CHAPTER 4

Ethnogenesis and the Construction of Ethnic Identities

Every morning in Ala-Too Square, in the centre of Bishkek, soldiers ceremonially raise the Kyrgyz flag, next to the statue of Lenin.[158] On the cold and rainy morning of 15 May 2003 the flag raising ceremony was attended by the President, Askar Akaev, and a number of high ranking politicians and academics. This ceremony marked the beginning of a two-day international conference on Kyrgyz statehood.[159] After the flag had been raised and the soldiers had taken their guard, the politicians and delegates attending the conference returned to the Kyrgyz National University. Here, the President unveiled a new statue of Jusup Balasagyn in front of the main entrance to the university. Balasagyn, a poet and philosopher, wrote *Kutadgu Bilig*, or *Beneficent Knowledge*[160], in 1069, which outlines laws and moral codes within an Islamic context. In his speech at the unveiling, Akaev praised Balasagyn, calling him: "[a] great fellow countryman [Russian: *zemlyak*], [a] well-known compatriot, one of the symbolic representatives of our ancient culture, [and] one of the symbols of our whole society" (Akaev 2003f: 336).[161] Akaev also noted that: "The majestic figure of Jusup Balasagyn – a sage and state-builder [Russian: *gosudarstvennik*] – finds new importance and new scope in the thousand-year memory of our people" (Akaev 2003f: 340).[162] The President argued that by linking the present with figures of the past, he was supporting a national revival, "[…] when a new epoch of power calls our people to form a national spirituality [Russian: *dukhovnost'*], in the context of universal human values. Today, it is important to return to the spiritual [Russian: *dukhovnyi*] wealth of the past, which is our great cultural heritage" (Akaev 2003f: 337).

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[158] In August 2003 the Lenin statue was removed and replaced by another statue, *Erkindik* (Freedom). See Chapter 3 for a description of the removal of the Lenin statue.

[159] The conference, "The Development of Statehood within the Conditions of Interaction of Nomadic Groups and Settled Oases in the Area of the Great Silk Road", was a key part of the statehood celebrations which mainly functioned to support the government's claim to 2,200 years of statehood, rather than offer an opportunity to critique and question the legitimacy of such notions.

[160] This is a general interpretation of the title. Rafis Abazov (2004: 83), however, translates the title as "Knowledge which Gives Happiness". See Balasagyn (1998) for an English translation of the text.

[161] Akaev delivered this speech in Russian.

[162] *Gosudarstvennik* could be translated as "statesman"; however, I find that "state-builder" matches Akaev's usage more closely.



Figure 4.1 – Statue of Jusup Balasagyn in front of the Kyrgyz National University (Photo: Author)

At the same time, Akaev added another dimension to the relationship with Balasagyn. He stated that Balasagyn was a leader of a Kyrgyz *plemya*, Chigilei, which today is argued to be the ancient name of the *plemya* Cherik. In his closing remarks, the President announced: "By opening the monument to Jusup Balasagyn, we, his descendants, carry out the sacred duty to the great son of Kyrgyzstan" (Akaev 2003f: 342) (i.e. to continue to improve and strengthen the "state" and to focus on the moral development of the people by drawing on social values elaborated through the government's account of history). This representation places Balasagyn within a *sanjyra* of the Cherik *plemya*, but also as part of an officially sanctioned genealogy of the Kyrgyz people. This latter ascription promotes him as a national hero, whose actions and moral virtues should be emulated today.

These actions and morals are encompassed in Akaev's use of the Russian term "*dukhovnost'*", which translates into English as "spirituality". However, this does not describe a set of beliefs connected with a form of religion, but instead employs spirituality to refer to a set of morals connected to the maintenance of the Kyrgyz ethnic values, as Akaev has described them through the seven precepts he formulated from his reading of the *Manas* epos (see Chapter 5). Morality, as Caroline Humphrey has described, is an "evaluation of conduct in relation to esteemed or despised human qualities" (Humphrey 1997: 25). This is the kind of evaluation that Akaev uses to express his notion of *dukhovnost'*, to evoke a series of moral values which are elaborated through descriptions of the ancestors and act as a guide for the "Kyrgyz people". This association of a set of moral virtues with a genealogy of national heroes will be explored in the next chapter in the discussion of "exemplary figures" (Humphrey 1997), and is analysed in connection with the techniques of liberal forms of governance.

Akaev's constructed genealogy clearly links the Kyrgyz people of today and Balasagyn by a number of moral values. This genealogical form is not tracing an individual descent line, but a genealogy constructed on the national level. In this chapter, I analyse how the commemoration of historical figures, such as Jusup Balasagyn, help to create what could be imagined as a genealogy of the Kyrgyz people.[163] I begin by examining criticism of the late Soviet and post-Soviet ethnology by Russian academics. The social scientists engaged in ethnic studies since the collapse of communism have been reassessing the work of ethnogenesis, what I will describe for now as the study of the origins and development of ethnic groups, and are advocating new theoretical directions. Nevertheless, ethnogenesis still remains a popular academic discourse. In particular, I focus on former President Akaev's sympathy for the work of Lev Gumilev, a prominent theoretician of ethnogenesis, and examine the ways in which he has applied this discourse in his vision of a Kyrgyz nation and state.[164] I then trace elements that helped to structure this theoretical field through the Tsarist and Soviet eras. Gumilev's

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[163] This theme stretches into the next chapter where I investigate how this has been created and why the nation-building project has adopted this formation.

[164] A further note of explanation is required here to avoid confusion. In accordance with Stalin's definition, a "nation" is a descriptive term for ethnic groups that are recognised to have displayed a number of characteristics of distinctiveness and have (created) recognised territories (see Olcott 1995). This is not, however, as it is in the West, a depiction of citizenship. These terms are kept separate in the Soviet and post-Soviet imagination. Therefore, in the case of Kyrgyzstan, there are roughly ninety nationalities (including Kyrgyz, Uzbek, Russian, etc.), but all those nationalities living in Kyrgyzstan are Kyrgyz citizens.

work can also be contrasted with that of Yulian Bromlei, another well-known academic who developed a different variant of ethnogenetic theories, in order to show the range of debates that existed within the discipline.[165] Finally, I raise some questions which will lead into a discussion as to how ethnogenetic studies are being used in the Kyrgyz Republic. However, let us focus first on the debate about ethnic studies immediately before and after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Ethnic studies in the 1990s

The reforms introduced by Gorbachev in the 1980s permitted Soviet scholars to reconsider the directions of their disciplines. Academics were particularly divided over the study of ethnogenesis, a discourse concerned with the establishment of continuous social groups and group identity, those having similarities in language, customs, territory, and economic life; supported by historical analyses of the group's development. Ethnogenetic studies had (and continue to have) important political implications. They were used to support the leadership's ideological position that ethnic groups needed to be presented as developing into socialist societies. With the introduction of Gorbachev's more liberal policies, academics were able to expand the parameters of the ethnogenesis discourse somewhat. In 1990, Anatoly Khazanov remarked that "[…] Soviet anthropology is at present at the crossroads in matter [*sic*] connected with the general theory of ethnicities and particularly in its application to the ethnic situation in the USSR" (Khazanov 1990: 220). Ethnic studies in the USSR, Khazanov noted, were based upon the notion that ethnic groups are stable and continuously transmit their social structures from generation to generation. However, this did not, as he argued, explain or moderate the rising ethnic tensions visible in various parts of the Soviet Union. It was his hope that the social sciences would move beyond this impasse to be able to adopt a multiplicity of views.

A few years later, Valery Tishkov lamented that, as we will see in the case of Kyrgyzstan, *ethnos*, a distinguishable set of ethnic characteristics as officially defined by the Soviet administration, and ethnogenesis were still the most "[…] powerful and sacred categories in post-Soviet anthropology and in public discourse" (Tishkov 1994: 88).

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[165] Serguei Oushakine (2005) discusses the lasting influence of these theorists in his examination of discourses of ethnicity in post-Soviet Russia.

Although Tishkov was writing not long after the collapse of the Soviet Union, it was clear that in many cases ethnogenesis was one of the biggest interests in post-Soviet academic discourses and regarded as "sacred", as he described it, because it supported many ethno-nationalist political ideologies. Furthermore, older scholars rebuked many criticisms of the state of ethnic studies. The established academics asserted their seniority over the new scholars, who were "[...] simplistically presented as naïve newcomers lacking understanding of the theoretical depth of the 'domestic school', and at the same time lacking proper patriotism" (Tishkov 1994: 89).[166]

Together with these criticisms, a growing awareness of Western models of ethnic studies began to challenge previous Soviet ethnogenetic discourses. For example, although the theories of Lev Gumilev, one of the most popular theorists of ethnogenesis since the 1960s, have become highly influential in post-Soviet society, as they provide the flexibility to be used in new nation-building projects; his work has been stereotyped as an outmoded model (Shnirelman & Panarin 2001). In their criticism of their Russian colleagues, Viktor Shnirelman and Sergei Panarin argue Gumilev's theories are highly dangerous. They attack Gumilev's judgment of history as born of a patriotic viewpoint which has led to "[...] extreme subjectivisim, fed by a priori assumptions and ethnic stereotypes" (Shnirelman & Panarin 2001: 5). They accuse Gumilev of leaving historical events and other significant information out of his theories, as these do not fit with its logic. They continue by saying: "Gumilev's adoption by principle of historical amoralism, which allows his theories to be used by political extremists, is combined with deeply conservative attitudes adopted from Eurasianists" (Shnirelman & Panarin 2001: 14).[167] Finally, they state: "Gumilev was not the 'father of ethnology' but the prophet of dilettantes and xenophobic half-educated people – the kind of people who are filled with a furious desire to provide humanity with a new version of universal history" (Shnirelman, 2001: 15, see also Dragadze 1980: 163-164).[168]

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[166] See also Tishkov (1997) where he describes ethnic studies in Soviet social sciences.

[167] Interestingly, Gumilev's studies of Eurasia have led the President of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbaev, to name the Eurasian National University in Astana, the capital of Kazakhstan, in Gumilev's name to honour his work on the subject.

[168] Gumilev was often noted as the "father of ethnology" as his particular methodology was quite a nuanced approach in Soviet social sciences.

Ethnogenesis and Lev Gumilev

Lev Gumilev (1912-1992), the son of Anna Akhmatova and Nikolai Gumilev (both prominent poets who suffered under Soviet repression[169]), was an eminent historian and geographer from 1960 to 1988. He had been sentenced to hard labour in *gulags* several of times in the 1930s, served in the Second World War, and again was incarcerated in a *gulag* from 1949 until 1956.[170] Although he managed to establish himself as an academic and retain a post in Leningrad State University, he was closely monitored. Only during *perestroika* was he allowed to publish his most famous work, *Etnogenez i biosfera Zemli* (Russian: *Ethnogenesis and the Earth's Biosphere*).[171]

Since that time, his work has become very popular. Although his academic work was restricted throughout his career, his theories of ethnogenesis do not necessarily reflect an anti-Soviet agenda. It was instead the way in which they could be interpreted as grounds for independence, particularly by ethno-nationalists leaders. His theories are prominent not only in Kyrgyzstan, but throughout the former Soviet Union.

Gumilev's theory of ethnogenesis[172] was distinctive because of its focus on biology, as opposed to socio-political factors. This was a theoretical interest he developed from the work of Sergei Shirokogorov (1887-1939), an ethnologist who worked in the Russian Far East and China.[173] Shirokogorov (2002) viewed mankind as representing another biological species and divided into ethnic units. Expanding this view, Gumilev argued that *ethnos* "[...] naturally developed on the basis of an original stereotype of behaviour of a collective of people, existing as a power system (structure), opposing itself to all other similar collectives, proceeding from a sensation of komplimentarnost' [Russian: 'complimentarity']" (Gumilev 1989: 481). *Komplimentarnost'*, as Gumilev defined it, could potentially have positive and negative effects. It was a "[...] sensation of subconscious mutual sympathy (antipathy) of the individuals, determining the division between 'ours' and 'others'" (Gumilev 1989: 478),

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[169] Nikokai Gumilev – born in 1886, executed in 1921. Anna Akhmatova – born in 1889, died in 1966.

[170] Gulag describes a network of forced labour camps, or in this case, one particular camp. It is an acronym, which expanded is rendered in Russian as: *glavnoe upravlenie ispravitel'no-trudovykh lagerei* (The Chief Administration of Correctional Labour Camps).

[171] He had published other work during the 1970s, but this was regarded as one of his most important works.

[172] Much of the terminology used to describe ethnogenetic theories is in Russian, unless otherwise indicated.

[173] Shirokogorov's (2002) views has underpinned many scholars' concepts of ethnogenesis.

therefore acting as a form of self-awareness.[174] He argued that *komplimentarnost'* was close to "[…] patriotism, and is found in the competence of history for it is impossible to love people, not respecting their ancestors" (Gumilev 1989: 225). However, he argued it sometimes becomes a negative attribute on an inter-ethnic level in the form of chauvinism.

Gumilev argued that while *ethnos* was naturally occurring, it was born out of a desire for fundamental change. This desire for change he termed *passionarnost'* (Russian: "passionarity"). "[P]assionarnost' is the ability and aspiration towards changing the environment, or, translating this into the language of physics – breaking the inertia of a modular condition of environment" (Gumilev 1989: 257). Gumilev called *passionarnost'* "factor x" – that which caused the change in a social group. In the biosphere, social groups received energy from the cosmos, which built up a well of *passionarnost'*, essential to make change. Gumilev, drawing from the work of Vladimir I. Vernadskii (1863-1945), a famous mineralogist and public figure in Russia who wrote extensively on the biosphere, argued that the source of free energy in the planet is from living organisms and the surrounding environment. It was Vernadskii's theories that led Gumilev to argue that *ethnos* occurs naturally. Furthermore, taking Vernadskii's ideas as a basis for his thesis, Gumilev stated: "our planet receives from the cosmos more energy than is necessary for the maintenance of the balance of the biosphere that goes towards an excesses generating [...] among people – a passionarnost' push or explosions of ethnogenesis" (Gumilev 1989: 308). Within the biosphere this is the most intimate relationship between society and nature.

Shnrielman and Panarin have summarised Gumilev's view of ethnogenesis as:

> [...] the birth of an ethnos [is formed] by [the] appearance of a small group of people, united by common sympathy and a great feeling of patriotism, who are prepared to sacrifice personal prosperity and even their lives for the achieving of their projected goal. In its name they are ready to break with their usual norms of behaviours, i.e. with the existing stereotype (Shnirelman & Panarin 2001: 10).

Ethnogenesis was a popular form of analysis since the 1930s "[with the growth] of 'Soviet patriotism,' or nationalism, […] scholars were urged instead to study the formation and evolution of peoples living in the USSR" (Shnirelman 1996: 10).

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[174] However, in the Soviet theories, there is very little consideration of ethnic self-awareness or self-consciousness forming as the result of actual or perceived conflict or deprivation. This was, however, a feature of some work on ethnicity in the West, particularly in the 1970s. See Dragadze (1980).

Gumilev's theories also had implications for politicians who wanted to mobilise people as nationalities and break away from the Soviet Union. However, the development of ethnogenesis was not a specific development of Soviet social studies. Ethnic studies have a much longer history going back to a series of reforms in Tsarist Russia. The reforms introduced in Russia in the 1820s were developed out of a discourse on how to structure education and train people's minds and bodies in order to create a coherent nation. Such views were based on the work of the German scholar Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762-1814). Fichte's (1968) vision, to educate children in nationalist ideology, laid the foundation for Gumilev's description of ethnogenesis.

Antecedents of ethnogenesis

In his *Addresses to the German Nation*, Fichte outlined an idea for the construction of the German nation through education. He argued that not only would people see themselves as a separate *ethnos*, but through education, they would train future generations to act in defence of this identity. His views were no doubt influenced by his reaction against the French occupation of parts of Germany in 1808 when he delivered these lectures in Berlin. Furthermore, he gained the support of a large segment of the public who also tired of the occupation and were galvanised by this patriotism.

A German nation, according to Fichte, could only be achieved by unifying the people. In his opening address Fichte stated:

> Only of Germans and simply for Germans, I said. In due course we shall show that any other mark of unity or any other national bond either never had truth and meaning or, if it had, that owing to our present position these bonds of union have been destroyed and torn from us and can never recur; it is only by means of the common characteristic of being German that we can avert the downfall of our nation which is threatened by its fusion with foreign peoples, and win back again an individuality that is self-supporting and quite incapable of any dependence upon others (Fichte 1968: 3).

In Fichte's view, the struggle to achieve unity would be painful. Difficulties and hardships were necessary, but in order to reach their goals, the Germans must not be made prisoners to these pressures. He stated the only way to achieve this new notion of nationalism was "[…] a total change of the existing system of education that I propose as the sole means of preserving the existence of the German nation" (Fichte 1968: 11).

Fichte's new system of education focused on training the whole person. He noted: "Accordingly, as the old system was able at best to train some part of man, so the new must train man himself, and must make the training given, not, as hitherto, the pupil's possession, but an integral part of himself" (Fichte 1968: 12).

In the late 1820s, education reforms in Russia introduced new laws in order to train students in "national" subjects. This was a reaction by Tsar Nicholas I to the Decembrist uprising of 1825. The focus on "nationalism" in these reforms indicates a type of ethno-nationalism influenced by Fichte's views. Through these reforms, Nicholas I reasserted his autocracy. It was a time, which Alexander Vucinich described as: "[...] the era of official nationalism, of nationalism by decree" (Vucinich 1965: 247): a concern on stressing a duty to the nation mixed with paranoia. Nicholas I made professors and students sign statements declaring that they did not belong to any secret societies and instituted a number of limiting measures. In 1826 he created a new organisation, the Supreme Censorship Committee which was made up of members of the Ministers of National Education, Foreign Affairs and Internal Affairs. He also created a new censorship decree, much harsher than the existing one of 1804. The emphasis of this new degree was "[...] to be concentrated on (*a*) science and education; (*b*) morality and internal security; and (*c*) the orientation of public opinion" (Vucinich 1965: 247).

At this time, significant changes took place within the sciences. The new emphasis of the education system included a greater concentration on educating the children of the aristocracy. The new laws laid down by Nicholas I made it more difficult for middle and lower classes to receive an education.[175] "The gymnasiums, as college preparatory schools, were to concentrate on educating the children of the gentry and government officials. Parish schools were to be opened for the peasantry, to give them as much education as seemed fit" (Vucinich 1965: 251). The children of the gentry and government officials were privileged in their education and also status. This did not mean that lower classes were completely excluded from higher levels of education, but their numbers were almost a token gesture in comparison with the number of upper class children that were admitted to university.

Count Sergei Uvarov (1786-1855), who was the Minister of National Education from 1833 to 1849, developed many of these reforms. In 1832, just before he became the

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[175] A gymnasium statute in 1828 meant that the way schools taught subjects and who the students they taught completely changed. A later reform in 1835 basically ended university republicanism as outlined in an 1804 education charter.

education minister, Uvarov announced the slogan for a "Russian system" of education: "Orthodoxy, Autocracy, Nationality" (Russian: "*Pravoslavie, Samoderzhavie, Narodnost*"). These three elements were presented as fundamental and closely interconnected components of Russian ethnic identity. These values "[...] raised the flag of old-fashioned patriotism and rang a proud affirmation of native values. It proffered a cogent outline of the dynamism, content, and form of Russian development" (Whittaker 1984: 94). Cynthia Whittaker describes Uvarov's reforms as providing a fresh approach to education, within the context of the Tsar's attempt to limit dissent. She states:

> While Uvarov simultaneously sought to raise the quality of instruction and to create a 'new spirit' or 'morality' among youth, Nicholas [I] was primarily concerned with a 'morality even higher' than 'learning or erudition.' For the tsar, 'morality' served as a code word for loyalty to the autocracy, belief in Orthodoxy, and a pride in being Russian, all of which was to help prevent revolution and create domestic stability (Whittaker 1984: 135).

The reforms that Uvarov instigated, I suggest, were influenced by German idealist philosophers more than has previously been discussed. Uvarov had travelled and studied in German-speaking countries in his youth and would have been well aware of the work of Immanuel Kant, and the work of some of his contemporaries, such as Friedrich Schelling, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, and Fichte; and these philosophers were already being taught in Russian universities from the 1820s. Intellectuals, such as Peter Redkin and Nikita Krylov, both lecturers in law; Timothy Granovskii, a historian; and M. G. Pavlov, an agronomist, were well acquainted with Fichte's work as well as with other German idealists, and were discussing them with students. The educational reforms in Russia stressing a nationalist view were developed in an intellectual climate strongly influenced by the works of contemporary German scholars.

