



**THE RESEARCH OF TURA MIRZAYEV BASED ON THE LITERARY  
PERFORMANCE OF ERGASH JUMANBULBUL**

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**Annotation:** In the article, the repertoire of Ergash Jumanbulbul (Ergash Jumanbulbul o'g'li), basically his "Bulbul taronalari" (Melodies of Nightingale) and its artistic value and ways of adopting it are discussed. Comments are given regarding what aspects Tura Mirzayev has mainly focused on. Specific considerations and examples are provided regarding the approach of defining the author's position and judgement.

**Key words:** epic, literary skill, bakhshi, version, poetic piece, prosaic piece, literary depiction, motive, repetition.

In folk epics, the destiny of a whole nation, its history, culture, and dreams are portrayed. As academician T. Mirzayev emphasized, "Folk epics are a great gift from antiquity, a reflection of the general outlook of the period in which they were created. At the same time, they are literary monuments which were created in the conditions of living traditional creativity and performance, express the objective spirit of the people across generations, expanding or narrowing in content and form, and passed down orally from generations to generations. They are a unique artistic expression of heroic events wrapped in the shell of legends from the national history of the people." [1.21.] Folk epics are sung by the most eloquent, experienced, and wise bakhshis (epic singers) of the people. Even in the 19th century, poets such as Ergash Jumanbulbul o'g'li, Fozil Yo'ldosh o'g'li, Po'lkan Shoir, Berdi Bakhshi, Islom Shoir, Bekmurod Jo'raboy o'g'li, Abdulla Nurali o'g'li, and Saidmurod Panoh o'g'li had already become popular among the people. Furthermore, the recorded history of over 200 bakhshis who lived and created in the 19th–20th centuries stand as a significant scientific achievement in Uzbek folklore studies. Each bakhshi had a peculiar style in both using the language and performance. Among them, Ergash Jumanbulbul was always regarded as a leading figure, recognized for his eloquence and mastery of words. The epic repertoire of folk bakhshis basically contains dastans (epic poems) and termas (didactic songs). This repertoire is traditionally passed down orally from master to apprentice. The stronger the apprentice's memory, the more accurately the original version of the learned dastan, terma, or qissa (story) is preserved in new performances. However, it is not entirely correct to consider this a mere replication of an original version. In the process of new performances, the bakhshi enriches the epic work with his own talent, incorporating real-life truths, advice, and insights through improvisation. In this way, dastans are artistically polished by the bakhshi's worldview and linguistic richness.

The performer's eloquence, depth of thought, and vivid imagination influence the content of the performed dastan. Russian scholar V. P. Anikin, discussing folklore traditions, noted: "There can be no folklore outside of tradition. Creative acts connected to improvisation must be based on tradition; otherwise, the essence of the events will not materialize. The improviser draws on ready-made poetic solutions, ideas, imagery, poetic techniques, and stylistic formulas." [2.209.]

It is precisely these aspects that give Ergash Jumanbulbul's performances and creative repertoire a special place in national folklore studies. The dastans performed by the bakhshi stand out from those of other performers in terms of poetic scope, epic structure, artistry, and unique style. Especially in the poetic parts of the dastans sung by Ergash Shoir, the high level of melodic expression, rhyme, repetition, and artistic wordplay is striking. This attests to the bakhshi's profound epic knowledge and his deep familiarity with classical literature.

In his performances, the depiction of events and the actions of characters are artistically interwoven using masterful language, evoking memories and stirring a nostalgic longing for the distant past. The collection *Bulbul Taronalari* ("Nightingale Melodies") constitutes nearly half of the poet's entire repertoire, which alone serves as compelling evidence of Ergash Shoir's mastery and brilliance as a word artist.

Indeed, Ergash Jumanbulbul preserved the finest examples of Uzbek folk epics that he heard from poets before him, eloquent storytellers, and notably from Tilla Kampir (Granny Tilla), and reinterpreted them into classical-level compositions for the people. For this reason, studying and researching the bakhshi's creativity has remained a consistently relevant issue in Uzbek folklore scholarship.

