akkochkor, Kanky, and Alakchyn, are killed. Wounded and surrounded, Teyish remains on the battlefield with only a small group of warriors. His final declaration that the Kyrgyz will never surrender turns the battle into more than a military confrontation: it becomes a statement of collective resistance and national survival. The scene captures the novel's central idea that freedom requires sacrifice, endurance, and the willingness to defend one's homeland even when victory appears impossible. The battle is presented on an epic scale, while the deaths of individual warriors give the resistance its human and tragic dimension.

Homeland: Land and Displacement

When the Dzungar-Oirat invasions make the northern lands dangerous, the Kyrgyz face a painful choice: remain and fight or leave their homeland to protect their people. The decision to migrate south shows that displacement can sometimes be necessary for survival, but leaving the homeland carries its own emotional cost.

This conflict becomes clear when Boom warns Koshoy that Galdan's commander, Chagan Erchik, is preparing to attack the Kyrgyz. She urges Koshoy to lead the people south before the invasion. Talkan Biy gathers his people to discuss what they should do. Baybolot argues that they should remain and fight the Oirats, refusing to abandon their homeland. Talkan, however, fears that the Kyrgyz would be overwhelmed by the much larger Oirat army and that a direct battle could lead to the destruction of the people. He therefore makes the difficult decision to leave the northern lands and lead his people toward Aksy and Ala-Buka in the Fergana Valley.

The migration does not mean that everyone abandons the homeland. Koshoy, Er Soltonoy, and their warriors remain in the Chuy Valley to resist the Oirats and slow their advance. While Talkan leads the people toward safety, these warriors stay behind to defend the land and give the migrating people time to escape. The novel therefore presents both staying and leaving as forms of resistance and survival.

In the southern lands, Talkan and his people initially find safety. They settle in Aksy and Ala-Buka, and for a while their lives become peaceful. Then tragedy reaches Talkan's family. His sons Begish and Chegish die in the Gissar and Kulyab regions. Baybolot and Baiseyit travel to attend the funerals, but after returning, they also become sick and die. Smallpox spreads through the family, killing eighteen members in all. Baybolot, Talkan's favorite son, is among those he loses.

Talkan's grief becomes inseparable from his displacement. He had left the northern lands to protect his people from the Oirats, but even after reaching safety, he loses the people closest to him. He mourns his sons, his family, and the homeland he was forced to leave behind. His grief gradually turns into anger and a desire for revenge against the Oirats. Through Talkan's experience, the novel shows that losing one's homeland is not simply a physical migration. It is also the loss of familiar places, family connections, memories, and a sense of belonging. The southern lands provide temporary safety, but Talkan continues to carry the northern homeland with him through memory, grief, and his determination to resist those who drove his people away.

Illustrative moment: As Kalmyk forces moved into the region, many Kyrgyz fled south, toward Andijan and Aksy, and into the Alai and Pamir valleys of Central Asia. His court remained hidden, following the

ancient Dzungar Oirat tradition; only a few knew where the taishi's camp stood. Once a lama in Tibet, Galdan loved warm climates, though years in Siberia, the Altai, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan had hardened him to every climate.

At fifty, he remained lean, dark, and strong, drinking kymyz and Chinese spirits and eating raw lamb or horse meat in the Kalmyk manner.

Betrayal: Disloyalty during War

The theme of betrayal during war is most clearly shown through Tursun Khan's actions while Er Eshim is fighting the Kalmyk-Oirats. At the gathering in Talas, the nobles and tribal leaders unite behind Er Eshim as their khan and promise to defend their lands and people. Er Eshim then rides to war with Chaa Biy, Kokum Biy, Manap Biy, and other Kyrgyz warriors, leaving Tursun Khan in charge of the khanate while he is away. Er Eshim trusts Tursun to protect the people and maintain order in his absence.

The war itself places the Kyrgyz under enormous pressure. Er Eshim faces an Oirat army said to number around 30,000 warriors and uses the mountains, rain, hidden paths, and surprise attacks to weaken the larger force. While Er Eshim and his commanders are risking their lives on the battlefield, Tursun violates the trust placed in him. Instead of defending the khanate, he turns against his own people.

Tursun attacks the khanate while Er Eshim is away, imprisoning people, including women and children. He also forces the wives of fallen warriors into marriage. His actions make his betrayal especially cruel because he attacks the very people Er Eshim has gone to war to protect. The danger therefore comes from both outside and within: the Oirats threaten the land with invasion, while Tursun undermines the community from inside its own political leadership.

When Er Eshim finally returns with Chaa Biy, Manap Biy, Kokum Biy, and the other warriors, the people celebrate their survival. Their joy at seeing their leader return contrasts sharply with what has happened during his absence. The traditional purification ceremony performed for Er Eshim emphasizes that he has returned from the dangers of war, but the betrayal within his own khanate has created another conflict that cannot be solved on the battlefield alone.

Illustrative moment: While Er Eshim was away fighting the Kalmyk-Oirats, Tursun Khan remained behind as the ruler of the khanate. Instead of protecting the people entrusted to him, he turned against them. He attacked the khanate, imprisoned women and children, and forced the wives of fallen warriors into marriage. The people had believed that Tursun would safeguard their homes while their warriors were away fighting. His actions turned their own ruler into an enemy. The betrayal was especially painful because Er Eshim and his warriors were risking their lives to defend the same people Tursun was abusing. When Er Eshim returned, he discovered that the greatest danger had come from within.