CHAPTER III

An Exposition and Analysis of Educational System and
Ideals of Kyrgyz People

In this chapter, we are going to discuss, expound and critically examine the three periods of education in the history of the Kyrgyz people: pre-Soviet Kyrgyz, Soviet Kyrgyz and post-Soviet Kyrgyz education. No doubt, the most crucial and vital period among them is the Soviet period which we are going to dwell on more. This is an educational system which was introduced in Kyrgyzstan since 1924 and was prevalent till 31st of August, 1991 i.e. before the collapse of socialism and breaking up the Soviet Republics. When Kyrgyzstan became a nation-state, there was an urgent need for an alternative educational system and ideals, values to be introduced in the newly born nation state.

It may be pointed out at the outset that Kyrgyzstan became a nation-state at a very critical world situation. It is the unipolar world with the development of science, technology and information along with globalization and human rights. In the field of education, there is tremendous amount of knowledge and information but there is a lack of wisdom to make use of it,
Kyrgyzstan in particular is facing an educational legacy of Russian dominance with the economic and technological challenges of post cold war period. It is under this complex world situation and domestic constraints /challenges/expectations that we have to critically examine the educational system and ideals of Kyrgyzstan.

It is under this world situation and domestic expectations that we wish to bring out the deep insights of Chyngyz Aitmatov (L. 12th November, 1928-) into the problems of education and upbringing of youth. Aitmatov's creative writings include works where he is up to the crisis of Soviet education system and alerts about the consequences of the crisis. Another major theme in Aitmatov's stories concerns the inequality that exists among the male and female members of the traditional Central Asian society. Yet another theme that concerns Aitmatov is the conflict between good and evil, especially his conviction that good nearly always triumphs over evil. Intertwined with ideology and politics, this theme is often interpreted as the inevitable triumph of socialism over capitalism. But in the context of our research, we will give more attention to his creative insights about education, crisis of education and its consequences.

In order to make our position clear and precise, we have divided this chapter under the following heads:
a) Kyrgyz Education in Pre-Soviet, Soviet Periods and in Kyrgyz Republic;

b) Aitmatov on the Problems of Education and Upbringing of the Youth;

c) National Education and Indigenous Values;

d) Mother Tongue and all education in it;

Section (a)

Kyrgyz Education in Pre-Soviet and Soviet Times and in Kyrgyz Republic

At the present time Kyrgyzstan is surviving a very important stage of its development: the transition period to market economy and democracy. This has been continuing for several years, and affects all aspects of social life.

Democracy cannot be given to people easily; they have to go through this difficult process by themselves and gain it through personal sacrifice and struggle. Democracy is built on two specific premises: a certain level of social and economic development in society and a vision for change among...
progressive members of the population. The main condition for the democratization of society is the human factor and education plays a key role in its formation. The meaning of democracy and a pivotal role of education in democratization of society is emphasized by Cholpon Alieva as follows: "For some, democracy means enlightenment and humanism, and for others, it means enrichment and domination. Social defects, the problems of modern society in the Central Asian countries, in most cases are caused by the lack of a just, democratic culture and purposeful educational work towards this goal. In this connection the field of education is the basis for the development of democracy. At present, much depends on state policy in the sphere of education and on the personal qualities of the leaders of the government, as well."

As a democratic society we are quite young what means there is still a long way to go for us on the path of democracy. It requires to keep in mind our past - what we were like before and future - what we want to be in future. It is high time to look back and speak honestly and openly about what Kyrgyz people were, what we became under Russian control and domination and what we are today. And there is a must for thinking about what

---

82 condor.depaul.edu/~rrotenbe/aeer/v17n2/Alieva.pdf
we want to be in the future especially. What we are today should depend on what we want to be in the future.

In this connection we are going to examine the three periods of the history of the Kyrgyz people in brief and the development of education which are as follows: pre-Soviet and Soviet history and education development of the Kyrgyz, then the history and education development of Kyrgyz Republic.