In this context, his work attracted the attention of leading Uzbek folklorists and founders of the field, such as Professor Hodi Zarifov and Academician To'ra Mirzayev, who initiated scholarly research into his poetry. Particularly notable are the academic studies conducted by To'ra Mirzayev, especially his research titled "A Great Folk Poet" featured in the fifth volume of the five-volume collection *Bulbul Taronalari*, published in 1978 to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Ergash Jumanbulbul o'g'li. This work stands out for its scholarly style and academic significance.

Academic To'ra Mirzayev, while studying the art of the bakhshi (folk singer), relied on the memories of his teacher, Professor Hodi Zarifov, who had worked closely with the poet. In shaping the portrait of Ergash Jumanbulbul o'g'li, he paid special attention to the poet's ancestors, first discussing his family background. Hodi Zarif wrote: "Whenever I remember Ergash Jumanbulbul o'g'li, my thoughts always fly to Tilla Kampir." [3.38.]

According to the scholar, Tilla Kampir was a talented female epic poet from the village of Qo'rg'on. The reason the epic "Oysuluv" remained in Uzbek folklore is closely tied to this respected woman. The epic was recorded from Ergash Shoir in 1937 and preserved as a valuable source, because Tilla Kampir's grandson, Ergash, had heard the story from his father, Jumanbulbul.

Tilla Kampir's creative role had a big influence on the high artistic value that people gave to Ergash Shoir's performances. Among the public, both Tilla and Sulton Kampir were highly respected, and stories about them have become legendary. It's also important to note that in the Qo'rg'on school of bakhshi tradition, women were portrayed with special love and respect—this shows the deep admiration people had for Sulton and Tilla Kampir. To'ra Mirzayev, when studying Ergash Shoir's life, focused on his ancestry. When analyzing his art, he relied on 20 epic works and lyrical songs (terma) recorded from the poet. As the scholar explored these epics, he paid special attention to "Oysuluv"—a story that survived in an incomplete form. The version we have today is based on a tale recorded from the bakhshi's father. Based on his teacher Hodi Zarifov's information, Mirzayev presented the following ideas:

- He discussed the plot of the epic

- He focused on the characters and their traits
- He compared and analyzed the sequence of events

The epic poem is said to be similar in its social meaning to the famous Central Asian legend of “Tomiris.” In fact, the deep social and life-related meaning of the “Oysuluv” epic connects to Herodotus’ Histories, especially the legend of Tomiris. While the legend highlights the heroic defense of the homeland by Tomiris and her son Sparangiz, the epic presents strong, artistic portrayals of Oysuluv and her son Kunbotir, showing their closeness to the people and emotional depth.

In Uzbek folklore, there are works that clearly show influence from each other in how such complete epics are formed. As Professor V.M. Zhirmunsky put it, works like Yusuf-Ahmad, Jonish and Boyish, Qo‘zi Ko‘rpeshe, and Yodgor, although different, are linked to the development or reflection of the Alpomish epic in Central Asian oral tradition. [4.27]

For example, the epic “Yakka Ahmad” from the repertoire of the bard (baxshi) also shows direct influence from Alpomish. When analyzing both epics side by side, the researcher pays special attention to each motif, noting that many plot lines and themes are very similar in content.

In particular, the motif of friendship between Hakimbek and Qorajon is highlighted. The Alpomish epic uniquely features the most developed “heroic friendship” theme, which is not as deeply explored in “Yakka Ahmad.” While the friendship between Ahmadbek, Prince Ernazar of Balkh, and the trickster Almuhammad is present in Yakka Ahmad, it does not reach the same heroic level and mainly serves to move the story forward. [1. 254] In Alpomish, however, the friend’s loyalty is shown as truly heroic — Qorajon even changes his religion, accepts all the challenges set by Barchin, and is ready to give his life for his friend. When studying the motifs in Ergash Jumanbulbul’s epics, To‘ra Mirzayev highlights elements like repetition (takrir), rhyme (qofiya), and refrain (radif), which are rarely found in other Turkic epics and add to the emotional and artistic power of “Yakka Ahmad.” He notes that the first steps to research these repetitions were taken by his teacher, Hodi Zarifov. [1.257]