Uvarov's reforms were vital for the construction of Russian nationalism at the time. Vucinich argued that the Uvarov's policies:

> [gave] higher education a national character by ridding the social sciences and the humanities of all potentially subversive ideas. The rigid control of scientific thought was accompanied by an expansion of the curriculum dealing with "national" subjects; Russian history was introduced as a special university subject, as were special courses in Slavic languages and literatures (Vucinich 1965: 256).

Nationalism was the underlying focus of many subjects. For example, the new course on the history of Russia was presented in three different ways: official nationalism, Slavophilism and Westernism. Although these methods were not mutually exclusive (some authors managed to create mixtures out of a couple of these ideas), they still represented major trends in the discipline. Vucinich noted that these methods did have at least one characteristic in common: "[...] a profound belief in the use of abstract sociological or philosophical principles as a means of determining the nature—sometimes prophetic—of historical events" (Vucinich 1965: 271).

One academic who promoted the historical discourse of official nationalism, S. P. Shevyrev, saw that the "[...] social life of Old Russia provided him with models of high morality dominated by the principle of unqualified subjugation of the individual to society" (Vucinich 1965: 272). Old Russia served as a reified historical era where Byzantine influence on Russia was felt through a "[...] theological systematization of religious dogma and to moral-religious education" (Vucinich 1965: 3).

The other forms of historicism diverged from the official view, but still represented important discursive movements at that time. Those who professed Slavophilism tended to romanticise the past and stress that Russia was historically unique. Where slavophilism departs from official nationalism is that they saw the Peter the Great's reign as one which brought the end of a unique Russia, because his links to the West corrupted Russian society.[176] The Westernism form of historical study at that time "[...] assumed that historiography could and should become a science and that the historian must study the workings of universal processes within the context of individual societies—in other words, that the inner logic of history is scientifically demonstrable" (Vucinich 1965: 272).

The reorganisation of the education system in Russia, almost twenty years after Fichte had made his pronouncements, reflected a concern to orientate education around a

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[176] Just as historical investigation was to undergo change, in the mid-1850s, there was also a series of reforms in the way in which information was gathered about the peoples of Russia. Under the supervision of Grand Duke Konstantin Nikolaevich (1827-1892), young writers were drafted in to conduct ethnographic studies on behalf of the Russian Naval Ministry, whose results were published in the *Morskoi sbornik* (Russian: *The Maritime Collection*). "The writers found that peoples defined themselves, regardless of the views of the central government, according to regional material culture, work ways and religion. A diversity of working cultures existed and could combine to define nationhood" (Clay 1995: 56). The studies were quite popular and lent a new image to the non-urbanised people of the Russian Empire. Catherine Clay (1995) refers to this style of ethnographic writing as "literary ethnography". However, the Naval Ministry also sought to use the new information to administer colonialism better throughout the region. The duration of this new period of ethnographic interest was short lived. It fell in between the rise of Slavophilism and "Official Nationalism".

national ideology. In the case of the reforms instigated by Nicholas I, the focus was on official nationalism. This focus remained and was in some ways incorporated into the educational reforms of the early Soviet period. It helped generate a preoccupation with the creation of the Soviet man (*Homo Sovieticus*) – the citizen who embodies the ideals of socialism and whose ethnic identity has been superseded by their devotion of the Soviet people.

Soviet ethnography and the implications of ethnogenesis

The organisation of the people was a specific concern following the October Revolution. In the early Soviet period, Serguei Oushakine (2004) noted there was a perception of instability connected with everyday life (Russian: *byt*), which was described as a loss of self. Soviet writers and academics, such as Maxim Gorky, constructed a new public identity which many people integrated into their own experiences. In particular, the theme of "loss of self" was presented as "[…] an instability of *environment* in general and *nature* in particular" (Oushakine 2004: 394, original emphasis). Discursive shifts in literature, science and pedagogy at that time reflected an attempt to overcome this loss: "an absence of clearly articulated models of subjectivity was overcome (and overshadowed) by a very powerful and vivid rhetoric of various techniques through which a controlled environment of culture—a 'second nature' in Gorky's words—could be created" (Oushakine 2004: 394). The erasure of the self, an important condition for the modernization of Russia, in Oushakine's view, leads to what he terms as the "void subject", or "[…] a process of reducing the complexity of one's identity to 'bare life', to the 'biopolitical body', so that one's dependence on the protective shield of 'second nature' becomes all the more crucial" (Agamben, 1998: 171, cited in Oushakine 2004: 395).

In particular, pedagogy provided a way of creating new people in the socialist image. In the 1920s and 1930s, Anton Makarenko (1888-1939), a school teacher from Ukraine, developed a new pedagogic method for training children and to shape their personalities. The organisation of the children into a collective body by Makarenko "[…] acts as an external context and as an internally motivated force, a social hybrid achieved by a means of mentored training" (Oushakine 2004: 415). His method made the children aware of their place in a new system, a new way or organising themselves in relation to others in their group.

This desire for severing the ties with the past, retraining and re-educating people, and providing them with a new identity were reflected in Lenin's (1966) speech to the youth leagues in 1920. Lenin noted that in order to build communism, the youth needed to be completely re-taught and this could only be accomplished by "[...] destroying the foundations of the old, the capitalist way of life" (Lenin 1966: 283). Moreover, Lenin stated: "This generation should know that the entire purpose of their lives is to build a communist society" (Lenin 1966: 299). This is echoed in Oushakine's comments on the Soviet subject: "The successful development of an organism was considered to be a result of a double operation: severing the organism's attachment with the past was compensated by the organism's full and controlled immersion within newly created conditions" (Oushakine 2004: 416).

In a similar way, ethnographers had to redefine the categories by which they described peoples in the Soviet Union. In order for the Soviet authorities to achieve their ideal of Soviet man, they attempted to reorganise former Tsarist colonial subjects into nations which would eventually become Soviet citizens – an identity associated with the super-national Soviet state. The elaboration of nationalism in a socialist context was, to a certain extent, something of a preventative measure (Martin 2001) so that separatist nationalism would not challenge the authority of the Soviet regime. In accordance with these goals, theories of ethnogenesis were designed to study the ethnic origins of the Soviet people, formulating their research to conform to the stipulations laid down by Stalin in the 1930s (see below), which reflected a primordialist view.

This is displayed very clearly in censuses conducted by ethnographic research in the early years of the Soviet Union, which attempted to establish the dynamics of ethnic groups. In her study of Soviet censuses, Francine Hirsch notes that: "[throughout] the 1920s and 1930s, officials consulted the [official census] lists in repeated attempts to 'rationalize' the state's administrative structure and systematize the use of ethnic categories" (Hirsch 1997: 253).[177] Censuses during the imperial era had focused on two criteria: language and religion. During the Soviet era, however, religion was not used as a determinant of national identity. In early censuses, there was already a debate about the differences between *natsional'nost'* (Russian: nationality) and *narodnost'* (Russian:

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[177] It should also be noted that specific institutions in the various parts of the Soviet Union also had a significant effect on training and educating people in socialism. See Shoshana Keller (2003) on the role the Central Asian Bureau had in building up a group of native cadres or organising groups with detailed knowledge of socialism.

ethnicity), or the hierarchy of self-recognition and relative independence of ethnic groups. These two terms continued to be a complicated issue throughout the censuses. At times these two terms were given separate meanings or one was included as a subgroup of the other, however in 1926 they had been synonymous. By the mid-1930s the definition of the terms had developed a hierarchical component: "In official discourse, national'nosti were 'developed' peoples, and narodnosti were still developing" (Hirsch 1997: 267). This idea continued until the census in 1937 where *natsional'nost'* was used as the category of determining ethnic identity and *narodnost'* was dropped. Finally, in the 1939 census, the term *natsional'nost'* was used for a group which had definite territorial claims, and included nations, *narodnost'*, and national groups.[178] Hirsch states:

> Nations were defined as 'those making up the main population of a union and autonomous republics.' Narodnosti were 'peoples making up the main population of autonomous oblasts and national regions,' and 'peoples of a significant number, living compactly in defined regions and having literacy in their own language.' National groups included 'these peoples, which in their main mass live outside the USSR,' and which 'inside the USSR make up national minorities' (material quoted from archive documents cited in Hirsch 1997: 272-273).[179]

Therefore, in order to be a *natsional'nost'*, not only did a group have to comply with the categorisation of *narodnost'* they also had to have a specific territory which was considered to be theirs. This final change to the terminology supported Stalin's previous remarks concerning the national question: "*A nation is a historically constituted, stable community of people, formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up manifested in a common culture*" (Shanin 1989: 60, original emphasis).

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[178] For a short discussion about the differences between the terms, see also Tishkov (1997: 33).

[179] There were different levels of autonomy granted to territorialized groups based on their size and official status as a nationality. The largest was a union republic, such as Kyrgyz Soviet Socialist Republic (Kyrgyz SSR) however, this was not achieved until 1936; from 1924 it was the Kyrgyz Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (Kyrgyz ASSR), within the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic (RSFSR). Soviet Socialist Republics technically had the most autonomy within the centralised government system, and in the latter part of the Soviet rule, they were nominally given the right to secede. Autonomous republics were also based on nationality and had specific territorial claims and special administrative autonomy within union republics. Within autonomous republics were *krais*, or large areas grouping together disparate groups of ethnicities. Within *krias* were autonomous *oblasts*. Again, during the Soviet era official had some territorial and administrative claims. Finally, there were *oblasts* which were part of larger territorial and administrative structures, and had no separate claims.

The overlapping meanings of the Russian terms are not clarified when translated into Kyrgyz. *Natsional'nost'* in Kyrgyz is *ulut*, but this is also the term used for *natsiya* (Russian: nation). Stalin's definition of this concept was regarded by social scientists as an ethnic population that was in a majority in a union republic or an autonomous republic. As for *narodnost'*, it is expressed in Kyrgyz by *el*. *El* is used almost interchangeably with another Kyrgyz term, *kalk*, which is translated into Russian as *narod*. *Narod* can mean "a people", but it also if frequently used to mean "an uncountable mass of people" or "the masses".

The Russian terminology and its change in different censuses lead Hirsch to conclude:

> [...] the consolidation of nationalities was very much in keeping with the revolutionary agenda of transforming the peoples of the former Russian empire into a modern citizenry. The paradox is that this 'modern citizenry' was one based on a western European prototype—a citizenry divided into economically viable national-territorial units, each with an official language, culture, and history (Hirsch 1997: 278).

The divisions made by the ethnographers, in accordance with the stipulations of the Soviet administration, divided peoples along an evolutionary continuum and into various levels of national groupings. The ethnographers had to demonstrate how the peoples could be ushered through the different stages and eventually to socialism. This was the goal of ethnogenesis, but as we have seen in Gumilev's work, the construction of national identities was reinterpreted to legitimate the strengthening of ethno-national identities in the late Soviet period. However, there were other academics who developed ethnogenetic theories whose work limited the possibilities of such splits between ethnic identities.

A preoccupation with ethnos

Later work on ethnogenesis concentrated on identifying a core *ethnos*, or recognisable elements of peoples that were similar to the categories that Stalin had described (see Shanin 1989), instead of larger groups of *natsional'nosti* or *narodnosti*. While this was ostensibly the same as Gumilev's work, these scholars did not advance notions of moments of breaks with other ethnic groups. They instead, stressed demarcated ethnic boundaries within a totalising social group. One of the most important scholars in this

debate was Yulian Bromlei (1921-1990).[180] I will briefly examine the work of Bromlei briefly as he developed a distinctly different style of ethnogenesis theory than Gumilev.[181]

Yulian Bromlei was a highly influential academic and head of the history department of the National Academy of Sciences in Russia from 1976 to 1990. He discussed theories of ethnogenesis since the 1960s. Bromlei preferred to use the Greek term, *ethnos* (Russian: *etnos*), instead of the Russian term *narod*, for describing a community consciously aware of their separate ethnic identity, as the term *narod* can have a number of different meanings. Later, Bromlei refined his description of *ethnos*, creating a distinction between what he called *ethnicos* and ethnosocial organism (ESO). Bromlei used *ethnicos* to define *ethnos* in a general sense; or what he called the "ethnic phenomenon proper" (Bromlei 1974: 72). He described this as: "[...] an historically formed aggregate of people who share relatively stable specific features of culture (including language) and psychology, an awareness of their unity and their difference from other similar groups, and an ethnonym which they have given themselves" (Bromley 1980: 155).[182] This meaning was extended to groups that had the same "ethnic" features, but did not share the same socio-economic formation, which Tamara Dragadze claims was "usually a rather spurious distinction between 'socialist'-cum-Soviet and 'capitalist'" (Dragadze 1990: 207).

The ethnosocial organism, on the other hand, was part of a particular *ethnicos*: "[often] the main part of a given ethnicos is contained within the boundaries of a single state (a social organism)" (Bromley 1980: 155). In other words, this was a smaller group of people, who shared similarities with other people in their *ethnicos*, but were defined by living in one state, and belonged a "[...] definite socio-economic formation which unavoidably gives a specific character" (Bromley, 1980: 155, see also Bromley & Kozlov 1989). Bromlei recognised three different socio-economic formations, all devised from a Marxist model of evolutionary typology: *plemya* (or "tribe"); nationality (*narodnost'*); and bourgeois and socialist nations. The ethnosocial organism denoted societies at these different evolutionary stages, while *ethnicos* was a description of the *ethnos* of the people,

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[180] Bromlei's surname has been transliterated in two ways: "Bromlei" and "Bromley". To be consistent with the particular transliteration of Russian words I have chosen, I use "Bromlei", but where his name has been transliterated as "Bromley" for publications, I have left this unchanged.

[181] In the following chapter, I analyse the dynamic between Bromlei and Gumilev and the implications their work had for Kyrgyzstan. However, Bromlei's work has not been as central to the nation-building campaign in Kyrgyzstan as Gumilev's theories.

[182] See also Bromlei (1973: 37; 1974: 66). See Tamara Dragadze (1980) for a short historical description of *ethnos* in Soviet ethnography.

i.e. their historically formed commonalities which indicated a certain level of corporateness, representing a separate ethnic group, but not necessarily confined to a single state.

Bromlei's work, among others, sought to label ethnic groups and to chart their progress. This was different from Gumilev's theory which examined the explosive origins of ethnic groups, which was used to support the ethno-national rhetoric. Bromlei was an influential academic, but the limited applicability of his theories in the post-Soviet era has caused many to focus on Gumilev's work. Akaev's use of Gumilev reflects his intentions to use it to legitimate his ethno-national ideology.

Representations of ethnicity in Central Asia

As I have argued, Gumilev's ethnogenetic theories have shaped the discourse of ethnicity in Kyrgyzstan and other former Soviet republics. During the Soviet era, the study of ethnogenesis not only attempted to describe the origins of a people, it was a teleological discourse which posited that separate ethnic identities would eventually be abandoned in favour of a broader socialist identity. However, the establishment of ethnic groups, the ideological construction of those ethnicities into nationalities, and the development of the nationalities policy by Lenin which was continued by subsequent leaders of the Communist Party eventually led to a situation where perceptions of nationally constructed imagined communities became markers of identity.[183] Ethno-national leaders began to use Gumilev's theory to emphasise ethnic distinctiveness and their place in history.

Another development which strengthened national identity was the organisation of national cadres, through the 1923 policy of *korenizatsiya* (Russian: "indiginization"). This gave the nationalities a larger role in Communist Party ranks (Olivier 1990), and allowed the national cadres to recruit their "own people" to institutions, creating an ethno-national majority, which slowly minimized the effect that non-nationals had in each republic (Slezkine 1994: 433). Although the republics still had to answer to Moscow, the local elites were strengthening their positions through the access networks they had cultivated throughout the Soviet era.

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[183] See Graham Smith (1990) for a discussion on the administration of the nationality policy throughout the Soviet era.

By the late 1980s, Mikhail Gorbachev had difficulties resolving "ethnic" violence due to his slow decisions on how to tackle disputes throughout the USSR, especially those arising over territorial claims.[184] His reformulation of the policies initiated by Lenin, and his openness to reforms only encouraged ethno-nationalist leaderships with (more or less) demarcated territories to secede from the Soviet Union. This led to the disillusionment with the notion of *sblizhenie* (Russian: "coming together"). Since the policy of national delimitation in 1925, it was argued by social scientists that the "coming together" of the different ethnic/national groups would led to *sliyanie* (Russian: "merging") into a Soviet *narod* (Smith 1990). The goal of *sliyanie* became increasing difficult to realise, particularly during the Krushchev era, but notions of inter-nationality "friendship" and *sblizhenie* were still stressed by the Party. Economic reforms initiated under Kurshchev strengthened local interests and were viewed by administrators in Moscow as *mestnichestvo* (Russian: regionalism) (Smith 1990: 8), presenting another obstacle in achieving *sliyanie*. By the Gorbachev era, the notion of *sblizhenie* was almost abandoned for greater friendship between the nations. The ideal of the different Soviet republics coming together through a common cause had become less important that maintaining cordial official ties with each of the territories. Gorbachev's answer was to reassess the nationalism question to give the nations more equality, but this did not represent a form of federalism. Nevertheless, this model was challenged and encouraged several republics to declare independence. The countries and national identities that established independence or greater autonomy were predominantly Soviet creations (Ro'i 1991), and have been subject to nation-building efforts of their new political leaders. In cases such as Kyrgyzstan, the ethno-national vision, often underpinned by elements of Gumilev's theories, strengthened the desire to secede from the Soviet Union.

The effect, as Yuri Slezkine has described it, was that of a communal apartment where the occupants (the Soviet republics) had fallen out with one another:

> [The] tenants of various rooms barricaded their doors and started using the windows, while the befuddled residents of the enormous hall and kitchen stood in the center scratching the backs of their heads. Should they try to recover their belongings? Should they knock down the walls? Should they cut off the gas? Should they convert their 'living area' into a proper apartment? (Slezkine 1994: 452).

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[184] In his book focusing on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia, Thomas de Waal (2003) highlights the effects of Gorbachev's indecisiveness.

Since independence the new ethno-national elites have been vigorously engaged in their own nation-building projects. As we have seen with Akaev's discussion of Balasagyn – a strong leader who embodies the goals of a unified Kyrgyz nation – it is underpinned by ethnogenetic theories which legitimate its distinctiveness and separation from the Soviet Union.

In short, since the collapse of the USSR the new elites began reinterpreting ethnogenetic theories and employing them in the construction of independent ethno-national identities. In many ways this was a continuation of Soviet practices. For example, in his study of post-Soviet Central Asia, Olivier Roy argues that: "Nationalism was created by the administrative, cultural and political *habitus* installed by the colonial power, within an entity that had no antecedents of nationhood" (Roy 2000: x).[185] Berg Fragner contends that post-Soviet nationalism should not be seen "[...] as a break with Soviet traditions but as a more or less unconscious continuation of Soviet habits towards the 'National Question'" (Fragner 2001: 13). However, the suggestion in both Roy's and Fragner's arguments that there is a continuance of Soviet ideology with little or no modification by local elites is misleading. I argue in the following chapter that while Kyrgyzstan and other former Soviet republics have maintained many facets of the Soviet ethnogenesis project in the descriptions of their respective nations, nationalities and "peoples", this should not be seen simply as the workings of a *habitus* imposed by Soviet ideology, but an ideological field that has been actively manipulated by the new political elite. In other words, the ways in which the discussion of ethnogenesis is employed in political and some public media should not be seen as an unconscious continuation of the models used during the Soviet era. These notions are being elaborated and used in very different ways. The Kyrgyz example shows that nationalism has been reinterpreted and presented to stress other values and goals in its post-Soviet development, some of which were reinterpretations of former Soviet concepts. The construction of a Kyrgyz national identity and the vision of history that underpins it are being used to govern the people, but in a way that also encourages them to govern themselves in a new way.

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[185] Pierre Bourdieu describes, *habitus* as: "The conditionings associated with a particular class of conditions of existence produce *habitus*, systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures, predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them" (Bourdieu 1990: 53).

CHAPTER 5

The Genealogy of Kyrgyz History and Identity

Since independence, the construction of the Kyrgyz ethno-national identity has been based upon a history which emphasises the role of ancestors in their struggle to form and maintain the nation and state through their moral virtues. In the previous chapter I examined the dedication of a statue to Jusup Balasagyn. At the unveiling, former President Askar Akaev noted that Balasagyn was a great state-builder. Balasagyn is credited with having contributed to the development of the Kyrgyz state, which is described as existing in one form or another since antiquity. In the official history, he was one of a long line of moral figures who helped to develop a unified state.