*The Kyrgyz people and the education before the Soviet period (from ancient time)*

Historians tend to disagree on the early history of the Kyrgyz. The earliest notable residents of what is now Kyrgyzstan were warrior tribes of Saks (also known as Scythians), from about the 8th century BC to the mid-2\textsuperscript{nd} century AD. Alexander the Great perhaps faced the stiffest resistance from Saks tribes in his 4th century BC advance through Central Asia. "Historians are certain that Alexander The Great undertook a march towards Central Asia after the conquest of the Persian dynasty of the Ahkemenids. In 329 BC on the shores of the river Syr-Dariya, there was a decisive battle between the local Saks and the armies of the Greek commander. The victory over Syr-Dariya appeared to belong to the Greeks. However, it seems that the vanguard of Alexander the Great, and possibly the commander
himself, visited the territories that are now in modern Kyrgyzstan.\textsuperscript{83}

The last Saks had been conquered by Usun tribes in the middle of the 2\textsuperscript{nd} century BC. The ethnic term “Kyrgyz” was mentioned first in Chinese chronicles in 201 BC. “The Chinese historians in 2001 BC named the Kyrgyz tribes in the eastern Tien Shan of Northwestern Mongolia. Ten centuries later the name appears in a Chinese chronicle of the Tang Dynasty. At this time the Kyrgyz had just conquered the Ughurs and created ‘The Great Kyrgyz Empire.’\textsuperscript{84} In these chronicles it is mentioned that powerful state of Gunns under the leadership of Maodun conquered the Empires of Geguns, Dinlins and others. As the scientists established undoubtedly, the Chinese called the ancient Kyrgyz as Geguns. So, thanking to this chronicles we know that Kyrgyz Empire already existed at the end of the third century BC. Thus, ethnic term Kyrgyz is the most ancient one among the all existing Turkic-language peoples. There are many testimonies to the fact that in ancient times the regions inhabited by the Kyrgyz were scattered all over Western Mongolia (Lake Kyrgyz-Nur) and the Eastern Tien Shan Mountains (ridge Boro-Khoru). That is, the...

\textsuperscript{83} Akaev A., Kyrgyz Statehood and the National Epos “Manas”, New York, Global Scholarly Publications, 2003, p. 22-23

\textsuperscript{84} Ibid p.10
ridge Boro-Khoron near the lake Kyrgyz-Nur in the Eastern Tien-Shan Mountains of Northwestern Mongolia and Eastern Turkistan and the Tien-Shan are both referred to as ancient dwelling places of the Kyrgyz people.

The lives of the ancient Kyrgyz forced them to move from place to place, fight in wars, and unite with other peoples for the protection of their interests until a national Kyrgyz community was finally established. There were many hardships and many victims, but there was also a pleasure of victory and success.

The migration to Yenisey is the next stage in the history of the Kyrgyz. Migration of the Kyrgyz from Central Asia to Yenisey, Southern Siberia, happened in the middle of the first century BC according to a number of historians when they were forced to migrate to the Sayan Mountains as a result of tension from the Huns. However, there is another group of scientists who believe that evidence points to the appearance of the Kyrgyz on the Yenisey in the fourth and six centuries BC which means that migration from eastern Tien Shan Mountains to the Sayan Mountains took seven to eight centuries.

The modern territory of Kyrgyzstan was under the control of various Turkic alliances from the 6th to 10th centuries, with a sizeable population living on the shores of Lake Issyk-Kul. Turkic alliances were Karluks, Arabs and other Turkic tribes.
Kyrgyzstan, in particular Talas region, was the scene of a pivotal battle in 751, when the Turks and their Arab and Tibetan allies drove a large Tang Chinese army out of Central Asia. This event has a great historical meaning for the people of Central Asia; the Chinese approximately for about thousand were not appearing at the borders of Central Asia again what has caused the development of Muslim culture in the region.

So, ancestors of today's Kyrgyz people lived in Siberia's upper Yenisey basin until at least the 10th century when under the influence of Mongol incursions they began migrating south into the Tian Shan - more urgently with the rise of Genghis Khan in the 13th century.

Present-day Kyrgyzstan was a part of the inheritance of Genghis's second son, Chagatai. By the early 16th century, they were the present-day Kyrgyz Republic's predominant people. So, Modern Kyrgyz are a mixture of the original Turkic-speaking nomadic herdsmen and their Mongol conquerors.

Between the 16th and 19th centuries, the Kyrgyz people alternated between periods of tribal independence and foreign conquest. The Kalmyks founded Djungary Hanstvo (kingdom) in the late 17-18th century, and the Kokand Khanate in the first half of the 19th century overran them.
The feudal Russian conquest of the Kyrgyz began in the mid-19th century, and by 1867, they were absorbed into the Russian Empire. The Tsarist government did not recognize the Kyrgyz as a separate national entity or political unit. Kirgizia, along with other Turkic nations of Central Asia, was included in Russian Turkistan, created in 1867.

