

Kanımjan, and Burulkan wonder **how Kül-čoro will get across the raging river to talk with them.**

From Kül-čoro's point of view, the violence and power of the Ürgönč are described in lengthy, lyrical detail. Kül-čoro utters a soliloquy: "How shall I cross the river? How can I go back without shame? If my lord says 'Did you go?' what shall I say in reply?" He spies Ay-čürök and her ladies and maids, and his eyes flash. There are: Tolgonay, Oysalkın, Kanımjan, Alımkan, Kasıke, Akılay, Ak-bermet, Ak-šerbet, Kasımjan, Burulča, Kalıyča, Tınımkan, and Urumkan, and a number of maids. They stand on the edge of the cliff and wonder how Kül-čoro will get across.

**Kül-čoro, ashamed to turn back in front of so many girls, plunges into the water. (Tay-buurul) swims desperately, and Kül-čoro calls on Baabedin, Iliyaz, and Manas's *arbak*. Only when he invokes Manas's *arbak* does Tay-buurul flit from the water "like a swallow, like a boat, like a fish"**—then there is an aside about how much Tay-buurul cost, which required (Manas) to levy a mighty tax on Bukhara to raise the money.

Man and horse cut a fine, though wet, figure as they emerge on the far bank. The girls hide in their tents as Kül-čoro approaches, asking, **"Is it Semetey himself?"** They describe Kül-čoro and Tay-buurul to Ay-čürök and say, "If you don't believe us, go out and look!" **Ay-čürök scolds them:** "Such rumors and gossip! **Semetey is not such as he."** **She says that it is Almambet's son Kül-čoro, and Kan-čoro.**<sup>682</sup> Ay-čürök's exquisite person and adornments are described in fulsome detail. She goes out with Akılay to meet Kül-čoro. **Akılay speaks, challenging him and trying to frighten him. "Tell me where you are from, and who you are! If you try to come closer you will die. You have no manners!"**

<sup>682</sup> This is a bardic slip: Kan-čoro has stayed with Semetey, and he does not figure in the action on this side of the river until he crosses later with Semetey.

This is Akun Kan's daughter Ay-čürök! No man has ever left the presence of Ay-čürök (alive)! Speak up!" Kül-čoro beats his horse's head and says, "Let it be as you say; I am a wolf among girls; I am an envoy come from a khan!" Then he threatens Akılay, jumps down from his horse, reaches down inside comely Begimjan's gown, and flips her knobby white breast out.<sup>683</sup> Ay-čürök nearly dies of shame. Vehemently angry, she says, "What rudeness! You will die by my father Akun Kan's guards—you'll make it hard on yourself—now say, where are you going?" Kül-čoro calls her *jeŋe*,<sup>684</sup> and says he has come seeking an explanation why she took his (Semetey's<sup>685</sup>) Ak-şunkar. Ay-čürök says, "Rude boy, what of this bird? Why do you call me *jeŋe*? Who are you, and who is your father, and what is your lineage? One asks someone's name from custom; one asks a man('s position) from his figure; one asks for a word from respect." Kül-čoro replies, "*Jeŋe*, do not pretend you have not seen Ak-şunkar: you turned into an *ak bula* on the banks of Ala-köl—you turned into a white swan and escaped. I saw it: this is the hand that cast Ak-şunkar; this is the way we have come in search! You ask my lineage—do you imply that I have no lineage?"—Kül-čoro then gives Semetey's lineage, adding, "and I am Semetey's *ini*."<sup>686</sup> And if you wish to know *me*, I'll tell you: I am of Almambet's line,

<sup>683</sup> *iyiktey* ('spindle-like') *bolgon ak emček/imere karmap kaldı emi* (*STJ*, p. 137; Sarıpbekov 1994, p. 151 [erroneously with *aynektey* 'mirror-like (bright?)']). "Suave" Kül-čoro's gross act echoes *emček karmoo*, the term for the (at least theoretically still chaperoned and chaste?) meetings with the bride which were the groom's incentive to pay the bride price; see Kisliakov 1969, p. 116; cf. Hatto 1980/82, part I, p. 81.

<sup>684</sup> Respectful address for a senior female, literally an elder kinswoman; particularly in wedding customs, the wives of the bride's elder bothers. The *jeŋeler* were the agents in the premarital liaisons between bride and groom, and this may be why Ay-čürök then asks Kül-čoro, "Why do you call me *jeŋe*?"

<sup>685</sup> In the following dialogue Kül-čoro often speaks in Semetey's voice, and Ay-čürök responds as if she were speaking to Semetey.