In this chapter, I will examine the public recognition of historical figures in the construction of Kyrgyz history and identity. I argue that the historical figures are presented in a way that complements people's own views of their ancestors, some of whom are publicly recognised. The official representation of the ancestors as moral figures not only establishes the government's position on what it means to be a good citizen, but also provides people with a rhetoric through which they can locate their own narratives. As the official narratives becomes increasingly used in people's descriptions of their ancestors, they also adopt the moral values implicated its construction. These govern the way in which people address their ancestors and the nation. Furthermore, for those that take an interest in their ancestors, the integration of the concepts in the official narrative become organising principles through which people attempt to direct or govern other people's actions and perceptions about the importance of their ancestors and the nation they have constructed.

I begin this chapter by examining the official set of moral values that Akaev located in the actions of the historical figures that are publicly recognised and commemorated. He derives these from the epic poem *Manas*. The warrior Manas is an archetypal figure which represents Gumilev's notion of *passionarnost'* (Russian: passionarity) and morality. Following this, I juxtapose Akaev's depiction of historical figures imbued with "passion" with Weber's description of charisma. By focusing on the rhetorical construction of charisma or *passionarnost'*, I demonstrate that these figures are treated as "exemplary", to use Caroline Humphrey's (1997) term.

The discussion of exemplary figures is followed by an interview with a woman who has contributed to the construction of a museum and a monument to two of her ancestors. The way in which she articulates the meaning and importance of her family is partly articulated through Akaev's own description. Moreover, her ability to celebrate her ancestors reflects a new freedom that the Kyrgyz have experienced since the end of the Soviet Union. However, it is through this freedom, particularly through the adoption of views complementary to the official representation of historical figures, which represents a form of governmentality. I analyse the ways in which people are being governed through these adapted concepts and how it is positioned in the governing of others. However, I begin by examining the first national celebration, where I argue we find the foundation for the official description of the ancestors.

Manas

In 1995 Kyrgyzstan celebrated the 1000th anniversary of the epic poem *Manas*.[186] It was of such importance that the commemoration received an endorsement from the United Nations in 1994.[187] The event celebrated an epic, which many people described to me as the "encyclopaedia of the Kyrgyz people", underpinning their ethno-national identity. The main focus of the festivities centred in Talas, in north-western Kyrgyzstan. Here is what is believed to be the *gümböz* (Kyrgyz: burial vault) of Manas, a mythical warrior who united the Kyrgyz people. An entire complex, Manas Ordo (Manas's Palace), was constructed for the celebrations, which included a three-storey *böz-üi* (Kyrgyz: nomadic felt tent or yurt) (see Figure 5.1). The complex contained a museum about the epic *Manas*, other epics and also the region. Furthermore, there were many *böz-üi* with



Figure 5.1 – Three storey *böz-üi*. Photo taken by Kagan Arik (1995: 17).

[186] See Kagan Arik's (1995) account for a short description of the events that took place. Arik represented the University of Washington at the festivities.

[187] The resolution the General Assembly of the United Nations (1994) stated that the epic poem was "[…] a vital link in sustaining and unifying the peoples of the Central Asian region throughout their long history," and that they also recognised that the epic "[…] is not only the source of the Kyrgyz language and literature but also the foundation of the cultural, moral, historical, social and religious traditions of the Kyrgyz people".

traditional handicrafts and other items. A separate historical and ethnographic complex, Manas Aiyli (Kyrgyz: village), was also built in Bishkek for the celebrations.[188]

According to the officially-recognised version of the legend, Manas was the only son of Jakib, a wealthy Kyrgyz aristocratic, who grew up to be a strong leader. From an early age he showed great strength, especially when he protected his father from a group of Kalmyks and killed their leader. He then slowly united the Kyrgyz *plemya* and defeated the Kalmyks and the Chinese.[189] In the officially-sponsored government history, he is the most important figure in the Kyrgyz nation-building project. Manas is evoked in many contexts. He is even remembered in the national flag. In the centre there is a golden *tündük* (Kyrgyz: the latticed smoke hole in the roof of a yurt) surrounded by forty flames, representing the forty Kyrgyz *plemya* that Manas united.

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[188] It is important to note that this celebration only happened after independence. Daniel Prior (2000) has described the constant efforts to have the epic officially recognised during the Soviet era. There were publications and theatrical performances of the story in the 1940s, but no official celebrations were ever allowed. In Prior's account, he follows the particular version of the epic as performed by the famous *manaschi* (Kyrgyz: a person who can recite the epic poem), Sagymbai Orozbakov. His account was recorded, but was later denounced by the Communist Party and communist sympathisers in Kyrgyzstan (Akaev 2003c; Prior 2000; Ro'i 1991). There were concerns that his work could be interpreted as pan-Islamic and pan-Turkic. Undoubtedly, there were traces of opposition in the versions recorded by Russian ethnographers in the nineteenth century. At that time those that became known as "Kyrgyz" faced a situation where the Russian Empire, Kokand Khanate and China were attempting to gain control over the region. Certain versions of the epic may reflect the view of those people at that time caught in this power struggle (Hatto 1990). In this respect, the *Manas* epic could be compared to Caroline Humphrey's (1994) notion of "evocative transcripts".

[189] Although some people have managed to learn large sections of the epic, people often say that it is only through visions and dreams that you learn the full story. Manas visits people through dreams where he tells the story to them. When they wake up they can recite a version of the epic, which is very long. For example, one *manaschi*, Sayakbai Karalaev, recited over a half million verses in his version of the epic. Another *manaschi*, Rysbek Jumabaev, came to London in August 2004 to give several performances at the British Library. In a conversation with him following one of his performances, he told me that he had been touched by Sayakbai when he was four years old, and that he has seen Sayakbai seven times in his dreams. Although Rysbek could recite the poems, he did not do so for twenty years. However, two years previously, when he was unemployed and had no family, he began reciting the poem again. His life started to improve, and he stated that: "Manas showed him the way". When he recites the poem, it comes to him as if by inspiration. He said that when he closes his eyes and performs movements with his head and arms while seated, the poem comes to him clearly. For more on *manaschis* and *akyns* (Kyrgyz: poets) see A. Asankanov and N. Bekmukhamedova (1999).



Figure 5.2 – Manas riding his horse Ak-Kula while slaying a dragon. Statue located in front to the Philharmonic. (Photo: Author)

During the festivities in Bishkek, President Askar Akaev made a speech, extolling the virtues found in the epos: "We propose *Manas* as the companion of our life today; the union of the people, who are inspired for tomorrow; and an immortal spirit, which lives from generation to generation" (Akaev 2003d: 30). Akaev outlined seven precepts of Manas, which he had taken from his reading of the epic: 1) Unity and mutual support; 2) Interethnic harmony, friendship and cooperation; 3) National honour and patriotism; 4) Through hard, relentless work and knowledge comes prosperity and well-being; 5) Respecting the spirits of the ancestors and future generations; 6) Harmony with nature; 7) Strengthening and defence of Kyrgyz statehood (Akaev 2003d: 30-32).[190] These seven principles became the basis of the spirituality (Russian: *dukhovnost'*) – a guiding moral force – that was mentioned at the unveiling of the Balasagyn statue. They form the basis of the official charter for the future based on the (mythical) past.

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[190] I have taken these from the text of the original speech. In later versions of the principles, slight variations have occurred, but the general meaning is the same. In later editions the fifth point has been changed to: "Humanism, magnanimity, tolerance". For further descriptions of the 1000th anniversary of Manas and the seven principles, see Akaev (2002a; 2002b; 2003d) and Stephen Kinzer (2000).

In a later discussion about the importance of the epic of Manas to the spirituality of the Kyrgyz people, Akaev noted:

> Our national epos connects the succession of generations of Kyrgyz with its high moral principles and ethical standards, which have become the flesh and blood of the Kyrgyz. [...] Heroism and nobleness – two great features of the Kyrgyz national character born out of the difficult conditions of our history – have continued to develop and have received powerful reinforcement by the epos *Manas*, as a result of its spiritual [Russian: *dukhovnyi*] influence on the national consciousness of the Kyrgyz (Akaev 2003c: 12).[191]

The moral implications expressed through the notion of "spirituality" are a central concern in the representation of the ancestors. Akaev's use of the term "spirituality" carries two further connotations. Firstly, it offers a new version of moral values based on local concepts. It is a break with Soviet concepts, although they retain some traces of socialist ideals. Secondly, it develops a secular moral system, not one purely based on Islam. When this was announced in the mid 1990s, it cultivated an image of Kyrgyzstan as a secular Islamic society, receptive to Western interpretations of democracy and the development of civil society.

Lev Gumilev in Kyrgyzstan

Akaev's depiction of spirituality, however, is underpinned by Lev Gumilev's theories of ethnogenesis. In his book, *Kyrgyz Statehood and the National Epos "Manas"*[192], Akaev dedicated an entire chapter to Gumilev and what significance *passionarnost'* has for Kyrgyz statehood. Akaev's use of *passionarnost'* defines his conception of the Kyrgyz struggle for independence, a struggle which is characterised by the moral (Russian: *dukhovnyi*) virtues which he derives from the epic *Manas*.

However, I want to briefly return to the discussion, begun in the previous chapter, concerning the difference in meaning between the two ethnogenetic theories. Although Yulian Bromlei's views on ethnogenesis have been influential in the Soviet social

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[191] The editors of the English translation of Akaev's book did not clarify the differences in meaning when they translated specific words, e.g. *etnos*, *dukhovnyi*. Therefore, I have included the original Russian words in brackets were applicable (see Akaev 2002a).

[192] In this case, Akaev used Gumilev's definition of *ethnos*, which in the English version has been translated as "ethnicity".

sciences, Akaev's preferred use of Gumilev, I argue, allows him to focus on exemplary figures and patriotism.[193] Gumilev examines the history of an ethnic group as the explicit attempt by individuals to become a separate "ethnic group" and to maintain their independence. In this respect, Gumilev's theories go further than Bromlei's views. Not only does he try to establish the attributes of what constitutes ethnic groups, but also to explain their origins through the purposeful actions of individuals.[194]

Bromlei was concerned with demonstrating the distinctions between *ethnos* and "nation". However, he also argued that a Soviet people (Russian: *narod*) could form through a "fusion" or coming together (Russian: *sliyanie*) of different *ethnoses*. This would not represent an ethnosocial organism (a small group of people sharing the same ethnic characteristics living in one state), but would instead be an *ethnos* (a broader category of ethnic identity spread out over a number of states).[195] For Gumilev, although an *ethnos* may have been incorporated into a larger group, it still retained its own ethnic distinctiveness. Again, the main emphasis of Gumilev's argument was the separation and establishment of a separate ethnic identity through the accumulation and dissipation of energy with the surrounding environment.

Akaev focuses on Gumilev's notion of "passionate people" as social catalysts of change. He notes: "When I speak about a person, I mean a passionate person, around whom the process of unification can take place" (Akaev 2003c: 332-333). Akaev employed a number of Gumilev's examples of passionate people, e.g. Alexander the Great, Chinngis Khan, and Tamerlane to demonstrate this point. However, he argued that these "passionate people" seek to achieve their final goals through the establishment of statehood: "What was the framework in which the political will of this passionate person found its ideological base? It must be statehood" (Akaev 2003c: 334).[196] In Akaev's view, statehood is the ultimate goal of those ancestors recognised as having

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[193] Indeed, former President Akaev has not been the only one to employ Gumilev's version of ethnogenesis in the construction of national identities. See the work of Olexander Hryb (2000), who comments on the use of Gumilev's theories in Ukraine and Russia. This article is referenced with the kind permission of the author. Furthermore, Gumilev's work on Eurasia is highly regarded. In Astana, the capital of Kazakhstan, the Eurasian National University, bears Gumilev's name in his honour.

[194] Although this can be interpreted to suggest that Gumilev's theories are inherently racist (Shnirelman & Panarin 2001), Gumilev seemingly does not intend them to be taken this way.

[195] Gumilev also focused on the formation of a "superethnos", but this did not have the same characteristics as Bromlei's notion. A "superethnos" was a large conglomeration of ethnic groups, but one which did not loose their individual ethnic traits. Gumilev's study of geography and ethnic groups, particularly of the Eurasian landscape which he viewed as having great anthropogenic capacity, led him to this conclusion.

[196] This is Akaev's view. However, I would not go as far as to suggest that the actions of a person embodying *passionarnost'* are primarily concerned with unification.

passionarnost'. It is the formal establishment of the state which underpins Akaev's ideology of ethnogenesis and his depiction of the historical figures.

Akaev complemented Gumilev's notion of ethnogenesis further by drawing on his background as a physicist to help "ground" Gumielv's theories in the natural sciences, to give it more relevance to the Kyrgyz case. Akaev examined the work of Il'ya Prigozhin (1917-2003), a highly renowned chemist, on open systems, or systems "[...] which exchange substances and energy with an environment" (Akaev 2003c: 328), as a useful model for studying *passionarnost'*. Prigozhin's theory "[...] analyzes the phenomenon of self-organization, which takes place in dissipated structures after their transition from the state of chaos" (Akaev 2003c: 328). Through positive reactions in an open system there can be fluctuations or a series of fluctuations which causes the previous state to collapse, known as bifurcation. The result could be the system becomes chaotic or organised. However, with the use of lasers, Prigozhin found that the charging of photons would "orientate" or organise the system. This led Akaev to conclude: "Ethnic systems result from the bifurcation of a state of chaos (homeostasis) and the reaching of a high internal organization through the charging of passion" (Akaev 2003c: 342-343).

Akaev's description of historical figures, as filled with *passionarnost'* in order to organise a Kyrgyz nation and state, is suggestive of Max Weber's notion of charisma in the sociology of authority and obedience (Feuchtwang & Wang Mingming 2001).[197] The two terms share many similarities. In Akaev's usage of *passionarnost'*, however, the historical figures are described by their exceptional level of devotion towards their people in the continual struggle for independence, as opposed to what could be (mistakenly) construed as a divine "quality" of a person. Nonetheless, a brief examination of the similarities between the two concepts reveals new perspectives in the involvement of *passionarnost'* in the nation-building project. It is important to note that my use of the term "charisma" is not a comparison made by Kyrgyz friends and discussants, it is my own. Nonetheless, a discussion of charisma is complementary to the general theme expressed in Gumilev's view of *passionarnost'*.

Charisma, like *passionarnost'*, can be imagined as being an extraordinary attribute, through which people identify a figure as having special characteristics, and is usually

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[197] This is just one form of charisma that is described by Weber. The other form is examined in religious systems, see Weber (1998 [1948]). See Weber (1968) for a collection of essays specifically related to the way in which he develops his ideas of charisma.

conceptualised as a important quality for good leadership. For example, Weber states that charisma is:

> [...] applied to a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he considered extraordinary and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities. These are such as are not accessible to the ordinary person, but are regarded as of the divine origin or as exemplary, and on the basis of them the individual concerned is treated as 'leader' (Weber 1978: 241).

Friedrich Nietzsche's influence on Weber's notion of charisma is evident in this description, as Charles Lindholm has noted: "Weber understood charismatic appeal as arising from the vivid emotional intensity of the charismatic figure. In this he followed Nietzsche, whose superman [German: *Übermensch*] was superior precisely because of the force of his passions. However, where Nietzsche imagined his hero in solitude, for Weber charisma could exist only in relationships" (Lindholm 1997: 53).[198] Weber states: "It is recognition on the part of those subject to authority which is decisive for the validity of charisma" (Weber 1978: 242). It is this key point, the realisation of charisma through social relationships, which has led to it being conceptualised as creating forms of solidarity. Taken in this context, it is similar to that which Ibn Khaldûn, a fourteenth century north African intellectual, described as "group feeling" (Arabic: *asabīya*), or a kind of solidarity, vital for social cohesion. Khaldûn notes: "Leadership over people, therefore, must, of necessity, derive from a group feeling that is superior to each individual group feeling. Each individual group feeling that becomes aware of the superiority of the group feeling of the leader is ready to obey and follow (that leader)" (Khaldûn 1967: 269).[199]

Charisma conceptualised as an innate "quality" in a leader is a reification that is created through the discursive practices that are employed in the imaginative construction of these figures. Thomas Csordas, in his study of the location of charisma in the Catholic Charismatic Revival, stresses this discursive formulation: "Could not charisma be a product of the rhetorical apparatus in use of which leader and follower alike convince themselves that the world is constituted in a certain way?" (Csordas 1997: 139). This

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[198] See Nietzsche (1978) for his description of the superman.

[199] Ibn Khaldûn's explanation of solidarity resembles the Durkheimian notion of "mechanical solidarity". As Ernest Gellner (1993) notes, however, Durkheim contrasts mechanical and organic solidarity, and assumes that both these forms are recognised, but Ibn Khaldûn only knows, or thinks, in terms of mechanical solidarity.

question stresses the fundamental aspect that "charisma" is not an individual trait, but a result of rhetorical devices employed and explicated through social relations. He notes: "[Charisma] is a particular mode of interpersonal efficacy: not a quality, but a collective, performative, intersubjective self process" (Csordas 1997: 140). It is the construction of a rhetorical apparatus that serves as the locus of charisma, not as the source of it. The intersubjective self is a continual process made by interaction with others and also contributes to general interpretations of charisma.

What implications does this have for the nation-building process? *Passionarnost'* is presented as a personal quality of the historical figures. However, like charisma, it is a reification of features of historical accounts generated through intersubjective discussions. Furthermore, its elaboration through the genealogical imagination, *passionarnost'* represents a level of personal intimacy in relation to people's views of their ancestors: both as family relatives and as "national" ancestral figures represented in nation-building projects.

The incorporation of an enduring form of *passionarnost'* in everyday lived experiences is similar to Weber's notion of the "routinization of charisma" (Gerth & Mills 1998 [1948]), or what has been called the "[...] 'banalization' (*Veralltäglichung*) of charisma" (Bourdieu 1987: 132-133). Banality describes both the ways in which charisma is included into everyday life, and how it becomes indistinguishable from our daily actions and thoughts. Banality is a theme employed by Michael Billig, who comments on nationalism. He argues that, particularly in the West, "banal nationalism" reflects a series of actions and events that have been subtly woven into the practice of everyday life. He notes: "[...] the term banal nationalism is introduced to cover the ideological habits which enable the established nations of the West to be reproduced. [...] Daily, the nation is indicated, or 'flagged', in the lives of its citizenry. Nationalism, far from being an intermittent mood in established nations, is the endemic condition" (Billig 1995: 6). Although Billig rightly notes that nationalism is a trait that established Western nations imagine other struggling nations as engaging in, we need not limit the conception of banality to just the West. In Akaev's view, nationalism is a display of passionate energy which struggles for unity for the present and the future, based on the examples from the past, and present in the actions of everyday life.

However, as Stephen Feuchtwang and Wang Mingming note, for Weber, charisma was also an attempt to displace the actions of the present and return to an idealised past. They state:

> Charisma is the name for the innovative and restorative potential of tradition. It is a potential realised in explosions of social movement and invention when internal and external disturbances and dissatisfactions sharpen boundaries between a present that does not live up to traditional expectations which are 'remembered'. What is remembered is a past when mythology says those expectations were really fulfilled. Such utopian explosions occur on the boundaries between an 'us' who know this and a 'them' or a 'world' which as yet does not (Feuchtwang & Wang Mingming 2001: 19).

This is also visible in Akaev's rhetoric of *passionarnost'*, where he stresses people must look to the past for guidance. The numerous statues he unveiled to ancestors and the elaboration of their qualities illustrates this aspect of the revival of the past in the present and for the direction of the future.

Charisma, as it appears in this analysis, represents two concepts about socially-constructed values and political leadership. Firstly, there is a cultivated rhetorical apparatus which serves as the locus of charisma. Through a process of banalization, the images of certain figures become widely associated with charismatic traits. Secondly, the leadership, high morals and devotion to national construction attributed to the historical figures indicates that these qualities are conceived by some as lacking in contemporary society. As in Akaev's description of Balasagyn, the qualities which he possessed are highlighted as important traits for the continuation of Kyrgyz society. If we attribute these same qualities to *passionarnost'* we see the banalization of a new focus on the idealised characteristics of a reified past.

The recognition of historical figures as moral guides in people's everyday lives is highlighted by Caroline Humphrey (1997) in her analysis of morality in Mongolia. Her research concentrates on "exemplary figures". These exemplars are chosen by people as a kind of teacher that will guide them to enhance their morality through the development of the "self". Through this analysis, Humphrey highlights the distinct moral values between European religious and secular models and Mongolian examples. One of the main "ethics of exemplars" in her Mongolian example is that "it constructs a particular kind of individuality" (Humphrey 1997: 34). The exemplary person, whether religious or secular (or both), living or historically venerated, is regarded as someone that serves as a guide to developing admirable qualities in those that seek their inspiration. Even in the act of searching for an exemplar, people are already developing this notion of the self: "Finding exemplars is part of discovering and cultivating oneself" (Humphrey 1997: 36).