Kyrgyzia became a major area of Russian colonization, with Russians and other Slavs given the best land to settle, reducing the extent of grazing (pastbishe) lands available for the Kyrgyz nomads considerably. Kyrgyz resentment against Russian colonization policies and conscription for noncombatant duties in the army led to a major revolt throughout Russia's Central Asian territory, including Kyrgyzia. Casualties were high on both sides, and thousands of Kyrgyz fled with their flocks to Afghanistan, the Pamirs and China.

A runic writing came into existence in Turkic milieu in the first half of the VII century. Almost from that time, that is from the early middle ages and till the XX century the Kyrgyz had a written language. That is, the Kyrgyz in Middle Ages had their own alphabet on the base of runic graphic called ancient Kyrgyz (or Orhano-Yenisey) written language and it is recognized by the most outstanding linguists of the world. Nowadays we have got preserved lots of epigraphy of that time and they are kept in the
National History Museum. So, at the very beginning the Kyrgyz would use runic writing on the base of Sagdi-Aramic writing (VII-X centuries), then a penetration of Islam brought Arabic alphabet, then Persian (Farsi) and Chagatai (XVI-XIX centuries). As mentioned above, the epigraphic monuments of the Middle Ages, some documents and manuscripts and even books written in XVIII century preserved till this time are a proof. We have got preserved an original letters (also its Russian translation) of the Kyrgyz to Ekaterina II from the 10th of October, 1775 where a group of the Kyrgyz complains about their hard life to Russian Emperor. We also have got the letter- request (in origin and translation as well) asking for patronage from Russia. This was a letter written by Atake-Bii (initiator and forebear of the establishment of friendly relations between Kyrgyz people and Russia) in 1785 to Ekaterina II and Siberia Authorities. So, there are whole series of letters from the first part of XIX century existing till nowadays and these letters were written in Kyrgyz on Arabic graphic.

The representatives of the philosophical trend called “Zamanizm” made a considerable contribution to the development of written literature of the Kyrgyz. Arstanbek Boilosh (1824-1878) was a poet who would write down his poems, so he is considered one of
the forefathers of written literature of Kyrgyz before the revolution.

Another Zamanist Moldo Kylych (1866-1917) also made a great contribution to the process of transferring from oral poetry to written poetry.

Thus, an official statement (more likely political, than scientific) that the Kyrgyz did not have writing before the revolution did not prove to be true.

The first books published in Kyrgyz language at the beginning of XX century (1911-1913) were of Osmonoly Sydykov (1877-1940) named “Taryh-I Kyrgyz Shadmania (The history of Kyrgyz expanse) and “Muhtasar taryh-I kyrgyzia” (brief history of the Kyrgyz) and the lyrical poems of Moldo Kylych (1866-1917) “Zilzala” (Earthquake).

“The Kyrgyz almost did not have schools as such before XVII-middle of XIX century. Just visiting mullahs would teach children the basis of Arab grammar on Koran. After the annexation of the Kyrgyz to Russia, there appeared some schools so called russian-native. Some Kyrgyz Manaps (Kyrgyz rulers) also constructed buildings for schools and invited teachers to teach at those schools. On the 1st September, 1888 the first agricultural school was opened in Karakol city where 11 Kyrgyz boys were admitted. In 1890 another school was opened in
Pishpek. Later we got boys and girls gymnasiums in Karakol and other cities as well. However, the Kyrgyz started getting educated much earlier, in X century when they would inhabit on Yenisey. “This was the time when China tried hard to get the Kyrgyz Empire as their vassal but failed. However the Kyrgyz had a friendly relationship with China and there was some political and trade purposes behind it. The Kyrgyz rationally used the access to the important cultural centers of China and kept sending young Kyrgyz people to study in China. Some of those young people who achieved very high level in their studies would be invited for a work to other Empires. For instance, in Tibet there was fellow working as a copyist of Chinese books on Buddhism who came from Kyrgyz Empire.

Thus, education of the Kyrgyz has its roots far beyond Soviet period although it was not yet an education system as such.

Kyrgyz Education in Soviet Period.

In 1919, Kyrgyzia was included in the newly established Turkistan, Autonomous Republic under the aegis of the Soviet Union. In 1924, the Kara-Kyrgyz Autonomous Oblast was

---

85 Ploskih V., ed. Istoria Kyrgyzov i Kyrgyzstana; Bishkek, Ilim, 2000, p. 176
86 Ploskih V., ed. Istoria Kyrgyzov i Kyrgyzstana; Bishkek, Ilim, 2000, p. 133
created (it was called Kara-Kyrgyz to distinguish it from the Kazakh Autonomous Republic). In 1925, it was renamed the Kyrgyz Autonomous Oblast and then renamed once again in 1926 as the Kyrgyz Autonomous Republic. It became a Union Republic in 1936.