<sup>686</sup> Lit., 'younger brother'; a general term for a junior male.

who fled from Beejin. We packed and mounted up and came here to take you; let the enemy suffer."

Ay-čürök says, "Semetey is not my equal; how are you my equal? Čin-kojo is my intended spouse. He is no less than Semetey, and Toltoy is my cousin—Toltoy is no less than you (Kül-čoro)! He is not one to let Ay-čürök be stolen. You will see hardship from Toltoy; you will die at Čin-kojo's hands! You have no teeming troops behind you, no way to take Ay-čürök! Go back and tell Semetey everything (I have said)!"

Kül-čoro says, "May a dog hear your words! Shall Toltoy and Čin-kojo cast Ak-šunkar?! Shall I be left on the steppe after Semetey lets them take you?! Semetey is a crack shot and a hero whose conquests (are so many and great that they) can't be written—can Čin-kojo withstand Ak-kelte's shots? Do they have the mettle for a fight? May Semetey not raid your people; may Semetey not seize you from Akun Kan's seat of honor and put you on the hard back (of a horse) and make you a cook in my spoilt lady Čačikey's kitchen!" Hearing this, all the girls laugh out loud.

The scene shifts to Semetey. He trains his telescope on the distance, sees Kül-čoro ford the river, sees him go in among the ladies and maids, and sees him grab at Begimjan's breast. Then he calls Kan-čoro: "Has Kül-čoro found Ay-čürök? Do they know that I am coming? How can I leave Ay-čürök? Let's go and put shame on Čin-kojo and Toltoy—let's play with the girls!" Semetey mounts Abıke's Kök-telki and has Kan-čoro take the 14 horses in train. They come immediately to the Ürgönč, which is described in long, lyrical fashion as before. When they are unable to find a ford, Kan-čoro suggests staying there for the day, looking around for a ford, and going to Ay-čürök tomorrow—or, if not, they should take off all their clothes and (hang) from the horses' harness in the current. Semetey says, "That young boy can ford the current—you have

taken leave of your senses if you don't want to! This is an auspicious day! Won't Kül-  
čoro be watching from the other side? If I flee in fear of the river, won't God strike me,  
won't Ay-čürök laugh? Let's risk death—I wish to see Ay-čürök's gleaming eyes!"

Speaking a word to the Creator, and uttering the name 𐰽𐰺𐰸 aamerden, Semetey  
beats all the horses into the water; Bakay's Boz-jorgo goes first (springing) like a goat.  
Kan-čoro is afraid, but Semetey plunges right into the water:

Calling on Baabedin,  
his hems and sleeves soaking,  
saying, "Protect me, God, protect me!  
Father Manas, make good!"  
he went along leaning on his side  
when Kak-telki went in the water—  
"Allah!" came to his lips,  
and repentance came to his words.  
When had he ever been repentant?  
When he saw a khoja he used to beat him!  
He had chewed up Jakıp Kan  
and gobbled Abike,  
had sent Köböš to his grave  
and proved his bravery;  
his Protector had been with him;  
he was the offspring of bold Manas:  
though (Manas) was dead,  
his root and offspring had increased (in Semetey)!  
Atop his saddle of white steel  
(Semetey) had mixed *arak* with *bozo*,<sup>687</sup>  
he had lived to twenty,  
but before this day, your Wretch  
had never gone on a long journey,  
had never ridden a first-rate racer,  
had never dived, risking his life,  
into a river in torrent!  
If a dervish approached he would not stand up,  
if he stood up he would not greet him;  
if a khoja came he would not get up,  
if he got up he would not greet him!

<sup>687</sup> A drink from mildly fermented millet mash.

If he saw a khoja he would pick him out,  
 he would tie his hands and feet!  
 If he saw dervishes or ishans  
 he would drive them crashing before him!  
 If he saw a dervish he would strike him,  
 he would stare at him boldly!  
 When had the wicked malefactor  
 ever been repentant?!  
 With repentance from his mouth,  
 and sparks from his eyes,  
 he missed his fine horse, and roared,  
 complaining to Kül-čoro:  
 "I have no (Tay-)buurul beneath me,  
 I have no sorrow but for Allah!  
 The time has come for me!  
 I have no hero by to mourn me,  
 I have no sorrow but for Čürök!  
 I wasn't thinking when I let you cross;  
 your father's grave—shit!  
 I drove fourteen horses,  
 but not one compared to (Tay-)buurul!  
 Kan-čoro here  
 cannot compare to Kül-čoro!"  
 Now the *pir* of the waters, Iliyaz  
 took his lead-rope  
 and dragged him out of the water.