Christopher Kaplonski (Forthcoming) has drawn on Humphrey's example to highlight the political ideologies implicit in the selection of exemplars. The isolated moments of history from which the exemplar is chosen are dependent on political ideologies. History and politics, therefore, cannot be separated, and as the person who finds an exemplar places themselves as a "person in history" (1996). To be a "person in history", I argue, implies that once the person has selected an exemplar they are enmeshed in a series of moralities, which are a product of the political ideologies of that time, shaping representations of the figures and moral values of the past. I suggest that in the case of Kyrgyzstan, this is a selection of ancestral exemplars – ancestors characterised as exemplary figures by their moral virtue and struggle towards unification, but their image is fundamentally a part of the political rhetoric of nation-building projects.

In the case of Kyrgyzstan, the ancestors attributed with *passionarnost'* and the moral virtues are organised into a form of *sanjyra*. The *sanjyra* effectively conveys official ideologies among those who regard it as an important way of tracing identity through personal ancestors. This model provides people with an opportunity to articulate their own understandings of their ancestors through an official set of concepts. This complements the view some people have of their ancestors.

Nevertheless, like charisma, *passionarnost'* is not an intrinsic quality of a person, but one that is perpetuated by an intersubjective discursive construction. To return to Csordas's point, this is not a view that is imposed by authority, but one which is a negotiation between those presented as having certain claims of authority (i.e. political, moral, etc.) or those making such claims on their behalf and the people. The construction of an intersubjective rhetoric entails that what is deemed as "charismatic" or to display "*passionarnost'*" will always be reinterpreted. For Akaev, and others, who organise celebrations around such notions, there is a need to present these concepts in way that corresponds to people's views. In this particular case, Akaev's conception of certain historical figures as having exceptional *passionarnost'*, complements the views of such people as Kalen Jetimishbaev and others who open museums and erect monuments to their ancestors in recognition of their great deeds and want to present their ancestors as valuable figures to the people of Kyrgyzstan. As Kalen explained to me as we drank tea and looking over his genealogical records, it was very important that Akaev had unveiled the statues to his ancestors. In doing so, Akaev had made a personal connection with Kalen and had officially recognised the national importance of his ancestry. I now examine the dedication of monuments more closely, as the statues themselves offer points

of reflection on the meaning of *passionarnost'* and the roles the historical figures play in the continual construction of the Kyrgyz nation.

The space and time of monuments

In this chapter, I have argued that many monuments to historical figures in Kyrgyzstan are focal points for government-sponsored notions of the nation-building project. They are also a place for people to trace their relatedness to different *plemya*, but also to the Kyrgyz people. The use of public space for the construction of monuments in a post-Soviet context has been highlighted also by Bruce Grant (2001) in his analysis of monuments in Moscow. By examining the work of the Georgian sculptor Zurab Tsereteli, he questions the meaning and intention of monuments and statues in Moscow.

Although monuments are highly visible and often occupy large public spaces with the intent to convey certain messages, Grant, drawing on the work of the Austrian writer Robert Musil, argues that monuments actually "deflect" or divert our attention. Monuments are likened to the effects of the state, a series of practices that obscure our vision from the modes of governmentality. They operate as a mask which conceals the struggles and contestations for power in the public space. In this context, Grant argues that we should "[...] see monuments [...] as a form of political practice itself, rather than as a metalanguage derived from hidden realities. They create new subject effects, new cognitions, and new forms of political legitimacy" (Grant 2001: 340). The space which monuments occupy, therefore, is transformed, indicating the kinds of political practices in society. Particularly in regard to statues dedicated to the ancestors, not only do these have personal meanings, but they allude to various political processes.

Not only are political claims invested in the erection and dedication of monuments in the public space, but there are also implicit conceptualisations of time as well. The construction and ordering of temporality adds further emphasis to the meaning of the historical figures depicted in the monuments. In his examination of time in the Cretan town of Rethemnos, Michael Herzfeld makes a distinction between social and monumental time. Social time is the substance of everyday life.[200] In contrast to this is monumental time, which Herzfeld describes as:

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[200] Carol Greenhouse (1996) has also examined "social time" which she conceptualises as social experience which articulates people's understanding of agency, or cultural notions of how the world works.

> reductive and generic. It encounters events as realizations of some supreme destiny, and it reduces social experience to collective predictability. Its main focus is on the past—a past constituted by categories and stereotypes. In its extreme forms, it is the time frame of the nation-state. To it belongs the vicarious fatalism—the call to submit to one's ordained destiny—that marks all authoritarian control (Herzfeld 1991: 10).

Monumental time, in Herzfeld's description, can also be employed to understand the monumentalization of historical figures and their place in the national history. It redefines the past in terms of present concerns and contexts. However, time, as much as space, is continually contested and the struggle to obtain the hegemony of meaning is never ending. Herzfeld notes: "This battle over time is a battle over the possession of identity" (Herzfeld 1991: 4). In Kyrgyzstan, the "identity" of the historical figures represented in the monuments is an attempt to establish their images as strong *plemya* or *rod* leaders, and as passionate and moral persons who struggled to maintain a separate ethnic (or national) identity and state.

In this context, time is represented in at least two ways. Firstly, there is an overarching sense of linear progression, which could include monumental time. In Akaev's use of ethnogenesis, we are also provided with a linear time scale. In the construction of monumental time, especially if we apply it to the Kyrgyz example, there is a sense that the persistent attempts of the historical figures to create a fully independent nation and state are expressed almost in terms of inevitability. Secondly, added to this linear progression is a dimension of timelessness. The 1000th anniversary of the epos *Manas* and the celebration of "2,200 Years of Kyrgyz Statehood" are not commemorations of exact dates, but are an indication of the earliest recorded reference and are therefore argued by both politicians and local people alike as an indication that the history of the Kyrgyz people could stretch much further back in time. Certainly in Akaev's view, the myth of origin established in the *Manas* epic supports this view of timelessness. There were many people I met who supported this view. In my conversations with Tursunbai Bakir uulu, we talked about the historical origins of the Kyrgyz nation. Although he is the republic's ombudsman, he told me that he studied history. As a historian and member of Kyrgyz society, he told me that the Kyrgyz state was at least two thousand years old. For him, this was an important distinction, not just

from his academic training, but as an indication of the ancient origins of the people and the characteristics which have helped them maintain their ethnic identity.

The monuments to historical figures are part of the government's presentation of a "Kyrgyz" history, which is created through the establishment of dominant official meanings in the organisation of public space and also in the imagination of time. In the official view, the figures are the "ancestors" of Kyrgyz *plemya*, and the ethnic group, or nation. These ancestors are sometime mythical figures (e.g. Manas), appropriated (e.g. Uyghurs claim that Jusup Balasagyn is "their" ancestor), and figures from more recent periods, particularly the Tsarist and Soviet eras. Nevertheless, in Akaev's narrative, they demonstrate important aspects of the moral virtue of the Kyrgyz.

Atake baatyr *and Shabdan* baatyr[201]

One example, similar to Akaev's view and echoed in public discourse, is clearly stated in the dedication of the statue of Atake *baatyr*. On 23 August 2003, Akaev unveiled a statue of Atake *baatyr* in the village of Kyzyl-Bairak, in the Kemin region, Chüi *oblast'*. A day beforehand, a direct descendent of Atake, Janyl Abdyldabek kyzy, published an article in a popular, pro-government newspaper, *Vechernii Bishkek*. In her article, which depicted the history of the Atake, she acknowledged President Akaev as having made "[a] huge contribution in the work of the rehabilitation of historic figures" (Abdyldabek kyzy 2003: 5). It was with the support of the President and in line with the goals of the "Year of Kyrgyz Statehood" that Abdyldabek kyzy found an opportunity to teach other Kyrgyz through the story of her ancestors and demonstrate the importance for the spiritual (i.e. moral) development.

I later got to know Janyl and asked her about the significance of this celebration for her ancestor. She was in her mid forties and an office worker in Bishkek. When I went to see her she showed me her pictures of her ancestors and discussed them at length. When we spoke about her moral significance of her predecessors, she explained: "A non-spiritual [Russian: *bezdukhovnyi*] people will not exist as a people. In any case spirituality needs to be supported. If a person does not love their ancestors, and does not honour them, how would that person think and talk about the Kyrgyz? Naturally [that

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[201] *Baatyr* is a Kyrgyz title which denotes a "hero", which is closely associated with bravery in battle (Beibutova 1988: 84-85).

person] will not turn out to be a patriot. Therefore, any spiritual education begins in the family".[202] This was a very common response that many people told me during my fieldwork. In particular, she considered Akaev's "rehabilitation of historic figures" correctly emphasising the role that those figures have in the spiritual (moral) life of the Kyrgyz people, and furthermore, that these figures should be at once the very centre of the nation, and also of individual families.

If we examine the depiction of Atake *baatyr* (b. 1738) in Akaev's book, *Kyrgyz Statehood and the National Epos "Manas"*, we can see how he highlights Atake's role as a passionate and moral figure, paramount for the maintenance of the Kyrgyz people. In the book, Akaev recounts that in 1718-1722 the Dzhungar Khanate took possession of Kyrgyz land (i.e. parts of what today are considered the northern Kyrgyz *oblasts*, including Chüi), forcing the inhabitants to move to the Fergana Valley. The "Kyrgyz", Akaev states, fought with the Dzhungars in the Ala-Too region and gradually reclaimed their land and Ysyk-Köl. Later, Atake held a *kurultai* (Kyrgyz: congress) between the Sarybagysh (his own *plemya*) and the Bugu *plemya*. They decided to divide the territory of Ysyk-Köl between them. However, the Kyrgyz had a number of external threats. The northern Kyrgyz were living on the outer reaches of the Kokand Khanate. Khan Norboto (who ruled from 1770-1798) invited Atake to Kokand in an attempt to bring Atake and his people under Kokand rule. Atake refused, and instead sought Russia as an ally. Akaev writes: "In order to ensure [Kyrgyz] security and a peaceful life, he wished for strong protection. With the aim of resolving this problem, Atake gathered a kurultay of the right wing of the Kyrgyz people. [...] All delegates of the kurultay unanimously approved the decision of Atake Batyr to send Kyrgyz envoys to St. Petersburg [...]" (Akaev 2003c: 132). Atake sent two letters with his envoys, one for General N. Ogarev, the chief of the Siberian border patrol, and the second to the Russian Empress Catherine II. Abdyldabek kyzy notes, however, that these letters were not a direct request for Russian intervention into their disputes. She provides a distinctly nationalist interpretation of the event: "Sending Kyrgyz ambassadors to Russia was not a search for protection – it was undertaken as the first attempt of the establishment of equal rights in

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[202] This view of "spirituality" is also reflected in the works of Dastan Sarygulov (2001; 2002), the former secretary of state, who has advanced views on Tengrianstvo as a way to counteract global problems. Key to his view is that he positions morality (Russian: *nravstvennost'*) and spirituality (Russian: *dukhovnost'*) as core values of the Kyrgyz which have helped them maintain their ethnic distinctiveness.

economic-political contacts; it was done as a request for the recognition of the Kyrgyz people and land" (Abdyldabek kyzy 2003: 5).

The statue of Atake stands next to the museum of Shabdan *baatyr* (1839-1912), the great-grandson of Atake. Shabdan *baatyr* (Shabdan Jantaev) is another well-renowned Kyrgyz hero. Descendants of Shabdan and local citizens contributed to the construction of the museum. The material and files for the museum came from the State History Museum, the State Archives and Abdyldabek kyzy's personal archive collection. Although the museum is small in size, she told me during an interview, that she feels that it is important for the Kyrgyz people so they know their history.

According to Akaev's account of Shabdan's life, he was one of the most respected leaders of the Sarybagysh *plemya* by the time the Russian Empire expanded more fully into Central Asia. Instead of fighting, he considered the benefits of seeking peace with the Russians. He was not the only one to decide this. In January 1855 Kachybek Sheralin took an oath on the Koran to pledge his *plemya's* (Bugu) allegiance to Russia. Nevertheless, not all supported the Russians, in July 1863, Ozmon Tailakov, a Sayak *plemya* leader, ambushed a small Russian detachment led by Major G. Zagryazhskii, head of the Tokmok *uezd* (Russian: small territorial administrative division during the Tsarist era). Shabdan used this opportunity to gain Russian support by rescuing the Major and his troops. He also aided the Russians further in helping them to negotiate with the southern Kyrgyz *plemya* and *rod*. In 1867 he met with Kurmanjan *datka*[203], who controlled the Alai region, which was still under the influence of the Kokand Khanate at this time. It was through Shabdan that part of what is southern Kyrgyzstan today came (somewhat) peacefully under Russian suzerainty (Voropaeva 2000). Akaev notes: "By explaining to all the aksakals, dzhigits, and biys that they were responsible first of all for the establishment and preservation of peace on their land, Shabdan Batyr made a significant contribution to unifying the nation [*sic*]" (Akaev 2003c: 137). The lessons of Shabdan *baatyr* are relevant for the fractured Kyrgyz political environment. Akaev's use of history resembles a political metaphor, the lessons of the past guiding the actions of the present and future.

The way in which Akaev has described the historical figures influenced the way Abdyldabek kyzy articulates her memories about her ancestors. Abdyldabek kyzy's

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[203] *Datka* is a Kyrgyz title used for an aristocrat of the Kokand Khanate. Kurmanjan *datka* in the independent history of Kyrgyzstan is often viewed as leader of the south; see Ploskikh *et al.* (2002) for a short biography of her life.

interest in illustrating the history of her ancestors is to tell other Kyrgyz about their history. In her article about Atake *baatyr*, she notes: "And that this monument is located near the museum of his great-grandson, Shabdan baatyr, shows the great continuity of generations. And owing to this continuity, the Kyrgyz carry the core of their ethnos [Russian: *etnos*] from millennium to millennium (Abdyldabek kyzy 2003: 5). Both Akaev and Abdyldabek kyzy are concerned in stressing the historicity of the Kyrgyz people and the lessons that can be learned from their ancestors. Their views stress similar notions of passion, morality and their necessity to the contemporary situation of the Kyrgyz nation and state.

Furthermore, Abdyldabek kyzy's attempt to educate others about her ancestors and the importance their legacies for the Kyrgyz people underlines an important issue. Although women are often not concerned with their genealogies, those who are interested are not dissuaded from contributing their views. Abdyldabek kyzy received an endorsement from President Akaev, thereby incorporating her views into the official discourse of ancestors. Her work is treated as an equal and significant contribution to the overall understanding of the Kyrgyz and their identity. The discursive space created in the examination of the ancestors may be dominated by men, but does not exclude women.

The complementary and supportive discourses provided by Akaev and Abdyldabek kyzy indicate yet another process. The official view of the government finds popular support among such citizens, who are able to articulate their ideas related to their ancestors not just in their own words but through an officially-promoted nationwide discourse. This is more than a concern to find a popular way of establishing a series of historical figures in the nation-building project; the intersubjective rhetoric that has been devised is concentrated at the very constitution of the "Kyrgyz" identity and how they govern themselves. In this way, the actions of the government in relation to the promotion of a series of historical ancestors is an element of government rationality, or as Foucault (1991) has described it, "governmentality".

"Genealogy of subjectification"

By exploring modes of governmentality we are able to examine the kinds of practices and ideologies which govern people's everyday lives. In the above examples, we see an attempt by government to organise people's understanding of their genealogy and history to foster unity for the maintenance of the nation and state. Furthermore, studies of

governmentality also concentrate on how some people, such as Kalen Jetimishbaev and Janyl Abdyldabek kyzy, attempt to govern themselves and direct the actions of others through their understandings of these notions. For example in the dedication of the statue to Atake *baatyr*, the moral virtues emphasised through his actions are not only viewed as a way to conduct a person's life, but also that these values should be passed on to others and directing their values as "Kyrgyz" people. Such conceptions are echoed by Colin Gordon in his remarks on Foucault's study of governmentality:

> Foucault points out that the growth of explicit reflection on the 'art of government' in the early modern period is accompanied by a consciously elaborated notion of the inner connectedness of the government of oneself, the conduct of individual existence, on the one hand, and the government of others, the regulation of the lives of many, on the other (Gordon 1987: 296).

Again, we see such notions of "interconnectedness" present in the official celebrations. The moral virtues derived from the *Manas* epic are present in the rhetorical apparatus which is used to refer to the historical ancestors. These ancestors of the nation are also people's own ancestors to whom they can chart their descendency through their *sanjrya* (Kyrgyz: genealogical information combined with an account of the past). The image of the ancestors, which helps to construct a person's identity through their genealogical imagination, also locates them in a broader national identity, accompanied by a moral system. The techniques of government, such as these, are increasingly concentrated on the people at the "[...] *very heart of themselves by making its rationality the condition of their active freedom*" (Burchell 1996: 30, original emphasis).

At the end of the Soviet Union people have been able to discuss their ancestry more openly. The *kurultai* (Kyrgyz: congress) of *sanjyrachi* that Kalen Jetimishbaev organised in 1990 is an example of this. However, this new freedom (and others) is precisely the same freedom through which their actions and behaviours are being governed and are being used by them to govern others. The narratives and intentions of Janyl Abdyldabek kyzy, Marat Chanchev, and even Nurlan Motuev, are partly a reflection of this form of governmentality.

While the oral transmission of *sanjyra* and details of the ancestors is said to have continued throughout the Soviet era, there is now a much wider and more accessible set of narratives about the ancestors. Akaev's views, present one way in which people can articulate the memories of their ancestors and place their actions in a broad, official set of

moral virtues. In 2003, the national celebration of "2,200 years of Kyrgyz statehood" included series of events whereby people were able to locate and re-evaluate their views according these morals. By linking the ancestors directly with the maintenance of the Kyrgyz people and state the government has created a specific set of narratives, supported and advocated by some people actively engaged in exploring their ancestry (such as Abyldabek kyzy and Jetimishbaev), which contributes to their notion of their "Kyrgyz" identity.

The interiorization of external representations are reinterpreted as a person's own identity, is a particular focus of studies of governmentality (e.g. Rose 1996b). In this case, the official (external) representation of historical figures is a view developed between Akaev's and the people's opinions about their ancestors. However, the very specific, official rhetoric which encompasses the presentation of historical figures forms a new way of conceiving of these figures in regards to the whole Kyrgyz people. For those that are interested in and promote the figures of their ancestors on local and national scales engage with this discourse.

Nikolas Rose has examined this phenomenon, particularly related to studies of liberalism in the West, through what he calls a "genealogy of subjectification". This, he argues, "[...] focuses directly upon the *practices* with which human beings have been located in particular 'regimes of the person'" (Rose 1996b: 131, original emphasis). Such a genealogy is a study of the trajectories and tactics that have been employed in the subjectification of individuals who have internalised the external encounters and meanings and reified them as components of personal identity. "The human being," states Rose, "is not an entity with a history, but the target of a multiplicity of types of work, more like a latitude or a longitude at which different vectors of different speeds intersect. The 'interiority' which so many feel compelled to diagnose is not that of a psychological system, but of a discontinuous surface, a kind of infolding of exteriority" (Rose 1996b: 142). Rose continues by arguing:

> Perhaps, then, we might think of the grasp that modes of subjectification have upon human beings in terms of such an infolding. Folds incorporate without totalizing, internalize without unifying, collect together discontinuously in the form of pleats making surfaces, spaces, flows and relations. Within a genealogy of subjectification, that which would be infolded would be anything that can acquire authority: injunctions, advice, techniques, little habits of thought and emotion, an array of routines and

> norms of being human – the instruments through which being constitutes itself in different practices and relations (Rose 1996b: 143).

Under Akaev, the ancestral exemplars represents a "habit of thought and emotion", serving as another technique to govern the Kyrgyz people. Moreover, through this conception of the ancestors, these moral virtues are presented as constituent parts of the "Kyrgyz" identity, and those that adopt such views locate themselves within a series of disciplining practices. This moral system and its articulation are located within the dialectic of memory and history in the genealogical imagination. The attribution of *passionarnost'* would have little effect, if it was not also tied to the notion that it was a quality present in the ancestors of many people and that they should also develop this trait for the unity of the country today.