In the mid-1920s, after the Basmachi Rebellion, a popular Turkic nationalist movement that swept former Turkistan from 1918 to 1924 and into 1931, the Soviet government softened its former colonial policy. The Soviet administration permitted traditional Kyrgyz culture to flourish, promoted the creation of native leadership and slowed the influx of Slavs into the region.

In the late 1920s and throughout the 1930s, however, these policies were replaced by Stalin's program of forced de-nomadization and collectivization. In addition, his program of Russification replaced Kyrgyz intelligentsia and leadership with ideologically acceptable Stalinist elite. Some Kyrgyz protested by slaughtering their herds or driving them into China, but by 1933, about 67 percent of the nomads were collectivized, the intelligentsia was decimated, and the Kyrgyz political cadres were purged.

Despite the turmoil, the Kyrgyz were eventually able to achieve some industrialization, a higher standard of living, substantial achievements in education, and even increases in
the population. They continued, however, to be one of the least urbanized major nationalities in the Soviet Union.

During the 1970s, for example, only 14.5 percent of the Kyrgyz across the Soviet Union lived in urban areas. Within the Kyrgyz Republic, they constituted less than one-fifth of the republic's urban population. In comparison, Russians residing in the republic were the most urbanized segment of the population, with more than half of them living in towns and cities. By 1989, the Kyrgyz Republic was the second-least urbanized republic in the Soviet Union, with 40 percent of its population residing in urban areas. Even after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Bishkek, the capital and largest city within the Kyrgyz Republic, contained less than 38 percent of the population.

Like other Muslim groups in the Soviet Union, the Kyrgyz people registered tremendous population growth in the period from 1959 to 1979. While the population of the Soviet Union as a whole grew by 15.8 percent between 1959 and 1970, the number of Kyrgyz increased by 49.8 percent. As a result, the proportion of Kyrgyz in the republic steadily increased, while the Russian share of the population declined despite ongoing Russian immigration into the republic.

By 1989, the Kyrgyz, for the first time in decades, constituted a majority within their own republic with 52 percent
of the population. Russians, with almost 22 percent of the population, were second. Other minorities included Uzbeks, Ukrainians, Germans and Tatars. To date, conflicts between the Kyrgyz people and Uzbeks have been a source of concern. Religion, however, has not been a source of concern as Islamic fundamentalism is neither popular, nor considered a cause for anxiety in this predominantly Sunni Muslim nation.

The Kyrgyz language, which belongs to the Turkic linguistic group, has three regional dialects. A Kyrgyz literary language was not fully developed until the Soviet period. It merges all three dialects and incorporates Iranian, Arabic and Russian elements. Like other Turkic languages of Central Asia, the Kyrgyz language first used an Arabic script, which was replaced by a Latin script in 1928, and finally by a Cyrillic one in the early 1940s.

Turning our attention to the positive aspects of Soviet time first, we shall emphasize first of all the great achievements it made in the field of education. And first and quite successful achievement was the process of illiteracy liquidation started in 1919 in accordance with the decree “On liquidation of illiteracy among the population of RSFSR” from the 26th of December, 1919.
Before the Revolution only 0.6 percent of the Kyrgyz were able to read and write. Without liquidation of illiteracy it would not be possible to raise the educational and cultural level of the population, so this practically was the beginning of the great educating process of the Kyrgyz and others as well.

Thus, in 1921 there were 79 schools for learning writing and reading opened in different places of Kyrgyzstan where more than eight thousand persons were learning writing and reading. Number of students was increasing rapidly. Besides this, development of the national written language and the publication of the first newspaper "Erkin Too" (Free Mountain), which became a unique "ABC" making the first "primer" for adults, created favorable conciliations for the literacy liquidation process.

Schools for adults had been opened all over, even in the farthest corners of the Republic, even on big pastures. So, the process of illiteracy liquidation was speeding up greatly what can be seen in the following statistics: in 1928-29 academic year 20 thousand and in the following academic year - 100 thousand; later in 1920-32, 226 thousand illiterate people got involved into the process.

The literacy liquidation process in Kyrgyzstan had some peculiarities. Due to the specific conditions of the locality,
special schools for women of eastern nationalities were opened. Also there had been moving schools for Kyrgyz cattle-breeder on nomad territories; special methods which did not require special buildings for schooling was used widely as well.

