

# Readings and Notes - Valikhanov

pp. 2 to pp. 13

## Notes

- The Nogay people have a chieftain, introduced like it is a fundamental truth
- The khan is on his deathbed
- he sends out his companions out to tell everyone what is happening
- a last feast is being prepared
- lots of repetition of the same phrases, e.g. “Nogay teeming as shadows”
- Kotokoy is 199 years old?
- he is Muslim, wants to be buried towards Mecca after his death
- he wishes a celebration, giving away velvet to women and holding a camel race for a prize camel
- the khan took in many wanderers of the steppe, man and bird alike and made them Nogay
- he passes on the care of the tribe to a warrior, Bay-mirza
- he should be generous with food and even give away his own robe to strangers
- he should also take care of a foundling who may one day become a hero
- make the boy khan when his time has come, says the old khan
- he again repeats phrases, “when my hazel eyes have passed beyond”, speaking in euphemisms
- khan asks the warrior to leave his forty, a group of trusted companions
- warrior shall leave the khan and seek out Manas, as the khan sees his potential
- by holding a Great Feast, warrior may be freed from his obligation to the khan
- again the “Nogay teeming like shadows at nightfall”
- even the trees weep as the khan died, so did the Nogay
- the Nogay build a huge mausoleum for the khan, just like he had asked of them
- the horse Kok-ala, ridden by Er-Kokco, son of khans, won the race and was showered with gifts
- the warrior does as the khan bade him and holds a feast and cares for men of other tribes
- now “Nogay that turn up their beaver-brims” is repeated
- the warrior did not leave the khan yet, he had to care for the foundling
- the boy went to school and got a saddle with a golden pommel, riding with the Nogay
- the boy, even though the warrior is highly esteemed, wants to take over the reign from his adoptive father
- if the warrior disagrees, the boy tells him to go to Manas and to leave him alone
- the boy makes a plan for moving camp to where his father's feast will be, he repeats in essence what his father told the warrior to do
- he will, on his journey, lodge with a rival, infidel khan as if he were his brother
- *he will hold the feast where the khan is laid to rest*
- he will slaughter all the cattle of his father and have 6000 butchers there
- he gathers infidel and muslim in one place, like his father said
- again, the beaver brims, there the boy is made khan by the Nogay

## Observations

- the narrator uses a lot of repetitions of the exact same phrases, like “Nogay teeming like shadows” or “when my hazel eyes have passed beyond”, “Nogay that turn their up their beaver brims”
- the khan is a Muslim, as indicated by the talk of infidels
- the khan takes in an orphan boy and makes him his successor
- the khan was apparently 199 years old, he is buried in a mound like a palace with ample gifts
- he was highly respected and thus honored in death with feasts and gifts
- the boy is only 8-10 when he is made khan
- Manas already has a reputation for being a ferocious warrior at the time the khan is alive

## pp. 58 to pp. 61

### Notes

- Manas beat a khan in joust and fighting was about to break out, but Bok-murun bade him to respect the feast
- Khan Bok-murun set out a prize of a black female camel hung with expensive jewelry and the like
- a chieftainess strips naked and takes the prize, while the crowd is highly amused
- Manas curses her for taking the camel as she is rich and never had to fear for her life for lack of food, accusing her of being greedy
- she retorts, she gave birth to 10 children, one of them named Manas, without her thighs, where would the men have come from?
- she says she has enough to get by and that she is in control of her force, which enabled her to shame men, whereas she cannot be shamed?