This is similar to Serguei Oushakine's (2004) description of the "void subject" of early Soviet modernity. It was through readjusting to external conditions that people were able to regain a notion of their daily life (Russian: *byt*) that they felt was missing in the period immediately following the October Revolution. Oushakine argues: "there is a profound and incessant preoccupation with external conditions: it is through redefining the existing parameters, through modifying ("altering") them, that the empty signifier of a new life is capable of revealing its meaning" (Oushakine 2004: 399-400). Again, the external is interiorised to establish meaning of the way in which people understand their lives, but at the same time it operates in how those people govern themselves as well. The tactics they employ for operating within this system of (new) meaning illustrate ways in which they are using these new forms in their own lives.[204]

For example, in the post-Soviet era, people have openly been able to explore their genealogies. People like Janyl Abdyldabek kyzy, who has great pride in her ancestors, is devoted to expanding contemporary awareness of these figures. However, this has been encouraged by Akaev's nation-building project. The celebration of ancestors and their actions in the new ethno-nationalist rhetoric has given Janyl, and others like her, a framework to realise the importance of the ancestors in their lives. When Bakyt and I would speak with Janyl she would tell us the importance of the lessons she learned from the ancestors. Additionally, she would say that it was her aim to now teach others about these morals and their place in Kyrgyz society today.

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[204] See also Barbara Cruikshank (1996) who argues a similar point through her examination of a self-esteem campaign in California in the 1980s.

This particular form of governance seeks to distance itself from political institutions. It is instead an idea through which Akaev expresses the importance of the ancestors and the qualities which led them to secure the freedom and independence of the Kyrgyz people. This is what Nikolas Rose (1996a: 46) calls governing "at a distance". The "advanced liberal" technologies which some countries advocate, Rose argues, "[...] see techniques of government that create a distance between the decisions of formal political institutions and other social actors, conceive of these actors in new ways as subjects of responsibility, autonomy and choice, and seek to act upon them through shaping and utilizing their freedom" (Rose 1996a: 53-54).

The freedom of Kyrgyz people today to explore their genealogies and discuss them is one way through which Akaev's administration attempted to construct and thus govern the people. An already existing notion of genealogies and the contribution they could make to Kyrgyz identity were already present. *Passionarnost'* and the moral virtues of the officially recognised ancestors was an addition by Akaev, but one that rested on a pre-existing notion of honour and respect for the ancestors.

Plemya, *nation and state*

The effect of this kind of governmentality is aimed at all the citizens of Kyrgyzstan. There were a number of other celebrations that took place around Kyrgyzstan during 2003 that also claimed to be part of the "Year of Kyrgyz Statehood". Those that celebrated these local commemorations marked the place of the ancestors in the contemporary political ideology, and in doing so, gave implicit support to the official rhetoric. For example, in the Tyup region, Ysyk-Köl *oblast'*, there was an announcement in the local newspaper for an upcoming celebration:

> Today, 15 August, in the Tyup region, will take place a ceremonial activity devoted to the 225th anniversary of Boronbai bii, which coincides with the year of Kyrgyz statehood. During this activity, the opening of a memorial street sign named Sultan Boronbai Menmurat uulu will take place, and a fundraising marathon for the Boronbai bii Foundation" (*Issyk-Kul' Tur* 2003: 1).[205]

[205] See Chapter 2 for more on Borombai. Again, there are various spellings of Borombai's name, but I am using the one I have found most consistently throughout Kyrgyz documents.

The celebration of the Bugu *plemya* leader was one of many during 2003. For example, I was given a calendar while in Naryn *oblast'*. A title ran across the top that read: "On the occasion of 2,200 years of Kyrgyz statehood", which served as an auspicious moment to commemorate two historical figures whose portraits were below the title. The year 2003 marked the 200th anniversary of Ajybek *baatyr* and the 100th anniversary of Kazybek *kazalchy*.[206] Below the portraits was another title, which read: "May Chech-Döbö-Ata bless you, At-Bashy!"[207]

Here we have two examples of the commemoration of historical figures. On the one hand, they are connected with localities and specific places. Borombai bii is associated with Tyup region and Ajybek *baatyr* and Kazybek *kazalchy* with Naryn *oblast'*. Furthermore, there is a specific reference to the spirit of Chech-Döbö-Ata to bless the residents of At-Bashy, a market town south of Naryn. However, on the other hand, the anniversary celebrations of these figures are placed within the context of the national celebration of statehood. The scales on which these figures are projected are an important aspect of the nation-building project. People are able to engage through their ancestors to celebrate the contribution they have made to the formation of the Kyrgyz nation and state.

If we return to the dedication of the statue of Jusup Balasagyn, we will recall that Akaev noted that Balasagyn was a great "state-builder" (Russian: *gosudarstvennik*), in addition to his role a *plemya* leader and a claim that he was an important "Kyrgyz" historical figure. This was a move to unify three identities in one person. To return to Rose's description of "regimes of the person", we can see that each of these classifications is a distinct part in the genealogy of subjectification. However, these categories are also interconnected. In this respect, in the following chapter, I will investigate how the state is added to this construction.

The government presentation of the state maintains a close relationship with "the people" and is expressed through genealogies connected with the construction of a national identity. In Kyrgyzstan, it should be stressed, the state is presented not as something that is external to people, a view common in the West (Mitchell 1991). David Sneath's discussion of "technologies of imagination", that is "[...] nation-building processes as imaginative projects" (Sneath 2003: 46), provides us with another notion with which to describe the particular construction of national identity we are encountering

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[206] *Kazalchy* is a Kyrgyz word for a poet in the pre-Tsarist and Tsarist periods.
[207] In Kyrygz, *ata* means "father".

in Kyrgyzstan. Sneath's argues that through the Soviet era and in the post-Soviet era, we are witnessing attempts to engage the population in Kyrgyzstan, or in his example of Mongolia, with the "state". This is done through a number of different activities and events, such as parades, meetings, speeches, etc. In Akaev's adaptation and expansion of local notions of genealogy not only engages people to interact with a constructed notion of the "nation" and "state", but also to imagine the possibilities through which this can be employed by people in their own lives and how they can (or possibly should) use this as a template with which to judge other people's actions.

The celebration of "2,200 years of Kyrgyz statehood" in 2003 is an example of the interaction between the people and the state. "Statehood" is presented by the government as the continuity of the state as a condition of the persistent struggle by historical figures to maintain unity among the Kyrgyz people and is encompassed in a set of moral values as being core to their ethno-national identity. In this view, the condition of the state is therefore contingent on the moral actions of their people directed towards unity and harmony. The state, therefore, becomes another rhetorical device through which the "Kyrgyz" are governed, but is a certain image of it and is meant to be internalised in order for the people to govern themselves.

If the "state" is a particular kind of ethno-national imaginative project, what does this mean for the other ethnic groups in Kyrgyzstan? The construction of the state exclusively utilises Kyrgyz social conceptions and customs. Despite Akaev's claim in 1994, "Kyrgyzstan is our common home" (Russian: "*Kyrgyzstan – nash obshche dom*"), the other ethnic groups in Kyrgyzstan are not able to find a strong resonance with the representation of the state. This has led other ethnic groups to feel ostracised and discriminated. In the following chapter, I examine these notions of the state further.

CHAPTER 6

The Genealogy of the State

The official idea of the state (Russian: *gosudarstvo*), virtually synonymous with the nation (Russian: *natsiya*), is constructed within a discourse which emphasises the positive actions of the ancestors in achieving sovereignty. This chapter focuses on the production of this image of the state during the "Year of Kyrgyz Statehood" and its significance at that time. Unity through genealogy formed the central theme of the national celebration, which was stressed by the President as the most important goal for the maintenance of the republic in the post-Soviet era. In this chapter, through my own "genealogy of the state", I examine the ways in which the government under Akaev created a discourse of unity through statehood, and in what ways it attempted to place the citizens at the centre of this construction.

I begin by examining the notion of the state. I refer to the state as an ideological construction and analyse the practices through which the people have been located as the target of politicised discourses contributing to the constitution of their identities as citizens (Rose 1996b). I discuss Akaev's vision of the Kyrgyz citizens at the heart of the state in an attempt to underline the importance of unity. I illustrate this by describing the 3000th anniversary of the city of Osh. Although the anniversary celebrations concentrated primarily on the historical origins of the city, they were also used to stress claims about the Kyrgyz territory, the Kyrgyz people, and the unity of the republic. From this example I propose a framework to investigate this notion of the state and its various underlying issues through genealogical analysis. Here I describe the use of genealogy as a methodological tool. This methodology highlights the distinction between the myth of the state, which is a polity resulting from the actions of the ancestors, and the state as an administrative structure. I conduct a brief genealogy into the external creation of the bureaucratic form of the state and contrast this with the official view of the state, one expressed in public festivals which elaborate Akaev's vision of the state as a creation of its citizens and as part of their identity.

However, this is only one representation of the state. Genealogy as a methodological tool exposes the contemporary liminal space of the discursive

construction of the state and the conditions which determine the necessity of such a discourse. This methodology also acts to critique this representation. I argue that the social tensions in the country provoked Akaev to create a national celebration to foster greater unity through statehood. Let us first examine the concept of the state and the way it is constructed in the official rhetoric.

The concept of the state

I refer to the state as an ideological construction (Abrams 1988 [1977]) constituted by practices which locate people in various political discourses and shape their identities as citizens. I focus on how this concept of the state is presented as an integral part of people's lives. I do not attempt to provide an exhaustive outline of the different ways in which the state is imagined, but instead concentrate on one aspect of the state – the dialogical interaction between the construction of people's identities and political action, and the specific events around which it occurs.

This view of the state is similar to Homi Bhabha's (1990) description of the discursive construction of the nation. Bhabha argued that the nation is a continuously recreated phenomenon of the present, not an historical object. Its formation is the result of a tense division between representations of an *a priori* historical existence, a "pedagogical object" in his terms, contrasted with a narrative "performance" elaborated through the rejuvenation of concepts and ideas in the present and reflected onto a discursive field outlining the "nation". The pedagogic aspect is concerned with the self-generation of the concept of the nation as a reality; however, the performativity of this creation continually disrupts the formation of this image. "The performative intervenes in the sovereignty of the nation's self-generation by casting a shadow between the people as 'image' and its signification as a differentiating sign of Self, distinct from Other or the Outside" (Bhabha 1990: 299). In Bhabha's terms, people are the "cutting edge" between these two forms of representation. This distinction keeps the nation in the present, constantly opposed to different and changing "objects" articulated as external to its own representation. This marks the internal constitution of the nation as a "liminal" space of discursive formation – not a totalising representation, but one where the boundaries are fluid and continually shifting.

Joel Migdal's (2001) "state-in-society" approach complements Bhabha's ideas. His concern is to focus on the way in which tactics of physical and discursive power are

used to make people engage with politics and each other in certain ways, and the conditions under which this changes over time. The state, as much as the nation, is a contradictory concept. It is an image, which is represented as a "bounded and unified organization", but is also as a practice of constantly shifting boundaries and "loosely connected parts" (Migdal 2001: 22). It is the task of political discourse to combine these disparate elements and present them as a significant form of identity for its citizens, and to demonstrate its self-determination to those outside.

Since independence, the Kyrgyz state has been presented in national celebrations as the product of the determined will of the ancestors throughout history. In Akaev's view, the ancestors are credited with unifying the Kyrgyz people and strengthening their territorial boundaries. By tracing their origins back to their ancestors, the state therefore belongs to all of the people, and thus unifies them. In the official view, the notion of genealogy as a form of relatedness is a basis for the concepts of *plemya*, nation, and state.

Akaev highlighted the importance of unity by designating it first among the seven principles he derived from the epic *Manas* (see Chapter 5). He argued: "The purpose for all the achievements of Manas was the unity of his people. When this goal was finally achieved, the star of the Kyrgyz people had risen. With quarrels and domestic conflicts, Manas's dream was destroyed. The Kyrgyz people had failed and their star died" (Akaev 2003c: 282). If internal division could be overcome then in the President's view, the Kyrgyz would continue to develop and the state would become stronger. These views were encapsulated in Akaev's slogan: "Kyrgyzstan – our common home".

This view was shared by many. Although many people did not know the epic in detail, they shared a sense of its importance for their customs and identities. Janyl Abdyldabek kyzy once described that she was educated in a Russian school, and therefore did not know much of the epic. However, as we discussed it further, she stated: "I think that everyone who considers themselves Kyrgyz must be proud of [the epic]. It is not simply a literary work, it is a sacred thing which our ancestors have kept, not as literary texts, but such a large work was saved as creative work [and should be admired]". She also stated that the epic was "the spiritual heritage of the people [and] should be in everyone's heart".

The theme of unity stressed through the epic *Manas* and employed in the national celebrations was an attempt to displace various social and political divisions emerging in the country. In the following example, the theme of unity is present in the anniversary of the city of Osh, but it is also used to address a number of other issues at that time.

The ancient origins of the state and its people

The commemoration of the 3000th anniversary of Osh in 2000 underlined the history of the city, underpinned by a notion of unity which contributed to the maintenance of the state. This notion was stressed by the Kyrgyz academic A. Asankanov who the role of the celebrations in the development of the state:

> [...] the celebration of the 1000th anniversary of the epic *Manas* and the 3000th anniversary of the city of Osh is a natural event for all the multinational people of Kyrgyzstan, during a period which finds them with independence, sovereignty, and statehood. These two major events promote the definition of the place of Kyrgyzstan in the world community and serve as a catalyst for further national progress (Asankanov 1998: 7).

This nation-building campaign demonstrated the importance of Osh to the country, thereby establishing the antiquity of the Kyrgyz territory and people. Osh was a main trading centre on the Silk Road, the ancient trading routes through Eurasia. By celebrating this anniversary on a national level, the official history could claim a part of this past.

The 4 October marked the beginning of a three-day event, celebrating the ancient origins of the Kyrgyz people, the different ethnicities that live in the country, and the borders of the state.[208] The Kyrgyz government invited many international dignitaries to the celebration. As the guests were driven through the main streets into the city before the official opening day, they were greeted by children waving flags with "Osh 3000" written on them. An official programme had been organised for the guests, which included many cultural shows and a concert by local children on the final day.

On the first morning of the celebrations I walked around the main streets of the city. It was rainy and cool. People had set up stalls which sold Kyrgyz handicrafts and food. I explored the centre before going to the city administration building to attend the opening of the festivities.[209] The opening ceremony was the beginning of an international

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[208] A booklet available to conference participants, published in Russian, Kyrgyz and Uzbek, told the "legend" of the city of Osh. See Makhmud Khasanii (2000). This event was also included in the UNESCO calendar of celebrations. A representative from UNESCO was present at the conference to discuss the importance that this celebration had for the international community and for Kyrgyzstan.

[209] I had been given an official invitation to attend the anniversary by the dean of the university faculty that I was attached to in Bishkek.

conference that continued for most of the celebration. The central theme of the conference was organised around a discussion of ethnogenesis. The conference participants were academics from all parts of the Commonwealth of Independence States (CIS), including the eminent Russian archaeologist and historian, Professor Mikhail Masson, who had excavated the area where the epic hero Manas is believed to be buried, and where the Manas Ordo complex is now located in Talas (see Chapter 5). The scholars, who participated in the conference, gave a range of papers devoted to different aspects of ethnogenesis and the importance of Osh and the Fergana Valley to Kyrgyzstan. After the conference, the guests and conference participants were driven to Sulaiman Too (Mount Solomon), the most sacred place for Muslim pilgrimage in the Fergana Valley. Here they were taken to a museum in the mountain. (The museum in Sulaiman Too was built by the Soviets, who blasted a hole in the side of the mountain to make space for it.) Next, the guests were taken to a new museum at the foot of Sulaiman Too, where the exhibitions presented the history of the region.[210]

The celebrations continued for the next couple of days. On 5 October, a series of social and cultural events were planned for the official guests and the public. This included sporting events at the city's hippodrome. However, on the final day, 6 October, there was a celebration in the city of Özgön, near Osh.[211] Here, there was an official ceremony to unveil a new monument in the town. President Akaev attended the event and uncovered a line of new busts of famous and respected people from the area. In the middle was a globe with a dove flying over it. There was one bust that my guide pointed out to me, which was of Salizhan Sharipov, a distinguished cosmonaut from this town.

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[210] Although I had an invitation, I was not one of the guests invited to each of the places that were visited on the cultural itinerary.

[211] Özgön was officially recognised as being roughly the same age as Osh and therefore shared in some of the celebrations during this time.



Figure 6.1 – 6 October 2000 – The new busts honouring the heroes of the Özgön region, including Salizhan Sharipov (Photo: Author)

Sharipov has served on missions on the Mir and International Space Stations, and received awards from President Akaev. Sharipov is of Uzbek parentage, but was born in Kyrgyzstan. By unveiling a statue in his honour, Akaev attempted to extend the notion of "Kyrgyzstan – our common home" to the people in a region fraught with ethnic tensions. In 1990, Uzbeks and Kyrgyz fought over claims to land (Razakov 1993; Tishkov 1995, 1997). In one week, 4-10 June 1990, five thousand crimes (including rape and murder) were committed, in a dispute that originated over land claims between Uzbeks and Kyrgyz living in the area. The people I spoke to still had bitter memories of the conflict. These monuments unveiled during the celebrations, however, had an alternate effect. The Uzbeks were incorporated into a Kyrgyz construction of honouring the ancestors based upon a *sanjyra* model. This had the effect of essentially ostracising the Uzbeks from the very state they are meant to embody. This and similar events have left Uzbeks in Kyrgyzstan looking towards Uzbekistan for meaningful forms of political authority (Liu 2002).

For Akaev, however, this was more than honouring the past and present heroes of the region. The speech at the unveiling was part of his political campaign for re-election. The presidential elections this year (29 October 2000) were particularly contentious. According to the constitution, the president could only serve two terms. However, Akaev argued that he was appointed by Parliament in 1991, instead of elected by the people, and therefore if he were re-elected in 2000, it would only constitute his second term in office.

Faced with allegations abusing his position, Akaev's address to the residents of Özgön was important, especially given that he was not popular in the south. His appearance at the unveiling of these statues was an attempt to sway voters in his favour. While sharing a taxi on the way back to Osh, I spoke with the other passengers about this. One man told me it was necessary for him to make such a gesture in order to gain votes in the region.

The anniversary also presented an opportunity for the government to address the growing division between northern and southern Kyrgyzstan. In a series of meetings with Tursunbai Bakir uulu, the republic's ombudsmen and native of the Osh region, he described to me the difficult situation of the south and the importance of this celebration. In our meetings, he told me how he had campaigned for greater economic and political involvement in the south for many years before these festivities. Furthermore, since 1993 he had campaigned to have the capital moved from Bishkek to Osh. He believed that this would raise the standard of living in the region. "Bishkek", he said, "is like a European city, whereas the other cities are old and derelict [...]". Southern political elites would often draw such comparisons, stating that they were politically under-represented and economically marginalised in contrast to the higher level of income and number of businesses emerging in the north. Although Bishkek remains the capital, during the celebrations Akaev announced that Osh was Kyrgyzstan's "second capital" (Akaev 2003e: 153).

While the southern elites were able to draw attention to their concerns, the government's decision to promote the festivities were also connected to other political developments that had taken place in the Fergana Valley region in the preceding years. In 1999 and 2000 Uzbek officials ordered that fences be erected and mine fields lain around parts of its border with Kyrgyzstan in an attempt to defend the country against terrorism (Megoran 2002). In 1999, a rebel group, known as the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), detonated bombs in Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan, in an attempt to assassinate the President, Islam Karimov. From their bases in Afghanistan and Tajikistan, they launched a series of incursions into Kyrgyzstan, attempting to make their way to Uzbekistan and establish an Islamic caliphate. The IMU also engaged in armed conflict with the Kyrgyz army during the summers of 1999 and 2000, but was apparently defeated. The celebrations in Osh provided the government with an opportunity to stress its secular goals and the dangers of religious fundamentalism.

Genealogy as a methodological tool

The anniversary of Osh was a moment for the government to celebrate the history of the state and its people. The events highlighted the notion of a unified people, but the events also attempted to address many other concerns. This example depicts an emphasis on the theme of unity of the nation, but also that this was the product of a number of other issues at that time. Akaev's discursive construction of the state had two effects. On the one hand, the state is presented as the result of the unification of its citizens. The public events and advertisements that accompanied the anniversary were an attempt to shape people's identities in accordance with Akaev's political goals. On the other hand, this discourse attempts to displace other issues, such as the marginalisation of the south and the country's territorial integrity. In order to explore these two aspects of ideology of the state, I suggest that genealogy, apart from conveying notions of relatedness, can be used as an analytical methodology.