Financing of education was growing spectacularly as well. If in 1934-35 academic year a budget for illiteracy liquidation process amounted 522 thousand rubles, then in 1936 it amounted 2300 thousand rubles and in 1937 it was 8 million rubles. This was used for opening schools all over, involving thousands of teachers and literate youth; for publishing books in Kyrgyz and Russian as well, organizing different training courses including teacher training courses and other educational events.

Thus, the process of illiterate liquidation in Kyrgyzstan reached great achievements. As a result of these great efforts by the end of 1938 literacy in Kyrgyzstan reached 70%: among men – 89.4% and among women – 74.4%.

This process continued the following years as well but the Second World War was a great obstacle to complete this process. However, it continued after the war and by 1959, 97.0% of the population in urban area and 98.1% in rural area were literate among the population from 9-49 years of age.

It is worth mentioning that there were some reforms, not pondered upon well, to our opinion, which complicated the
process more. These were the reforms on the national written language. The fact is during the first fifteen years of its functioning it was transferred from Arabic to Latin alphabet (1928), then from Latin to Cyrillic (1940) and as a result the same Kyrgyz had to learn reading and writing three times.

Thus, establishment of Kyrgyz state, creating the national written language and some other factors had provided favorable conditions for the development of the education system, especially primary and secondary education. “By the 1987-88 academic year, in other words, within 70 years the number of schools (1733) increased more than sixteen times, number of students (912.6 000) one hundred and thirty times and number of teachers (68 000; 74% of them had higher education) three hundred and fifteen times”87

The higher education was developing rapidly as well. Year by year a net of higher educational institutions was getting wider and wider. In 1925 there were two agricultural and two pedagogical training colleges. The same year Kyrgyz Institute of Public Education was established. By the end of 40s, there were 33 technical (training) colleges in the country and 6 thousand students were be studying in them.

87 Ploskiih V., ed. Istoria Kyrgyzov I Kyrgyzstana; Bishkek, Ilim, 2000, p. 327
In 1932 - Kyrgyz Pedagogical Institute, in 1938 - Agricultural Institute, in 1939 - Kyrgyz Medical Institute and Osh Teacher Institute, in 1940- Prjevalsk Teacher Institute came into existence.

Thus, on the eve of the Second World War there were 6 institutions of higher education where more than three thousand students were getting educated. After the War, in the first part of 50s, we have got Kyrgyz State University, Osh Pedagogical Institute, Prjevalsk Pedagogical Institute, Women Pedagogical Institute, Frunze Polytechnical Institute and Institute of Physical Culture. Later in 1967, Institute of Art and in 1979 Pedagogical Institute of Russian Language and Literature came into existence. By 1990-91 in all Higher Institutions of the Republic 58.6 thousand students were studying and 43.4 thousand students was getting educated in different training colleges.

However, together with those great achievements there were many shortcomings in the education system of Soviet period. There was an alienation of the schools from life and alienation of study from practice. Under the totalitarian regime all the curricular, syllabi and textbooks on social subjects, also all kinds of activities in the schools were highly ideologized. Groundless ceasing of studying of Kyrgyz language in Russian medium schools and other non-Kyrgyz medium schools, broad
use of Russian language in socio-political and cultural life of Kyrgyzstan led to a narrowing of the functions of Kyrgyz language and reduction of number of Kyrgyz medium schools what has affected negatively on further development of the language.

Regarding the shortcomings of the Soviet education a particular attention should be paid to the textbooks of the period, especially of history. During the seven decades of socialist rule, “the textbooks served as instruments of indoctrination of history, society, and culture and were distorted to mach the dogmas of Leninism”88. The Soviet historians rewrote the history several times in an effort to put both current deeds and ancient legends into the ‘framework’ of Communist ideology. The names of many Kyrgyz national Batyrs (Heroes) and other ancestors of the past now taught in the schools were not welcomed topics due to the period of intense Russification and Sovetization. Education served to support the ideology of the Soviet state and gave less attention to what was then referred to as the Kyrgyz Soviet Socialistic Republic. Soviet history textbooks portrayed history as ‘a stream of uncontested facts’. These facts highlighted only the positive aspects of Soviet unification and industrialization

88 Lisovskaiia S., and Karpov V., Cary, Pedagogika, Moskow 1997; p. 199
and it did not examine the negative consequences of Soviet ruling.