### Observations

- Manas behavior suggests that he had to struggle for a long time, not having enough food and money to live comfortably
- the Chieftainess is of the opinion that her status gives her the right to take the camel

## pp. 82 to pp.89

### Notes

- Khan Joloy was killed and his body cremated, such that nothing of him was left to bury, then the wind scattered his ashes
- the khan was killed by Manas
- Ac-buudan laments his master's death and the destruction of his body, then to not dishonor himself, he walks into the fire
- Manas' 40 companions attack the infidels as they lay somewhere
- they fire their **guns**, slaughtering every last man and horse
- one of them fled, Manas set out after them
- Manas recognized the Kitay and pursued him through flooding rivers
- the Kitay's horse was almost submerged
- again the listeners are addressed directly
- Manas gripped the horse's tail and ripped it out, while the steed got away
- the horse laments the death of the heroes and of its tail, wondering what both will tell their people when they return, **a talking horse**
- they shall either die or turn around and fight Manas to avenge the dead
- he goes back and tells Manas that they shall fight with all that they have
- the Kitay attacks Manas, hits his helmet/crown
- the battle axes are as broad as yurt doors
- Manas strikes back and puts him to the ground
- again addressing the listeners, as their dear hero Manas does something
- Manas returns, rides with his companions and then returns home
- Manas will go on suffering, his land is big
- again addressing the listeners
- Manas seized the Kalmak and Kitay, stole all the Kazakh's horses
- there are poor people with barely a spear and horse, the Kirgiz
- Manas took their boys, killed their warriors, stole women, girls and their belongings
- he fought for tax from Kahgar and Kokand, taught a lesson to the Ozbeks
- again addressing the listeners
- it ends with a blessing for Manas' future

## Observations

- cremating khans was not common everywhere, some consider it to be dishonorable, as it leaves nothing to be buried
- warriors are bound to their khan in life and in death, so they follow him when they failed to protect him
- Manas is also Muslim, his companions slaughter infidels
- the tribe of Manas is characterized as the good ones, as the storyteller says “your dear hero Manas” or “your dear elder ...”, also addressing the listeners directly
- the horse of the Kitay can talk?
- the warriors are characterized as fearsome and strong, with door-sized battle axes
- Manas is a good fighter, beating the Kitay without much effort
- Manas and his companions like looting
- then all of Manas’ victories are talked about, also one against the Kirgiz
- **Manas is not Kirgiz**

## Notes in class

- in this version of the text the characters are not introduced, suggesting listeners are familiar with them, while in later texts the characters are introduced
- storytellers use certain formulas: repeated endings, description of things to make it easier to remember the story
- beginning the story with the death of an important ruler is common: it creates a vacuum for new characters, creates drama, uncertainty; is relieved at the end with new ruler
- the rhyme scheme has entire words rhyming at the end of phrases, making it easy to remember
- the start has a real rhyme/idiom: probably rehearsed or it’s a common proverb
- it draws attention
- pause after the 4th line: emphasis on what was said
- typical rhyme meter is: X / X / X /
- the pommel on the saddle: khan is as necessary for a people as a saddle is for riding a horse
- recorded in norther Issik-Kul region in 1856: turmoil, wars, start of Russian colonization
- Valikhanov was on a reconnaissance mission from Russian Empire for annexation of the tribe
- V was happy to find this story told, called it “Illiad of the steppe”
- maybe the story was supposed to be a message to V. in a tumultuous time
- the khan asks for a Kazakh first, of all people, maybe message to V. (who was Kazakh)
- V. revised some lines, as they did not fit Kazakh or his opinion
- he may have misheard or purposefully changed stuff that didn’t fit him -> how much trust can we put into this transcription?
- Manas is not described like a hero, and he is not the center of the story, that changed later on
- Bok-murun may have been the original protagonist, name means “snot-nose”
- it may be kind of a parody? Bok-murun needs to earn his name first through battle or competition
- Manas wins the competition instead of Bok-murun, so he can not earn his name, is that supposed to be a surprise, or was the original story stale and they changed it?
- “Sart” - originally just someone from the flat lands, so a milkdrinker, today it’s a grave insult
- the route the khan describes and Bok-murun takes is the same route that the sarybagysh tribe takes annually: easy for the storyteller to remember, easy to emphasize for the audience, connects the audience to those heroes, as the walk in their footsteps
- almost shamanistic, connects the audience to an earlier time and gone heroes