Such a methodology enables an examination of the practices that contribute to the formation of how we imagine ourselves. As Bhabha described the split between pedagogic and the performative in the conceptualisation of the nation, I argue that genealogy as methodology focuses on this split and elaborates the conditions under which contemporary representations of identity are constructed and the shifting movements in discourse which underpin it. Therefore, I employ David Owen definition of genealogy: "[a] historical reconstruction of how we have become what we are which acts as an immanent critique of what we are and which is directed towards the practical achievement of human autonomy" (Owen 1994: 221). Owen's definition focuses on the history of philosophical movements, particularly those associated with Immanuel Kant's concept of maturity and his intellectual legacy in modernity. The use of genealogy as a methodology attempts to uncover the ideologies behind our conception of ourselves. This methodology is fundamentally a study of the present, which traces the discursive elements that are employed to construct contemporary images of our identities.

I suggest that there are two issues which are the most basic concerns of this methodology. Firstly, genealogy is used to identify and analyse the *a priori* assumptions of our social life. The values and beliefs which form basic concepts of our identities are the place at which the genealogical method begins to explore the events, conditions, and interpretations that contribute to these reified concepts and the temporality of their significance. In other words, genealogy traces the construction of ideas in connection

with the circumstances of the time they are elaborated. Secondly, and following on from the first, genealogy examines the language which is used to construct *a priori* assumptions of social life. This investigation emphasises the ambivalence of language, the changing interpretations and meanings connected with ideas and concepts. Moreover, this view of language also stresses the creation of meaning as external, and through language we shape our individual identities. This is by no means a complete account of all the elements employed to create these conceptions; such a project would never be complete. Neither do I exclude non-discursive actions, such as feelings and impressions. My intention, rather, is to analyse the construction of the state as an identity elaborated through relatedness and portrayed in nation-building projects.

The move to explore *a priori* assumptions developed from critiques of Immanuel Kant's study of reason. Kant's views were criticised by a number of philosophers, most notably Friedrich Nietzsche (1990). Nietzsche's critique of Kant can be described as a move from epistemology to genealogy. In other words, this was a shift from a theory of a stable, bounded body of knowledge founded upon distinct notions of reason, to that of an investigation of the elements which constructed that knowledge. Nietzsche's use of genealogy was an evaluative measure, to understand the historical development of knowledge and morality. Since, in Nietzsche's view, language had no universal meaning, *a priori* judgements could not be made. He disregarded Kant's transcendental ego, i.e. the unity of the individual's consciousness, but not an object that can be experienced itself; instead postulating an alternative form of consciousness, which he imagined as "[...] a social product whose historical development is co-extensive with the development of language" (Owen 1994: 22). In other words, Nietzsche was concerned with the hegemony of interpretation. Eric Blondel, who examined Nietzsche's interrogation of texts, described his view:

> [...] there is an interpretation precisely insofar as no meaning-founding *essence* or truth is to be found. Interpretation is reading without being able to fix the origin, proper place, code, or principle of the text. It is to suppose that meaning is always external and that the text does not contain its code in and of itself, but *depends* [...] upon what is outside of itself (Blondel 1994: 313, original emphasis).

Thus, the meaning of interpretations which form our sense of self is external to us. We do not create language, but instead we are created by its representation of ourselves.

Michel Foucault (1984) developed Nietzsche's view of the hegemony of interpretation, in his own discussion of genealogy. Foucault noted that genealogy was a method to comment on the "[...] hazardous play of domination" (Foucault 1984: 83), which conditions our concepts of ourselves. Foucault argued that if interpretation is a "[...] violent or surreptitious appropriation of a system of rules, which in itself has no essential meaning, in order to impose a direction, to bend it to a new will, to force its participation in a different game, and to subject it to secondary rules, then the development of humanity is a series of interpretations" (Foucault 1984: 86). In other words, interpretation reveals the entrenched judgements about ourselves and the continual shifts in how we recast our identities. Foucault argued that we have no control over these external judgements of our identities. He demonstrated the influence these judgements have over us in his study of power and hegemony. Ultimately, Foucault's development of genealogy as a method is directed at the investigation of relationships between ethics and power. The aim is to understand what we have become, but also to know how concepts of ourselves are entrenched in our cultural lives. It is to recognise that the meanings attached to ideas of what we have become are interpretations. Accordingly, it is the task of genealogy to chart the changes in the history of interpretations in reference to present circumstances (Dreyfus & Rabinow 1983: 108).

A genealogical investigation of the state examines the processes that have led to a particular representation at a particular moment. This methodology is employed precisely at the point where the state is attributed with primordial characteristics. Thus, the practices that represent the state as a form of historical consciousness are exposed, and the language in which it is framed is critiqued (Navaro-Yashin 2002). The hegemony of interpretation which underpins the state as a bounded entity is investigated and used against this image. The "real" age of the Kyrgyz state is no longer of great significance; it is the particular representation at its moment of articulation which becomes the focus of this methodology.

The genealogy of the state

Genealogy as a methodology not only investigates concepts, but also history of the forms they take in society. In this context, I am concerned with the construction of the ideological notion of the state, and also the actual, administrative structure of the state. In other words, the myth of the state describes how the Kyrgyz state existed nearly three

thousand years ago, but administrative formations are a more recent development. In this section, I briefly conduct a genealogy of the Kyrgyz state as an administrative entity. Although the independent Kyrgyz state was formed on 31 August 1991, when it formally seceded from the Soviet Union, it was a structure that had been developed by Tsarist and Soviet administrative divisions, and was not a native organisation nor did it reflect local conceptions of governance.

From the early eighteenth century, what is Kyrgyzstan today was under the control of the Kokand Khanate. The ruling dynastic family broke away from the Emirate of Bukhara in 1710. The rulers established their new capital in Kokand, in the Fergana Valley (in modern day Uzbekistan). The rulers succeeded in capturing the territory to the east, and by the early nineteenth century had established posts in northern Kyrgyzstan. The Kyrgyz in the Fergana Valley lived in sedentary agricultural communities. A number of taxes (see Chapter 2) were imposed by the rulers on the people in the Fergana Valley. The Kyrgyz that lived in the north were still nomadic and the khanate did not have strong control over them. The repression of the Kyrgyz people in the south led to a popular uprising in 1873-1876. Also at this time, the khanate was engaged in a series of battles with the Tsarist Empire that had expanded into the region. The uprisings and the force of the Tsarist army were too great for the khanate. In 1876 the khanate was abolished and all its territory became part of the Governorate-General of Turkestan.

The Governorate-General of Turkestan was based in Tashkent, but did not have jurisdiction over the Emirate of Bukhara or the Khiva Khanate (which remained as protectorates of the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union until 1920). During this period, the Tsarist administration divided Turkestan into several *oblasts*. The modern boundaries of Kyrgyzstan were divided between the Fergana *oblast'* and the Semirechie (Russian: Seven Rivers) *oblast'*. In 1886, the Governorate-General of Turkestan was renamed the Turkestan *krai* (Russian: a region which is a large administrative territory, but is not an autonomous *oblast'*).

After the October Revolution, in 1918 the Soviets renamed the Turkestan *krai* the Turkestan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic.[212] This included all of Central Asia including Kazakhstan. The Tsarist internal divisions were maintained during this time. However, Turkestan was largely separate from the central administration. In 1918-1919, both Russian and Muslim groups struggled against the Soviet regime. During these years,

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[212] In a new Soviet constitution of 1920, the area was renamed the Turkestan Soviet Socialist Republic.

the Soviets in Moscow and the Turkestan administration, with the assistance of the local Communist party, managed to repress these anti-revolutionaries and begin to implement their own social development policies (Soucek 2000).

In 1924 the Kara-Kyrgyz Autonomous *Oblast'* was formed (this was changed to the Kyrgyz Autonomous *Oblast'* in 1925), after the completion of the national border delimitation by Soviet ethnographers. The Soviet policy of nation building was founded upon the view that the people of the region were not advanced and needed to be ushered through the evolutionary stages until they developed a cohesive national identity, which they would eventually abandon for a Soviet identity. The designation of the Kyrgyz as an autonomous *oblast'* was still subject to the Supreme Soviet of the Union Republic. In 1926, the territory was renamed the Kyrgyz Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic. As the former First Secretary, Turdakun Usubaliev, stated: "The nation-state delimitation promoted acceleration of the consolidation of people of this region, liquidation of their former political, economic and cultural dissociation and backwardness, [and the] successful realisation of socialist transformations" (Usubaliev 1982: 11). This recognised the Kyrgyz as having a distinct ethnic identity and granted them the power to exercise the powers and administration of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) on its own territory.

Finally, in 1936 Kyrgyzstan was made a full Soviet Socialist Republic. The country had now become a full member of the USSR and had jurisdiction over all its cultural and domestic affairs, but its foreign policy, security and defence were still centrally controlled by administrators in Moscow. In a new constitution in 1937, a section was added, allowing Kyrgyzstan the formal right to secede from the USSR. However, this was not an actual power that could be exercised. Furthermore, the declaration of its membership to the USSR recognised the Kyrgyz as a historically defined ethnic group with common economy and social customs, in keeping with Stalin's definition (see Chapter 4).

During the Soviet years, a number of cultural and educational programmes were implemented by the administration. Opera, ballet and other fine arts were developed and encouraged. A campaign against illiteracy was initiated. This also served as a way of disseminating the ideology of the Communist Party. In 1918, the first newspaper in Russian, *Pishpekskii listok* (Russian: *Pishpek Paper*) was published. In 1924, the first newspaper in Kyrgyz (Arabic script) was published, *Erkin too* (Kyrgyz: *Free Mountain*). These served as mouthpieces for the government. Even in 1930, a Kyrgyz language

paper was published, *Sabattuu bol* (Kyrgyz: *Be Literate*). Books were also published cheaply to encourage people to read. Together with the literacy campaign, numerous schools and institutes were opened. In 1951 the first university was opened in Frunze (today, Bishkek). The Kyrgyz State University was a pedagogical institute and has subsequently expanded.

When the Kyrgyz Republic declared its independence in 1991, its form and structure were the creations of the Soviet administration. The organisation of the new government was based on this Soviet system, and retains many of its characteristics today. The republic is divided into seven oblasts (Batken, Chüi, Ysyk-Köl, Jalal-Abad, Naryn, Osh, and Talas), similar as it was during the Soviet era. These are divided into *raions* (Russian: regions), cities and villages. The republic is divided into legislative, judicial, and executive branches. There are local *kengesh* (Kyrgyz: council) in the regions. These are joined to the Jogorku Kengesh (Kyrgyz: Supreme Council, Parliament). Officials are elected to the *kengesh* and *akims* (Kyrgyz: governors) are elected as administrative leaders for *oblasts*.

Furthermore, its borders are a creation of the Soviet border delimitation. The different republics represented the largest ethnic groups in the region. However, the decision to formally demarcate these republics was an attempt to stop a federation of (Muslim) Turkic peoples. These borders were intended to be internal divisions, but now represent international boundaries. Kyrgyzstan has had border disputes with all of its neighbours. As I discussed in Chapter 1, the border issues with China have been addressed. Kyrgyzstan has also settled its border with Kazakhstan. However, there are still territorial disputes between Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.

The first official language of the Kyrgyz Republic is Kyrgyz. It is a Turkic language of the Altaic language group. Before the Soviet era, Kyrgyz, as with other Central Asian languages, was written with an Arabic alphabet. A reformed Arabic alphabet was used from 1923-1929. This was then changed to a Latin alphabet, which was used from 1929-1940. From 1940 until today, Kyrgyz is written with a Cyrillic alphabet. Unlike some of its neighbours, Kyrgyzstan has continued to use this alphabet. Russian also remains the official second language. The government's close ties with Russia have encouraged people to continue using it. It is used as the first language in government and most schools teach primarily in Russian, or have mandatory language classes.

The leaders of the Kyrgyz Republic are predominantly former Soviet *apparatchiks* (Russian: members of the Communist Party). However, Askar Akaev, the first president, was the only one of the Central Asian leaders not to be the former First Secretary of the country. From 1972-1986 he was a lecturer of physics at the Leningrad State University. In 1987 he was elected as vice-president of the Kyrgyz Academy of Sciences, and in 1989 became its president. He was a member of the Communist Party, but did not hold any significant positions. In 1990, he was elected by the Jogorku Kengesh as President of Kyrgyzstan. Many of his closest advisors and ministers have had long careers in the Soviet party. Until the "Tulip Revolution", many of the former first secretaries retained parliamentary seats in the independent government. The effects of Soviet style governance are still present.

This genealogy of the state briefly outlines how the modern Kyrgyz Republic was formed. In contrast to the myth of the state, the modern state and its institutions are largely creations of the Soviet administration. In the ethno-nationalist rhetoric of Akaev and other politicians, the state is reified as a primordial entity. These views maintain that the state was created from the conscious efforts of the ancestors to unify the Kyrgyz people. Genealogy as a method highlights the differences between such views and actual formation of the state. The actual origins of the state are a creation of external powers, regimes and governments. Ideas about the ethnogenesis of the state, however, advocate for a much longer process of evolutionary development and political consolidation. I now return to examining the discursive construction of the state as the struggle of the ancestors from ancient times. In what ways does this discourse construct the modern Kyrgyz citizen?

Shifting discursive space

In the previous chapters I argued that the Akaev-led government adopted the notion of the *sanjyra* (a genealogy with historical information) which formed their representation of the nation's ancestors. This style of nation-building project was to strengthen the claims of the government about the centrality of the historical figures to *plemya*, nation and state identities. This construction complemented people's perceptions of their own ancestors and provided an official set of statements through which they could articulate their relationship to their ancestors and understand themselves. In this section, I analyse the way in which this discourse has been cultivated so that the "state" constitutes a

meaningful part of a person's identity. In this regard, in Chapter 5 I employed Rose's (1996b) notion of the "genealogy of subjectification" to elaborate the practices through which people internalise external meanings.

An example of this was the unveiling of a statue to Atake *baatyr* by a direct descendent, Janyl Abdyldabek kyzy. Her description of her ancestors complemented Akaev's views. Her investigation into her ancestry led her to take pride in their actions. She attributed great significance to their actions for contemporary life. Her intention, by unveiling the statue and opening a museum, was to educate other Kyrgyz of their past and the lessons that can be learned for today. In short, Abdyldabek kyzy's ancestors had an important effect on the way she conceptualised her identity.

The discursive space is a landscape upon which not only identity is created, but the category of the person can be written and cultivated. While there is not enough space in this thesis to discuss the notion of personhood further, it is an important consideration for further research. A few notes should be made, however, about the correlation between the government's construction of identity and the constitution of the notion of the person. Charles Taylor has noted that:

> Being a person is being self-aware, but this is inseparable from being open to different significances, the specifically human ones, which can't be reduced to the vital and the sentient. These involve our being open to strong evaluations, which have to be treated as assessments, rather than conferrals or preference. [...] They are shaped by the language in which they are enclosed (Taylor 1985: 276).

In other words, within the discursive space external interpretations, and our elaboration of these interpretations, form our conception of self-awareness and qualities of humanity (such as desires, feelings, emotions, etc.) are conceived of as intrinsic to our nature. He notes that the recognition of personhood is located within a "space of disclosure", which can be defined socially as the external relations and affinities that people have with each other, and ritually, which requires acts of renewal or reaffirmation with the notion of being a person. The space of disclosure is one that is interiorised by speakers, yet the "place of articulation", as Taylor describes it, is external to us. This "movement" of the space(s) of disclosure increase our perception of ourselves as atomised persons.

The perception of ourselves as persons is generated by our use of interpretations. It enshrines particular concepts as aspects of our human "nature", which are treated as *a priori* characteristics. The official Kyrgyz discourse created a discursive space through

which a number of ideas have been presented as archetypal characteristics and inscribed on the notion of the "Kyrgyz person", or in this case, an identity of the citizens. Furthermore, *plemya*, national and state identities have been combined into one concept which is presented as exemplary of Kyrgyz citizens. They are all interconnected through different temporal and spatial scales. Therefore, we find in discussions of genealogies a description of personal relatedness (Kyrgyz: *jeti ata*), but also one that is more genealogically and historically expansive (Kyrgyz: *sanjyra*) and has been used a model for the government's attempts at identity construction. The "Kyrgyz person" is partly an elaboration of these three forms of identity. In the official representation of the year of statehood, the identity of the "Kyrgyz person" is what defines the state, and conversely, the state defines a concept of the "Kyrgyz person".

While this official form of identity is important for some people, it is not important for many. The suggestion that Kyrgyz society today is primarily organised through kinship is misleading. The networks established in the post-Soviet era are attempts by people to obtain help and support to overcome difficult economic situations. For example, in Chapter 2, I spoke about Cholpon who relies on the support of her family while she looks for work and to support her children. However, in the following ethnographic examples, two activities which took place in 2003 placed children at the centre of the conception of the state, and the state at the centre of their identities. These activities represent the organisation of the discursive space incorporating the notion of state and the people.

The People's Kurultai

On the morning of 6 March 2003 a large number of people assembled in front of the Philharmonic, where the Manas statue stands, in Bishkek. They had gathered for the People's *Kurultai* (Kyrgyz: congress).[213] Many students lined the perimeter of the square in front of the Philharmonic, waving different coloured flags. They also stood in the aisles between the empty flower beds running through the centre of the square. I had passed by here the day before and seen students practising their moves while the organisers shouted instructions at them. Classes had been cancelled in several of the

[213] The *kurultai* refers to a form of council or congress that was held while the Kyrgyz were nomadic. This word is Turko-Mongolic in origin and can still be found throughout Central and Inner Asia.

nearby schools and universities so that the students could perform, and those that did not participate were there to support their classmates. This was not a rare occurrence. I often saw students walking around with bags carrying their flags when they were required to participate in similar events. On this day, I met a group of students from a neighbouring school. They were not directly participating, but were told to come to the Philharmonic and support the others. They told me that their classes had been cancelled and that they were interested to see what was taking place. When I asked them what the *kurultai* was about, they replied that they did not know.



Figure 6.2 – 6 October 2003 – The People's *Kurultai* (Photo: Author)

On the day of the *kurultai*, a man and woman read messages in Russian and Kyrgyz which blared out from a set of speakers on one side of the square. "We are the

future of Kyrgyzstan", they shouted. This and other similar statements were repeated constantly, including the seven principles of Manas. The statements reflected the government's concept of the people at the centre of the state. In front of the Manas statue were military guards in full dress regalia standing to attention. After nearly half an hour President Akaev arrived. He walked down the red carpet to the centre of the square facing the Philharmonic and the Manas statue. In what was more reminiscent of an Olympic ceremony, four men ran towards the President with a torch and lit a flame in the centre of the square. Together with the President they declared the People's *Kurultai* now open. All participants went into the Philharmonic and listened to speeches from government officials and watched a cultural performance of various musical pieces, singing, and dancing. The whole event was televised throughout Kyrgyzstan.

The President opened with a long speech about the importance of this event in the history of the Kyrgyz Republic. Akaev, drawing on the ancient Chinese historical records of Sima Qian, stated that the Kyrgyz were a unified people a "minimum" of 2,200 years ago, because they must have existed before then in order for them to be recognised. He also announced the planning for the Second Global Kyrgyz *Kurultai* later in the year, where representatives of Kyrgyz diasporas from around the world would come for a special meeting (Akaev 2003b: 3).[214] Furthermore, the President discussed the importance of democracy and democratic practices. He referred to the changes made to the constitution by referendum on 2 February 2003 (see Chapter 1). These, he said, were for the improvement of the republic. In his view, people needed to approach the state from a more personal perspective: "If everyone approaches the assessment of the work of the state structures [and of the] participation in the state government from the position that 'we are the state' [Russian: '*gosudarstvo – eto my*'], we shall quickly achieve efficiency and adequacy of the state in the interests of society" (Akaev 2003b: 5). And for this reason Akaev stated that "[d]emocracy is not Bolshevism, but a movement of the general interests of the people" (Akaev, 2003: 5, see also Karimov 2003). Akaev directly positions people at the centre of the state. The citizens, in his view, are to see themselves at the heart of government and state practices.

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[214] The Second Global Kyrgyz *Kurultai* was held on 28-29 August 2003 in Cholpon-Ata on the shores of Lake Ysyk-Köl. In the speech that Akaev (2003a) delivered at the conference, he outlined the past, present and future of the nation and called for all to take part in its development.



Figure 6.3 – 14 March 2003 – Children performing in the concert "I am a Kyrgyz citizen" (Photo: Author)

On 14 March 2003 I was invited to watch a performance at a school in Naryn. This school was one of the best schools in the city. Although Naryn is predominantly a Kyrgyz speaking town, the school teaches mostly in Russian.[215] Today, the students performed "*Ya – grazhdanin Kyrgyzstana*" (Russian: "I am a Kyrgyz citizen"), a concert which would be repeated in schools throughout the country during the year. In attendance were the Regional Governor of Education, Töröbek Imanberdiev, and the Mayor of Naryn, A. Aidaraliev.