Soviet historians and textbook authors were compelled to imbue historical writings with Soviet ideology. In the process that came to be known as ‘Russification’ or ‘Sovetization’ a campaign was put into effect with the intention of subsuming individual republic cultures and histories with a propose of promoting the friendship of peoples to create a common Soviet culture and history. According to many ethnic Soviet historians, historical suppression and repression resulted in what has been called a “systematic extermination of the people’s customs, traditions and suppression of national character and this in effect resulted in a decline in national culture and traditions during the soviet period”89. It could be said that everything done in Kyrgyzstan during the soviet years all was to the favour of leaving the centuries of history, customs, traditions and language of Kyrgyz people behind the curtain.

To uphold the principles of communism in all school subjects, especially in history was a must. The following quote taken from the 10th grade history of USSR textbook reveals this agenda: “without a feeling of love for the homeland it is impossible to sensibly build Communism and rise up real

---

89 Interview with Kazak historian K. Kasymov. Kutbilim – No 3, 2000; p.33
citizens and defenders of Soviet Union. The subjects were aimed at educating the youth and developing communist ideas in the souls of students. Precisely the study of history was supposed to make a considerable contribution to the solution of the main objectives in the ideological work by the Communist party: upbringing in the spirit of high ideology and devotion to Communism, Soviet Patriotism and proletarian socialist internationalism, the formation of harmoniously developed, socially active personality, combining spiritual wealth, moral purity and physical perfection. Only in 1990 the Government developed a new program for the history of Kyrgyzstan which was separated from the program for the history of USSR. Before the history of Kyrgyz SSR existed as an optional course usually taught only in Kyrgyz, however, it became a mandatory subject across the Republic.

As a result of all these, many Kyrgyz over the preceding seventy years have become acculturated and russified to the extent that by the 1990s only 53% of the population spoke the state language of Kyrgyz. During 70 years of Soviet period many Kyrgyz medium schools shifted to Russian medium, so by 90’s many secondary schools and all institutions of higher education has Russian medium. Decades of Russification, according to

---

90 Istoria SSSR, Ministerstvo Obrazovania, Kyrgyz Respublikasy, 1989. p.3
many ethic Kyrgyz people, weakened the traditional determinants of our national identity.

Teacher training programs were not apart from this agenda as well. The most vital task for teachers was also accordingly: to develop communist ideas in the minds of students.

However, despite of all its shortcomings, for all its negative aspects, even 'die-hard' opponents of the former Soviet regime acknowledge one unquestioned success of the USSR: providing universal, primary education to all children, regardless of income or residence. From the remotest villages to the largest cities, all Soviet children learned to read and write. A significant portion went on to higher education.

Experts say that Soviet achievement of near-total literacy required great efforts and resources. Despite its moribund economy, especially in later years, the Soviet Union invested heavily in education. It stands in contrast to the situation in now independent countries that once been a part of the Soviet Union, although many of them after being emerged from the Soviet collapse are struggling to maintain this standard. Unfortunately, the struggling to maintain past levels of achievement in education does not seem to have a great success nowadays.
According to unofficial data within 15 years of independence illiteracy in Kyrgyzstan went down to 80%.

All in all, Kyrgyz society has undergone the massive social, economic and cultural transformation under Soviet rule. As a result of this process Kyrgyzstan became one of the most Sovietized and Russified nation of all Soviet nations. The policies of Russification resulted in the huge demographic shift that made the Kyrgyz people a minority in our own country. By the 1970, wholly European dress, the almost complete eradication of Islamic practices and the lack or very poor knowledge of Kyrgyz language among the majority young urban-based Kyrgyz had become the characteristics of the Soviet Kyrgyz people. Loosing the national language and destruction of Kyrgyz traditional life seems to be too high price the Kyrgyz have paid for having 70 years long socialistic life.

*Education in Kyrgyz Republic*

In 1990, the Kyrgyz Republic declared itself independent, but leaders retained confederative relations with other republics of the former Soviet Union. In 1991, the country joined the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and elected its first president. It was internationally recognized as a sovereign state.
And, this was the beginning of a new era, era of democratization for Kyrgyzstan.