The girls standing at the crest of the cliff ask Ay-čürök, "Is this the one called Semetey? That bird you took—is it *his*?! You would be wise to consider marrying Čın-kojo!" and they all laugh until they wet their pants.

At that moment Semetey rides up looking formidable, as if two men perched on his two shoulders, his cheeks like two sated beasts. He addresses Kül-čoro: "When will you bring news, when will you strike your foe? You amuse yourself with girls you've just met—when will you bring news (of me) to Akun Kan's city? You wait, playing on the swing with girls—you have no manhood, no honor, no sense! Don't let Akun Kan's daughter get away—let's go!"

Then Kül-čoro says, "Wait here, lord, You have no Nogoy or Kirghiz or Kazakhs under your command. I have found Ay-čürök; here are Čin-kojo whom you wish to shoot and Ay-čürök whom you wish to marry. She is beautiful! If she doesn't measure up in your eyes to Čačikey, then leave her and go, tell Akun Kan that the fiancé who wants her can have her!"

Semetey (mollified) gently upbraids Kül-čoro: "You were to invite Čürök to my pleasant land, but you have troubled her; like a trouble-maker you have not come out to take my hand and greet me!"

Ay-čürök says to Semetey, "You may say I'm your intended, but I have a cousin Toltoy and a man Čin-kojo." Semetey then becomes very angry and says, "Give me back my Ak-šunkar and I'll leave! Why should I marry you? You are old and white-haired and out looking for a husband. You're an old maid; give me my bird and I'll go right now!"

Ay-čürök says, "Old, you say! When Manas Khan was young, he raided the spacious Ürgönč with Bakay in command and, when he perceived my father Akun Kan's lofty dignity, he presented him with much of his booty. Manas and Akun Kan betrothed us then before we were born; I had the sense to (wait and) grow old! If their *arbak* don't bless me, I have my cousins Čin-kojo and Toltoy. I have honored my father-in-law Manas and waited (for you)!" She gives a short recapitulation of Kanıkey's flight to her father Temir Kan's city after Manas's death. "Now you and I are left. You say I am old; it is because you never came for me when I was young. So I flew off and looked for you! Čin-kojo raised an army, slaughtered horses and fillies, and prepared to have the wedding, but I hurried after you. If you want to see a fight, try to take Ak-šunkar!"

Kalıyman intercedes and says, "Leave off with your anger, elder cousin. Go into the white pavilion and serve *arak* and *bozo* (to Semetey), and drink." Ay-čürök quiets her

anger, prepares tea, has a two-year-old filly slaughtered, and spreads out the rectum sausage and mane fat<sup>688</sup> on the eating cloth. Semetey, Kül-čoro, and Kan-čoro eat and drink. Semetey says, "We have come a long, hard way. Let's sleep a bit, then go to Akun Kan's city."

Ay-čürök says, "Didn't I tell you? Don't you know? If you sleep out here on the steppe, Čin-kojo will see it from afar and come and take Ak-kelte from your neck, take Ay-čürök from your breast! We mustn't act like slaves' children (and stay out on the steppe). Čin-kojo and Toltoy are not ones to be afraid! Make no mistake—we should go to the white palace (of Akun Kan) now! Let's travel by night, then fulfil our desires; submerge ourselves in enjoyment; undress and go to bed (together)!" Semetey agrees, and they break camp and travel by night. Ay-čürök rides in splendor.

They draw near the narrow gate (of the city). The gatekeeper asks who is there. Ay-čürök identifies herself and gives him gold from her saddlebag; the gatekeeper is appeased, but Ay-čürök charges him not to tell anyone who has come in, and to allow the guests to pass freely at any time. Then she takes Semetey, Kül-čoro, and Kan-čoro to the guest yurt, clothes them in golden garments, and serves them sumptuous food and drink without end. Semetey, having eaten his fill, is led to a soft down bed. Ay-čürök tells the 10 young braves who stand guard to go home and tell no one that Semetey has come; "If you tell a soul, you'll lose your property and your head!" Then she fastens the door tight and sends away her maids. After going to bed with Semetey, she rises alone (Semetey is asleep) and goes back to Akun Kan's palace.

Kül-čoro decides to have a look for fun and see if Semetey and Ay-čürök are together. He goes and finds Semetey asleep and Ay-čürök gone, and wakes up Semetey:

<sup>688</sup> Delicacies.