We sat in the main auditorium hall of the school. At the front was a large banner reading: "*Ya – grazhdanin Kyrgyzstana!*" The children began the concert by naming aspects of life that they should strive to protect. Then Mayor Aidaraliev stood and addressed the audience. Amongst other things he stated that "2200 years ago we were a state". Today, in his view, this should be guarded as closely as ever. As for the concert, he called it a "children's movement", in regard to their struggle to preserve the Kyrgyz state.

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[215] I often wondered if the reputation of the school was not based on the format of education in Naryn. I was unable to carry out an extensive study in different towns, but I was told by several education administrators that students who do well in their classes are put into groups whose lessons are predominantly in Russian. Whereas the other students who do not do as well, remain in classes which are taught in Kyrgyz. While all students must study both languages in school and university, it was interesting that students should be separated into different language groups based on their performance in general studies.



Figure 6.4 – 14 March 2003 – Kyrgyz *eje* talking about the importance of *Manas* (Photo: Author)

Following this, three young boys took the stage and recited short passages from *Manas*, in a *manaschi* style. A woman dressed in traditional Kyrgyz attire stood behind them and praised them for their work. She underlined the importance of *Manas* to the Kyrgyz people and for the survival of the Kyrgyz state, before kissing the Kyrgyz flag. Then several children played the *komuz* (Kyrgyz: a small, three-stringed guitar) and *ooz komuz* (Kyrgyz: mouth harp). Finally, several students danced. As the performance drew to a close the students sitting in the audience raised a large *tündük* (Kyrgyz: the hole or wheel in the roof of a yurt) in the middle of the room.[216]

[216] A *tündük* is a Kyrgyz word for the hole or wheel in the roof of a yurt. The *tündük* is also one of the symbols of the Kyrgyz state. It appears on the flag with forty flames emanating from it, indicating the forty *plemya* of the Kyrgyz.



Figure 6.5 – 14 March 2003 – Children holding a *tündük* at the "I am a Kyrgyz citizen" festival (Photo: Author)

The *tündük* was a symbol that was used often during the statehood celebrations. For example, on the 30 August 2003 there was a children's concert, commemorating the importance of statehood. During the performance that evening, a large, illuminated *tündük* was lifted above dancers in the centre of Ala-Too Square. The programme was called *Uluu Tündük* (Russian: *Svyashchennyi Svet*) or Sacred Light.[217] The *tündük* was reported to symbolise "yurt – country" (Shepelenko 2003). My interpretation of this event was that all are citizens of Kyrgyzstan and live under one roof. This complements Akaev's earlier slogan: "Kyrgyzstan is our common home". However, it would also suggest that all rights within the common home are shared equally. This would support Akaev's new slogan for the year of statehood: "Kyrgyzstan – a country of human rights". This statement demonstrated the urgency with which Akaev attempted to foster unity within the country, particularly after the Aksy tragedy (see Chapter 1). The death of the protestors had caused concern among many people that the Akaev regime was becoming increasingly authoritarian. Akaev wanted to distance himself from this image.

The buildings around the square had also been decorated. They were adorned with blue banners, depicting mountains, eagles, and other national icons. Two banners had quotes on them, which underlined the importance of strengthening the qualities of the state in society. One quoted Manas: "I gathered buzzards and turned them into falcons. I

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[217] The *tündük* is also one of the symbols of the Kyrgyz state. It appears on the flag with forty flames emanating from it, indicating the forty *plemya* of the Kyrgyz.

gathered different peoples and turned them into a nation".[218] The other was a quote by Akaev: "Statehood is a great idea. It helps the nation survive in difficult times".[219]

The central themes of the performance stressed the centrality of *Manas* and the moral virtues Akaev derived from the epic to their identity as Kyrgyz citizens. In a speech at the Second Global Kyrgyz *Kurultai*, the President attested to the importance of *Manas*: "The unique oral creation of the Kyrgyz people, the epic *Manas*, was [throughout history] the carrier not only of the national idea, but was also a prototype of the national constitution, the code of laws and moral standards, [and] the code of honour and morality [Russian: *nravstvennosti*]" (Akaev 2003a: 5). In Akaev's view, the figure of Manas embodies all of these qualities. However, in his depiction, other ancestors, such as Jusup Balasagyn, also demonstrates these qualities through their individual actions.

A state of the people

These two examples illustrate the notion of the Kyrgyz people at the heart of the state, as envisioned by the government. Despite this celebration of statehood, not all citizens of the republic feel as though they are full members. Morgan Liu provides an account of Uzbek men living in Osh, southern Kyrgyzstan, who have felt since independence that they are excluded from the state. They have become disillusioned and do not look to Akaev, but conceptualise the President of Uzbekistan, Islam Karimov, as their khan. Liu notes:

> In a predicament where [Uzbek men] find themselves unable to mobilize for political action within Kyrgyzstan, and unable to connect themselves politically to Uzbekistan, Osh Uzbeks produced the *imagination* about ideal state and leadership that articulated their desires for good community and belonging within the reconfigured political landscape (Liu 2002: 5, original emphasis).

Liu notes the concept of the khan occurred with regularity in Osh Uzbek discourses. This was exemplified by the social and spatial context of the *mahalla*:

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[218] In Kyrgyz: "*Kulaaly taptap, Kush kyldym. Kurama jyiyp, Jurt kyldym*".

[219] In Russian: "*Gosudarstvennost' – eto velikaya idea, pomogayushchaya natsii vyzhivat' v trudnye vremena*".

> To live in a mahalla meant to be under a seemingly ubiquitous authority that exerted influence on social conduct within the neighborhoods. The mahalla operated as a field of authority. Osh Uzbek men envisioned an ideal postsocialist state as a kind of quasi-mahalla space under the paternal authority of the khan. The Khan oversaw his state with the same sense of personal stewardship as elders were supposed to oversee the neighborhood" (Liu 2002: 6).

Authority is treated "[...] as being *dispersed through a space* in the sense that its effects were recognizable throughout the space" (Liu 2002: 5, original emphasis). The *mahalla* acts as a space through which authority is felt. Again, the projection of the *mahalla* onto the state, and the state onto the *mahalla*, is an important theme. "The state was thus treated like a mahalla writ large in both 'content' (paternal oversight) and 'form' (spatial characteristics)" (Liu 2002: 7).[220]

This account stresses the importance of the *mahalla* as including a vision of the state through daily interactions and the state as community/*mahalla* writ large, which are in part answers to the points Mitchell (1999) has raised. Liu demonstrates the importance of local networks in a situation where they are excluded from the social forms that constitute the image of the state. The fact that Kyrgyz Uzbeks look beyond their borders to the Uzbek president as the source of political legitimacy demonstrates that for many the notion of unity through statehood is empty. Uzbeks that live in Kyrgyzstan do not share in forms of genealogical relatedness as they are represented in local and national levels, which preclude them from being able to locate themselves in the construction of the Kyrgyz state. In official accounts, historical figures are of "Kyrgyz" ancestors, and are regarded as being passionate, moral people, whose actions reflect a desire to maintain the unity of the Kyrgyz people and develop the "state". For Uzbeks, and other ethnic minorities in Kyrgyzstan, this has led to feeling ostracised. Both official and personal commemorations that were part of the year of Kyrgyz statehood reinforced the idea of a unified "Kyrgyz" history and genealogical imagination.

Genealogy as a methodological tool highlights the way in which the discursive construction of the state does succeed in placing all the citizens at the centre of the state. Many, such as the Uzbeks, feel ostracised, however, and separated from the representation of the state. The practices which contribute towards the construction of the person rely of Kyrgyz social understandings. Therefore, the state becomes not a

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[220] Johan Rasanayagam (2002a; 2002b) describes similar interaction between representations of the *mahalla* and state.

"common home", but a distinctly Kyrgyz space. It is the specific timing of the creation of this image of the "Kyrgyz" state during the "Year of Kyrgyz Statehood" that I focus on the in the following section.

Genealogy as critique

In the analysis of the genealogy of the state I have suggested that genealogy can be used as an analytical methodology. In the case of Kyrgyzstan, I have focused on the different representations of genealogy and how they underpin notions of *plemya*, nation, and state identities. Also, I have examined the formation of a discursive space where these identities have been combined and inscribed on the person in the official view. However, I suggest that the genealogy of the state can be employed to examine why this discourse has occurred at particular times and in certain ways. The use of genealogy as a methodological tool uncovers subtleties and shifts in the deployments of discourse, however, it also serves to analyse the usage of these identities in social contexts. In the following sections, I suggest a critique which focuses on the timing of the celebration. I argue that it was organised as a specific attempt to foster unity among the families of the victims of the Aksy tragedy and their supporters.

2003 – "2,200 Years of Kyrgyz Statehood"

In August 2002, President Askar Akaev announced that 2003 would be nominated as the "Year of Kyrgyz Statehood". The Kyrgyz news agency, *Kabar*, quoted Akaev as stating that the idea for Kyrgyz statehood "[…] came from the epos 'Manas'. Kyrgyz statehood [is] 2,200 [years old] and 2003…as a Year of Kyrgyz Statehood, according to [the] President will help to consolidate the nation, strengthen the unity and […] develop young Kyrgyz Statehood" (*Kabar* 2002). This was a sudden announcement and did not suggest the long, detailed planning that had gone into previous celebrations. On 20 September 2002, Akaev addressed the 57th Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations. Here, he outlined the historical reasons for celebrating a year of statehood. Akaev noted that if the General Assembly should acknowledge the "Year of Kyrgyz Statehood": "[The] acknowledgment will be accepted with great gratitude by the whole Kyrgyz nation; and it surely will make a great contribution to the interior political stability and

further consolidation of the multi-ethnic Kyrgyz nation" (Akaev 2002c).[221] However, as I have argued, the feeling of exclusion that some ethnic groups feel, such as the Uzbeks, demonstrates that the divisions are far deeper than such a celebration can overcome.

It is the stress that Akaev places on the importance of unity and internal stability I wish to focus on here. The announcement of a year of statehood was only made after the Aksy tragedy in March 2002, following increasing discontent by the families of the victims, residents of Aksy (who were also supported by other people in southern Kyrgyzstan), and supporters of parliamentary deputy Azimbek Beknazarov who protested throughout the summer. In response there were repeated calls by the government to "strengthen the unity" of the Kyrgyz people. For example, at the People's *Kurultai* on 6 March 2003, Akaev noted that: "It is the sacred duty of every Kyrgyz citizen in the Year of Kyrgyz Statehood – to strengthen the unity of the people, strengthen inter-ethnic harmony and to provide the people the opportunity to work quietly and fruitfully [...]" (Akaev 2003b: 5).

Throughout 2002 and 2003 Akaev attempted to create an environment of peace amidst growing discontent among members of the elite in southern Kyrgyzstan.[222] They demanded that justice be served to those found guilty in the Aksy tragedy. They also called for a number of reforms, including greater economic investment in the south. It appears that as a direct result of the mishandling of the Aksy case, Akaev was prompted to declare a new slogan for the republic: "Kyrgyzstan is a country of human rights" (Akaev 2003b: 4).[223] The "Year of Kyrgyz Statehood" presented an opportunity for implementing a platform on which citizens could celebrate a notion of the state where "stability" and "harmony" could be "strengthened".

The claim of 2,200 year of Kyrgyz statehood came from ancient Chinese chronicles. In his *Historical Notes* (Chinese: *Shih Ji*), Sima Qian wrote of the Gen'gun, a

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[221] Akaev's request to have the United Nations officially recognise 2003 as the "Year of Kyrgyz Statehood" was approved (2002b) on 1 November 2002 and the resolution was later adopted (2002a) during the 57th session of the General Assembly on 20 December 2002.

[222] There was also a claim made by Rakhman Razzakov, then editor-in-chief of the *Osh Taims* newspaper, that he wanted to organise a political party just for southern Kyrgyzstan (*Argumenty i fakty - Kyrgyzstan* 2003; Kalet 2003). To my knowledge, he never succeeded in this attempt, but it demonstrates the extent to which some members of the elite emphasised a notion of difference and separation from the north.

[223] In Russian this slogan is: "*Kyrgyzstan – strana prava cheloveka!*" The previous slogan, still to be found around Kyrgyzstan, announced in 1994 was "Kyrgyzstan is our common home!" (Russian: "*Kyrgyzstan – nash obshchii dom!*"). This was an attempt to overcome interethnic problems, specifically between the Uzbeks and Kyrgyz in southern Kyrgyzstan.

state in 201 B.C., which scholars have taken to be an early name of the Kyrgyz.[224] On 15 May 2003 a small section appeared in the government newspaper, *Slovo Kyrgyzstana*, depicting Sima Qian's account of the Gen'gun as proof. This was a pedagogical effort to illustrate the history of the Kyrgyz for the readers. The nation-building project attempted to train the minds and bodies of the citizens. The following section from the newspaper was translated from Chinese to Kyrgyz and then to Russian. However, the translators did not write "Gen'gun", they changed it to "Kyrgyz":



Первое упоминание в "Исторических записках" ("Ши Цзы") Сыма Цяня (II-I вв. до н. э.) о кыргызском государстве 201 г. до н. э.

史 记

〔汉〕司马迁 撰

匈奴列传第五十 2215

后北服浑庾、屈射、丁零、鬲昆、薪犁之国。于是匈奴贵人大臣

服,以冒顿单于为贤。

Из "26 летописей", китайские исторические хроники

"Исторические записки"
Сыма Цянь

ХУННСКАЯ ГЕНЕАЛОГИЯ, 50-Й СВИТОК 2215

"...позже на севере покорил такие государства, как Хунро, Кутчэ, Динлин, Кыргыз, Сэнле. Этим хуннские вельможи были ублаготворены и даровали Бодуну (Модуну) Тенирикуту имя Билге."

Перевод с китайского на кыргызский язык
профессора Макелека Омурбая,
профессора Мамбеттурду Мамбетакуна.

Перевод с кыргызского на русский язык
академика А. Какеева,

Figure 6.6 – The official translation of the section (having already been translated from Chinese to Kyrgyz, and now Kyrgyz to Russian) of Sima Qian's *Historical Notes* concerning the mention of the Gen'gun (Chinese: 鬲昆), ancient Kyrgyz. The quote at the bottom reads: "... later in the north such states as the Khunro, Kutcha, Dinlin, Kyrgyz, [and the] Senle were subdued. The Hun grandees were satisfied and granted Bodun (Modun) the territory, and named him a wise man" (*Slovo Kyrgyzstana* 2003: 8).[225]

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[224] For further information on this see Bartol'd (1996) and Tolstov *et al.* (1963).

[225] This translation deviates from the Chinese as printed in the article. Another translantion, directly from Chinese into English taken from the *Shih Ji* reads: "Later he [Modun] made the northern countries of Hunyu, Quyi, Dingling, Gékun, Xinli submit to him. Thereupon the noble people and the great ministers of the Xiongnu all submitted, with Maodun (Modun) Chanyu [sometimes pronounced as *shanyu*] as the leader [literally: sage, worthy person]" (Tineke D'Haeseleer, personal communication). Additionally, it is peculiar to highlight a point in history where the first mention of the Kyrgyz is when they come under Chinese control. In my opinion, this example suggests two things. Firstly, from the viewpoint of the official history, it shows that the Kyrgyz are one of the oldest ethnic groups with a state in Central Asia, and secondly, that they are highly resilient and have always struggled towards greater freedom and

Although the importance of this celebration in the broader nation-building project of the government is consistent with the other celebrations which emphasised the historicity of the Kyrgyz people and their customs, what is less clear is why this was not organised for 2001, which was officially declared the "Year of Tourism". Furthermore, unlike the 1000th anniversary of *Manas* and the 3000th anniversary of the city of Osh, plans for the "Year of Kyrgyz Statehood" were not started well in advance. Planning committees and publishing campaigns had been started two to three years before the official commencement of the previous anniversaries. Also, the United Nations received requests by President Akaev to recognise these events long before they were due to begin. President Akaev did not address the United Nations on the matter of Kyrgyz statehood, however, until after the Aksy tragedy and less than four months before the official start of the celebrations. The President's timing of this national commemoration suggests a compelling need to take action in the social life of the country. This was in addition to a direct political and economic intervention that was to benefit the affected families in Aksy, and to begin to address the perceived divisions between the north and south.

Critical imaginations of the state

The critique I provide here through the genealogy of the state investigates the timing of this national celebration. Although the celebration is in keeping with Akaev's nation-building goals, in my opinion, it also represents a moment of political expediency. The political tension growing in the country was of such significance that the claims for unity in his speeches indicate attempts to address these problems. The construction of the myth of the state and the national celebrations of this image were attempts to displace the focus on social tensions ad political opposition.

Genealogy as methodology provides us with an opportunity to examine events, such as the celebration of statehood, and trace its construction through multiple and complex discourses. As Foucault stated (1984), such a genealogy enables us to chart the shifting reinterpretations and their effects on the concepts of ourselves. In this study of the state, this method analyses how the notion of the state changes over time, but in doing

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independence. This presentation of history supports the construction of Akaev's broader notions of nationalism.

so, also performs a critique of the present representation. In the case of the Kyrgyzstan, the genealogical analysis of statehood and its various discourses also produces a critique of that representation. In this case, the desire for unity expressed through the state, was the result of increasing opposition which eventually led to Akaev's downfall.

Conclusion

In this thesis I have explored ways relatedness is constructed through the narration of genealogies and how this is employed in Kyrgyz nation-building projects. Narratives describing *rod* (Russian: "clan") and *plemya* (Russian: "tribe") are, I argue, primarily categories or relatedness underpinned by genealogical and historical knowledge. These identities are presented as important markers of Kyrgyz ethnicity, and have been incorporated into the official history and form the background of national celebrations. The image of the Kyrgyz people that is created through these representations is an ethnic group unified through the actions of their ancestors where all share genealogical ties.

However, political scientists (e.g. Collins 2006; Schatz 2004) have interpreted these concepts as politically divisive corporate groups. This is supported by accusations of *traibalizm* (Russian: "tribalism") in Central Asian governments. A number of models have been created which examine the internal dynamics of these groups and the negotiations and concessions that take place in politics. The success or failure of these interactions between "clans" determines the regime type and its durability (Collins 2006). When the ruling "clan" excludes other groups from political and economic power, the regime collapses. It has been argued by political scientists that the ousting of President Askar Akaev during the "Tulip Revolution" was an illustration of the collapse pacts between "clans".

Contrary to these views, I argue that the accusations of *traibalizm* in the period before and during the "Revolution" were not a description of the struggle between "clans", but instead narratives of overlapping conceptions of "corrupt" factions based on various forms of favouritism. These narratives highlight the strategic manipulation of identities in order to gain political and economic power. The increasing personal fortunes of the new elites have sparked widespread criticism particularly among those who struggle to negotiate the difficulties of everyday life in the post-Soviet era (Nazpary 2002).

Although *traibalizm* is described as a form of corruption, the notions of *rod* and *plemya* are regarded as important markers of social identity. These concepts are imagined communities formed through the narration of genealogical relatedness. Genealogies involve stories of ancestors and historical accounts which chart people's families and relations. Some people keep detailed records of their ancestors as a way to preserve these

memories and knowledge, but also as a way to describe to others the importance of the actions and morals of their ancestors. During my many visits to people's homes to discuss their genealogies, I heard many such stories. People would bring their personal files and notebooks and recount the lives of their ancestors.

However, for many people, these identities were not important. People explained that they did not find them relevant to their daily lives. The post-Soviet experience in Kyrgyzstan has been marked by economic shortages and low investment into social welfare. *Plemya* and *rod* were not cohesive groups and could therefore not provide any support. Instead, people relied heavily on their families and networks of friends to negotiate these difficulties. Yrys, a woman in her late forties living in Naryn, was one such person. Yrys lived in a flat with her teenage son. Yrys's husband, Rysbek, lived in Bishkek. He moved there to look after their daughter who studied at university in the capital, but also to have greater job opportunities. Yrys relied heavily on the money Rsybek sent her as her own salary was months in arrears. In our conversations, she continually returned to the topic of money and the pressures of not having enough. For example, she worried about finding enough money to be able to send her son to university.

Sadly, towards the end of my fieldwork, Rysbek suffered a heart attack and died. Yrys was devastated and remained deeply depressed for many months. Her emotional loss was great, and now she also had to manage without Rysbek's financial support. Yrys turned to family members, friends, and work colleagues for help and assistance. Each of these relations and networks offered her various forms of support during this difficult time.