Most vital events of the new era are as the followings:

- 1991 – Independence
- 1993 – New Constitution
- 2006 – New Constitution (January)

In 1989-90, Gorbachev’s political and economic reforms started to impact on the political and economic environment of not only Moscow, but also on the remote Republics of the USSR such as Kyrgyzstan. In 1991, the consequences of the political development and reforms brought the USSR to its end. This sudden transformation was as ‘catapult to independence’ and the Kyrgyz Republic obtained its independence and emerged as a sovereign state for the first time in its history. Dwelling on the consequences of the gained sovereignty, A. Abazov says: “Like all other Central Asian countries Kyrgyzstan faced a whole set of problems of a transition from a centralized socialist system towards a more open society based on a market economy. The issue of sustainable transition was complicated by the fact that the republic was not prepared for independence, and did not have enough time to adjust to the new political environment.
Kyrgyzstan, therefore, faced a number of urgent transitional problems that needed to be solved in a pressing environment.”91 So, Kyrgyzstan has started a simultaneous transition from a centralized economy to market economy and from authoritarianism to democracy, as well as from centralized federal state to a sovereign nation-state. This sudden and dramatic transition caused by the disintegration of the Soviet Union compelled authorities to rethink Soviet, communist oriented economic, political and educational systems. The latter will be the subject of our concern further.

The events of 1991 unleashed confusion and an upwelling of curricular and pedagogical reform fervour as well. There was a pervasive atmosphere of rapid change and much questioning the interpretations of the past. This was the time to break with the old system by introducing more Kyrgyz-Oriented education.

By becoming a democratic independent country, Kyrgyzstan has got great possibilities of changing its education system for the better and has been doing so. The number of primary and secondary schools has certain tendency to increase. There are more number of schools with Kyrgyz medium and new types of schools like gymnasium, college, lyceums and

specialized and private schools. New curricular and syllabi are worked out; new subjects have been introduced and new original textbooks have been being published.

The overwhelming majority of educational reforms passed during the first decade of the independence aimed at national self determination and humanization principles. Along with that the emphasis must be on de-russifying the content and historical interpretations and restoring the once displaced heroes of Kyrgyzstan in order to revive or construct a national feeling and to foster patriotism about Kyrgyzstan as an independent Republic. Many states in transition can be recognized by their 'patriotic nationalistic commitment' and 'ideological housecleaning'.

A new concept of education has been drawn up by the National Educational Program named "Bilim" (Knowledge) adopted in 1996. The goals of this program are to provide a freedom from ideological dictate for educational institutions, to create an ability to compete on international level and attain a decentralization of educational process and academic freedom.

The Government office, the Kyrgyz Institute of Education initiated changes in teaching of history by proposing a list of
corrections to old materials and changes to the old syllabi. In the changed programs there were more questions about revolution and re-evaluation of what was previously presented as the voluntary annexation of Kyrgyzstan by Russia. New and old questions surfaced, fuelling debates and contention concerning what history meant for the former Republics just turned independent nation state. History in high schools in Kyrgyzstan became a target for reforms and potentially powerful instrument in the new nation building project. Author and journalist Sergei Schememann states: “A nation’s history is its soul, and it was history, first of all, that the Communists tried to destroy.”

Thus, reforming of education after the collapse of the Soviet Union became multidimensional project since education is of enormously huge importance for nation building and nationalism. Martin Carnoy, Professor of Education and Economics; Stanford University, School of Education, USA, called education as “a fundamental instrument of change in revolutionary societies.” And the case of Kyrgyzstan should affirm this view in the way that it initiates educational policies as an attempt to use education for nation building. This period has given a cultural opportunity for the historians in Kyrgyzstan to

92 www.jrn.columbia.edu/faculty/schmemann.asp - 7k
93 Martin Carnoy was interviewed by me in November, 2003 during my visit to Stanford University - Aisalkyn Berenbaeva.
re-evaluate Soviet history and reinterpret how Kyrgyzstan’s history is portrayed in the textbooks and classrooms. Along with this re-evaluation there came criticism and concern over its nation building strategy. Thus, in the early to mid 1990’s educational authorities, like those in other newly independent states took to ‘ideological housecleaning’ through their attempts to seize the past in order to set up Kyrgyz-oriented future for the country.

However, the project was fraught with a bunch of complexities such as lack of a clear consensus regarding the types of changes to implement, a severer reduction in public funding for education and the most perplexing question: what is to be Kyrgyzstan’s national identity, given its diverse demographic picture and its desire to become independent and to remain stable. It is as necessary as it was inevitable that there should be a refashioning of the national identity in order to give meaning to this newly acquired independence.

In order to transform the country from Soviet state to more Kyrgyz oriented state the keys term “de-Russification”, and “Kyrgyzification” in case of Kyrgyzstan, must become activated like in most of the former USSR countries.

What is “de-Russification” and “Kyrgyzification?”
“De-Russification” has become one of the most vulnerable issues in almost all former USSR countries for anything said about de-Russification is always seen as encroaching on the Russian minority’s rights, and in case of Kyrgyzstan, its leadership is likely to consider the views of Moscow, whose political and economic influence on this small republic remains strong.