Polvon to‘ram, xaridorim sen eding,

Qiziq savdoli bozorim sen eding,

Bog‘imda olma, anorim sen eding,

Qatorda chirpingan norim sen eding,

Sog‘insam, ko‘rsam xumorim sen eding,

Bo‘ynima taqqan tumorim sen eding. [1.258]

The consistent and non-repeating rhyme pattern in the poem shows that the poet is a true master of classical literature and a highly skilled artist. The repeated phrase “Sen eding” (“It was you”) strongly expresses Oqbilak’s feelings toward Ahmad and highlights her inner emotions. There is a version of the epic “Yakka Ahmad” sung by Murod Baxshi from the Qo‘rg‘on school of epic singers. However, the version performed by Ergash the poet stands out for its beauty and emotional power. Based on available information, other famous singers like Jossoq Baxshi, his student Po‘lkan, and Jolg‘osh Baxshi also performed this epic many times. In the Qo‘rg‘on style of epic singing, performing the epics “Yakka Ahmad” and “Qironxon” was considered a special challenge for singers. That’s why Ergash the poet’s epics are known for their rich imagery, beautiful language, and strong lyrical style. In his works, we see both deep sorrow and inner pain,

and at the same time, a hopeful belief in a better and fairer future. [1.261]

This feature is also clearly seen in the “Go‘ro‘g‘li” series of epics, which were important parts of Ergash Jumanbulbul o‘g‘li’s performances. In one scholar’s research, special attention is given to these epics, including the legend about the fairies’ promise that Go‘ro‘g‘li would live forever in the hearts of the people. The researcher also focuses on how these epics are passed down through generations. The last part in this series is an epic story about Go‘ro‘g‘li’s great-grandson, Jahongir, son of Nurali.

Ergash the poet beautifully performed many of these rare and valuable epics from Uzbek culture. It is also important to note that songs and poems like “Go‘ro‘g‘li,” “Kunlarim” (“My Days”), “Armoning qolmasin” (“May You Have No Regrets”), and “Go‘ro‘g‘libek – zo‘r botir” (“Go‘ro‘g‘libek – The Brave Hero”) have been recorded from him. [1. 273]

**Conclusion** While studying these epics, the scholar also focuses on “Alpomish.” This epic shows us the wide variety of genres, themes, historical periods, tribes, and social layers found in Uzbek epic literature. T. Mirzayev explains how written literature has influenced epics. He says that in “Alpomish,” we see a unique mix: the heroic style of old epics is combined with features of romantic stories. This influence appears in how love is shown in the story, in the use of poetic forms from written literature, and in how the prose sections use book-style language. [5.49-50]. It is natural that the structure and artistic style of the epics in Ergash Jumanbulbul o‘g‘li’s collection are close to written literature. This is because from childhood, he listened to traditional gatherings like mashrabxons and fuzuliyxons, and he inherited the full talent of his poet ancestors. He also had a strong interest in classical literature and studied written works deeply during his education at the Mir Arab madrasa in Bukhara from 1884 to 1886. As scholar H. Zarif put it: “Since he was born and raised in a village and family of poets, he listened to songs every day and also read small collections of poems by Alisher Navoi, Fuzuli, Hafiz, Mirzo Abduqodir Bedil, Mashrab, and Makhtumkuli with great dedication. On one hand, he learned from folk poets and mastered the art of epic storytelling. On the other hand, his familiarity with classical Uzbek, Persian-Azerbaijani, and Turkmen literature brought great results. It’s as if two great rivers joined to form one vast ocean in his creative work.” [6.175] In short, Ergash Jumanbulbul deeply adapted many folk epics to match his own artistic ideas. He poured meaning into every line of his versions. In his epics, he often used wordplay to show the emotional state, feelings, character, and appearance of the heroes. The poet used the richness of the people’s language, imagery, and expressions so creatively that his skill in this area remains a great example for today’s writers.

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