These were not cohesive kin groups, but were fluid networks constructed to negotiate everyday challenges which became acute after the loss of Rysbek. Many people often needed the support and assistance of others to help them, but the problems increased greatly among single-parent families. The networks the people created were often among friends and acquaintances, and sometimes through haphazard encounters. However, *rod* and *plemya* identities were not a basis for establishing such networks. There was no such kinship organisation.

The reality of people's everyday lives stood in stark contrast to depictions of Kyrgyz society divided among cohesive *rod* and *plemya*. Nevertheless, many representations, in various discourses, portray Kyrgyz society as divided among these kin groups. I argue that this is a product of evolutionist views of society which have influenced perceptions about the organisation of society. Soviet ethnological research in

particular, played a large role in constructing this image. Furthermore, this image was maintained through the use of language. Certain terms and concepts, such as *rod* and *plemya*, have become commonplace and are standard ways of explanations of pastoral groups. However, the continued use of these terms as descriptions of real groups does not engage with the underlying notions of genealogy which construct these categories.

Therefore, I advance the notion of genealogical imagination – the construction of relatedness through the dialectic between personal and collective forms of memory, experience and interpretations of history. This investigation stresses the various forms of relatedness and how they projected onto various scales. For example, some locally venerated historical figures have been included into the national history as having struggled for the creation and maintenance of the Kyrgyz nation and state. Former President Akaev attended many ceremonies throughout Kyrgyzstan to unveil statues to ancestors. These figures, according to Akaev, represent values and morals important for people's lives today and for the future direction of the country. These views often complement people's own memories about their ancestors, and provide them with an opportunity to articulate their views within an official discourse. This use of genealogies has marked the development of Kyrgyz national identity in the post-Soviet period.

The parallel construction of complementary notions of genealogy between individual perspectives and government rhetoric are a form of governmentality. The effect of this disciplining and organising practice not only creates a representation of the person that can be governed, but is elaborated through an identity that is widely recognised as an important trait. People interested in their genealogies are encouraged to express their ideas in connection with the official discourse, which simultaneously acts as a form of self-government.

This concept is suggesting of Nikolas Rose's description of the "regimes of the person", which identifies practices which construct the notion of ourselves and identities. These regimes involve Foucauldian nuances in locating and examining the place of disciplining power in social and political relations. Rose's aim is to focus on the "history of the relations which human being have established with themselves" (Rose 1996b: 130). The regimes involve locating how humans are viewed as problematic, how they are being governed, who is making claims over their representation, what are the aims of these views, and how are these practices connected with broader political realities. The development of discourses is a central concept to the regimes of the person. By examining the different ways in which this concept is understood by people in their

everyday lives and its use in the political rhetorical we can analyse the various techniques this become a practice through which people are governed. However, this view also indicates that the discursive construction of such practices is continually changing. The investigation of particular representations reflects social and political issues of that time.

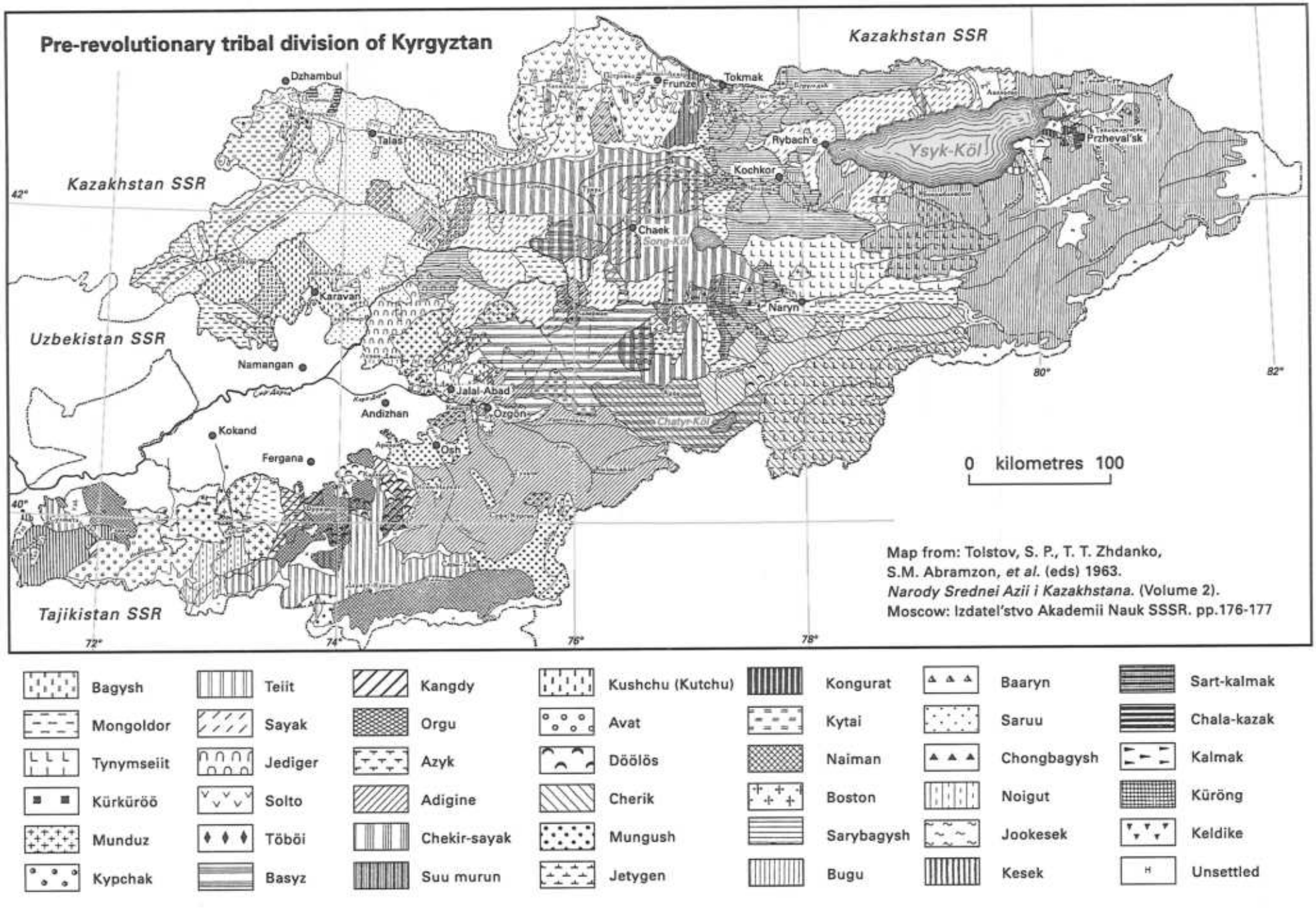
Therefore, I propose that another interpretation of genealogy, as a methodological tool, can be used to uncover the history and interconnectedness of the concepts employed to construct the national history and image of the state. Such a methodology examines the shifting discourses which combine to construct new understandings of the nation and the state. Furthermore, this methodology simultaneously performs an analysis of the production of these notions and their wider social and political significance at the moment they are expressed.

For example, why did Akaev nominate 2003 as the "Year of Kyrgyz Statehood"? Through an investigation of the circumstances of the period leading up to Akaev's announcement of this anniversary, I argue that while this was a continuation of previous festivities, it was an attempt to address social and political divisions in the country. The death of six protestors in 2002 sparked a series of demonstrations against Akaev. In response, Akaev initiated a number of measures; among these he proposed a national referendum to change the constitution. The referendum and other events which formed the statehood celebrations attempted to foster greater unity, and were expressed through the actions of the ancestors and people's duty to honour their genealogical ancestors.

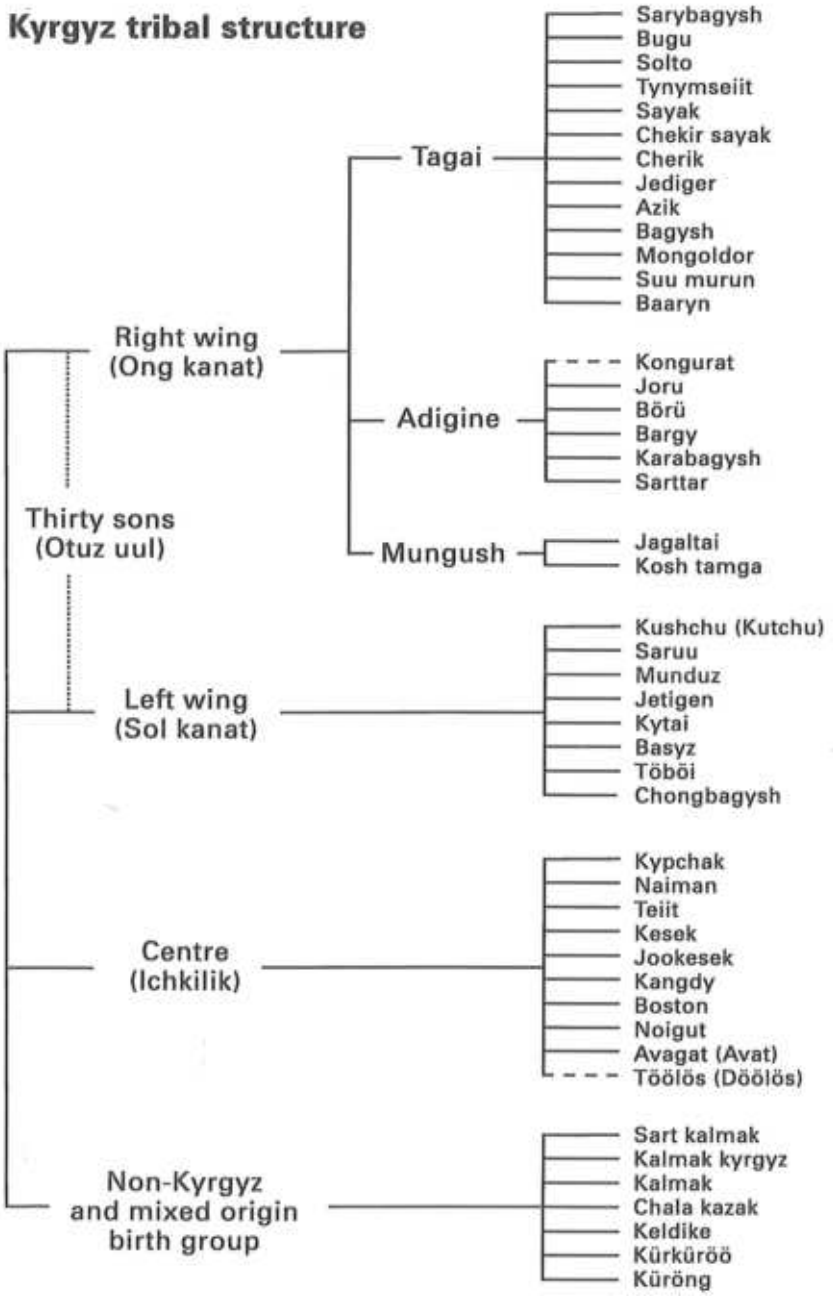
The genealogical method is an effective mode of investigation of the production of identities. It transverses local and national discourses and identifies the points of interconnection. Furthermore, it allows the possibility to critically analyse events and issues which influence the representation of these identities. It is a methodology which explores multiple, overlapping discourses, which contribute to the construction of identities in the present.

Appendix

In this section are maps and diagrams depicting Kyrgyz "tribal" division. These maps and diagrams are displayed throughout Kyrgyzstan. The map of Kyrgyzstan showing "tribal" divisons is located in the National State History Museum. I argue that these Soviet reconstructions of Kyrgyz "tribes" in the nineteenth century contribute to the notion that Kyrgyzstan remains divided into "clans" and "tribes" as corporate groups. Furthermore, I suggest that the distribution of "tribes" indicate historical areas of control by elites. These identities are still recognised to exist in these areas today, but do not form the basis of regional associations. They are imagined communities of genealogical relatedness.


Pre-revolutionary tribal division of Kyrgyztan
Kazakhstan SSR
Kazakhstan SSR
Uzbekistan SSR
Tajikistan SSR
Dzhambul
Talas
Frunze
Tokmak
Rybach'e
Ysyk-Köl
Przheval'sk
Kochkor
Chaek
Song-Köl
Karavan
Naryn
Namangan
Jalal-Abad
Andizhan
Ozgön
Chatyr-Köl
Kokand
Osh
Fergana
42°
40°
72°
74°
76°
78°
80°
82°
0 kilometres 100
Map from: Tolstov, S. P., T. T. Zhdanko, S.M. Abramzon, et al. (eds) 1963. Narody Srednei Azii i Kazakhstana. (Volume 2). Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk SSSR. pp.176-177
Bagysh
Mongoldor
Tynymseiit
Kürküröö
Munduz
Kypchak
Teiit
Sayak
Jediger
Solto
Töböi
Basyz
Kangdy
Orgu
Azyk
Adigine
Chekir-sayak
Suu murun
Kushchu (Kutchu)
Avat
Döölös
Cherik
Mungush
Jetygen
Kongurat
Kytai
Naiman
Boston
Sarybagysh
Bugu
Baaryn
Saruu
Chongbagysh
Noigut
Jookesek
Kesek
Sart-kalmak
Chala-kazak
Kalmak
Küröng
Keldike
Unsettled

Kyrgyz tribal structure



From: Tolstov, S. P., T. T. Zhdanko,
S.M. Abramzon, *et al.* (eds) 1963.
Narody Srednei Azii i Kazakhstana. (Volume 2).
Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk SSSR. p. 175

Glossary

adat	Kyrgyz	customs
aga	Kyrgyz	respected teacher
aiyl	Kyrgyz	encampment; village
ake	Kyrgyz	father; older brother
akim	Kyrgyz	*oblast'* governor
aksakal	Kyrgyz	respected elder; literally "white beard"
aksakaldar sotu	Kyrgyz	*aksakal* courts
akyn	Kyrgyz	poet
ala kachuu	Kyrgyz	bride kidnapping
apparatchik	Russian	member of the Communist Party
Arkan-al-Islam	Arabic	the five pillars of Islamic practice
asabīya	Arabic	"group feeling", or a kind of solidarity
ata	Kyrgyz	father
atkaminery	Kyrgyz	people masquerading as Soviet activists; people engaged in election propaganda
baatyr	Kyrgyz	"hero", a title usually associated with a display of bravery in battle
bai	Kyrgyz	rich herd owners
basmachi	Kyrgyz	fighters part of popular movement against the establishment of Soviet rule
bii	Kyrgyz	judge or judiciaries who settled disputes by customary law among *plemya*
bir atanyn baldary	Kyrgyz	children of one father

böz-üi	Kyrgyz	nomadic felt tent or yurt
byt	Russian	everyday life
chisti	Russian	pure
datka	Kyrgyz	a title of an aristocrat of the Kokand Khanate
dostoinstvo	Russian	dignity
dostorkon	Kyrgyz	tablecloth
dukhovnost'	Russian	spirituality
durachit'	Russian	to fool
eje	Kyrgyz	respectful term for an older woman
el	Kyrgyz	ethnicity; people; tribal union
elechek	Kyrgyz	white turban worn by married women
erkindik	Kyrgyz	freedom
ethnos	Russian	a distinguishable set of ethnic characteristics as officially defined by the Soviet administration
gosudarstvennik	Russian	state-builder
gosudarstvo	Russian	state
gulag	Russian	*glavnoe upravlenie ispravitel'no-trudovykh lagerei* (The Chief Administration of Correctional Labour Camps), hard labour camp
gümböz	Kyrgyz	burial vault
Homo Sovieticus	Russian	the citizen who embodies the ideals of socialism and whose ethnic identity has been superseded by their devotion of the Soviet people

hujum	Uzbek	an attack on the old ways of life
ichinen uruu	Kyrgyz	a *plemya* within a *plemya*
ichkilik	Kyrgyz	centre
iznasilovat'	Russian	to rape
Jadidism	Arabic	a reform movement in Central Asia in the early twentieth century advocating changes to education and politics, and the reformation of an Islamic society
jerdeshtilik	Kyrgyz	regionalism
jeti ata	Kyrgyz	a person's seven patrilineal ancestors, literally "seven fathers"
jigit	Kyrgyz	a young warrior, often in the service of a *manap*
Jokorku Kengesh	Kyrgyz	Supreme Council, Parliament of the Kyrgyz Republic
joo	Kyrgyz	enemy
kalk	Kyrgyz	people
kalym	Kyrgyz	bride price
kara	Kyrgyz	black; common; majority
kazalchy	Kyrgyz	poet (esp. during the pre-Tsarist and Tsarist eras)
kazy	Kyrgyz	judge
khan	Turko-Mongolic	leader, ruler
kichine uruu	Kyrgyz	a little *plemya*
klan	Russian	a political bloc, not dependent on the relations between the members
koldoo	Kyrgyz	support

kolkhoz	Russian	*kollektivnoe khozyaistvo* – collective farm
komplimentarnost'	Russian	complimentarity
komuz	Kyrgyz	a small, three-stringed guitar
kook	Kyrgyz	the udder of a nursing mother camel, which has been cut off and put onto the heads of captives to turn them into *mankurts*
korenizatsiya	Russian	the indigenization of Soviet power through mass recruitment of non-Russians into the Communist Party
korruptsiya	Russian	corruption
krai	Russian	a region which is a large administrative territory, but is not an autonomous *oblast'*
kul	Kyrgyz	slave
kulak	Russian	a peasant-proprietor working for their own profit in the pre-Soviet era
kurultai	Kyrgyz	congress
kyrk choro	Kyrgyz	the forty Kyrgyz warriors Manas is said to have united
kyz	Kyrgyz	daughter; girl
lider	Russian	leader
mahalla	Uzbek	neighbourhood
manap	Kyrgyz	*plemya* leader
manaschi	Kyrgyz	a person who can recite the epic poem, *Manas*
mankurt	Kyrgyz	a person who has lost their memory and has become a slave; dim-witted, stupid person

mat' geroina	Russian	heroine mothers, a title given to women who have given birth to at least five children (in Kyrgyzstan)
medressa	Kyrgyz	Islamic school
mentalitet	Russian	mentality
mestnichestvo	Russian	regionalism
moldo	Kyrgyz	literate, educated person; imam, mulla
muundar	Kyrgyz	generation, a broad age group
nark	Kyrgyz	common right; custom
narod	Russian	people
narodnost'	Russian	ethnicity
natsional'nost'	Russian	nationality
natsiya	Russian	nation
nepotism	Russian	nepotism
nravstvennost'	Russian	morality
nutag	Mongolian	a place of residence or an area of migration
oblast'	Russian	region
obyazannost'	Russian	duty
oey	Kyrgyz	house (yurt), family, household
ong kanat	Kyrgyz	right wing
orda	Russian	horde
otvetstvennyi	Russian	responsible
ooz komuz	Kyrgyz	mouth harp
paranja	Uzbek	veil

passionarnost'	Russian	the build up and explosion of passionate energy that causes change in a social group, usually associated with the establishment of an ethnic group, breaking away from a larger group, passionarity
perestroika	Russian	a programme of political and economic reform initiated by Mikhail Gorbachev
plemya	Russian	"tribe"
plemennoi	Russian	"tribal"
pokolenie	Russian	generation
pravozashchitnik	Russian	human rights defender
raja	Kyrgyz	money paid towards the expenses of a funeral of a family member
regionalism	Russian	regionalism
rod	Russian	"clan"
rodstvo	Russian	kinship
ru	Kazakh	"clan"
sanjyra	Kyrgyz	genealogical information combined with an account of the past
sanjyrachi	Kyrgyz	specialists on genealogical descent and the history of particular *rod* and *plemya*
sblizhenie	Russian	coming together
Shariat	Arabic	the code of law based on the Koran
shiri	Kazakh/Kyrgyz	the udder of a nursing mother camel, which has been cut off and put onto the heads of captives to turn them into *mankurts*
sliyanie	Russian	fusion; merging

sol kanat	Kyrgyz	left wing
söök	Kyrgyz	literally "bones", but similar to lineages
traibalizm	Russian	"tribalism"
tündük	Kyrgyz	the latticed smoke hole or wheel in the roof of a yurt
tütün	Kyrgyz	the household of a married couple
tuugandyk	Kyrgyz	kinship
uezd	Russian	a small territorial administrative division during the Tsarist era
ulut	Kyrgyz	nationality; nation
umma	Arabic	community of all Muslims
urkun	Kyrgyz	exodus
uruk	Kyrgyz	"clan"
uruu	Kyrgyz	"tribe"
uruuchuluk	Kyrgyz	"tribalism"
uul	Kyrgyz	son
uvazhenie	Russian	respect
volost	Russian	the smallest administrative division of a territory, especially during the Tsarist period
yas	Mongolian	bones, lineages
zang	Kyrgyz	custom; law
zemlyak	Russian	countryman
zhuz	Kazakh	horde

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