It is a direct opposite of "Russification” which is “an adoption of the Russian language or some other Russian attribute (whether voluntarily or not) by non-Russian communities. In a narrow sense, Russification is used to denote the influence of the Russian language on Slavic, Baltic and other languages, spoken in areas currently or formerly controlled by Russia...”\(^\text{94}\) and implies “the policy of the Governments and the efforts of NGOs in the post-Soviet countries directed to overcome the consequences of the Russification."\(^\text{95}\) “Kyrgyzification” is “an idea of creating the dominance of ethnic\(^\text{96}\) Kyrgyz in all spheres like economy, culture, education and politics of independent Kyrgyzstan. And it should be aimed at securing the approval of the nationalist Kyrgyz public without disturbing the multi-ethnic peace and also creating a new Kyrgyz nation as a basis of Kyrgyz

\(^{94}\) \url{http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russification}
\(^{95}\) Ibid
statehood. Unfortunately, Kyrgyzification policy as a real phenomenon in independent Kyrgyzstan has not yet popularized enough unlike, for example, Kazakification in Kazakhstan. It is sufficient to have a look at the recent literature about Kazakhstan to find this word almost in every work. The nation building project in all of post Soviet countries might require almost the same strategies, Kyrgyzification, as it seems to us, could work as an official nationalism of Kyrgyzstan. According to B. Anderson, the character of official nationalism is "an anticipatory strategy adopted by dominant groups which are threatened with marginalization or exclusion from an emerging nationally imagined community."\(^{97}\) Whether Anderson's conception of official nationalism corresponds to the nature of 'Kyrgyzification' or not is a question which can not be answered definitely for the time being at least.

As for Kyrgyz language, it is worth to mention here the fact that the Republic made Kyrgyz the official state language in 1989, and since that time Kyrgyz language has begun to play bigger role in education, but the whole generations of students previously received much of their training entirely in Russian, so

---

it takes time and great efforts to make Kyrgyz language as a primary language in the country and it needs to become one of the main components of the Kyrgyzification policy. As the policy has began to shift towards the revision of subjects, more hours and content attention must be given to Kyrgyz history over world history with sufficient increase in the number hours scheduled for the study of Kyrgyz language.

Thus, the objectives of de-Russification and Kyrgyzification must be cited in all syllabi, especially in history syllabi as an important tool for developing a national idea which is Kyrgyz-oriented rather than Russian in focus.

To understand the terms "de-Russification" and "de-Sovetization" in its essence, we must be familiar not only with the milieu from which they emerge but with the spectrum of the important events in the history of the Kyrgyz which had preceded them. Therefore, we have given earlier, in brief, the historical milieu of Kyrgyz people from its very origin.

Thus, in Kyrgyzstan, as in most of the former Soviet Republics, post-soviet educational reforms entail the process of de-Sovetization and de-Russification. De-Russification in general has been discussed above and here let us give a try to
define the meaning de-Sovietization. It is a way of nationalizing political systems by removing symbols, political institutions and representatives of Soviet power from their social and political landscapes and replacing them with new national symbols, political institutions and social practice. And de-Russification in case of Kyrgyzstan implies removal of Russian as the primary language of communication in the Republic as well as a shift from Russian history to the history of Kyrgyzstan. The new educational reforms taking place in the country for the time being must focus on de-Russification of the content and medium of education.

Another vital issue in democratizing of education besides 'ideological housecleaning' is an improvement of the quality of education in accordance with the rapidly changing world. Lots of efforts have been being done in this regard by the Ministry of Education in cooperation with the Government as well as with the international foundations.

The Government of the Kyrgyz Republic has defined education as a base for democracy-building and economic prosperity. Education in the country roots in two interconnected principles. The first one tends to preserve all positive experience
in education that has been acquired during the Soviet period. The second one strives for innovations at all levels.

Today Kyrgyzstan has thirty three public and fifteen private universities with 199 thousand students. According to the statistics, university enrolment has grown up to 400 per 10,000 since 1990, and is one of the highest in the CIS.

The higher education institutions in Kyrgyzstan have been extending international contacts, both in CIS and countries abroad. There are more than seventeen institutional agreements with the CIS countries, and about fifty agreements with countries abroad. Among them are those of mutual acknowledgement of the academic documents, titles and degrees, of equal rights of the citizens for admission to educational institutions in countries that are part of the Eurasian Economic Society. About three thousand young citizens of Kyrgyzstan are studying abroad in universities in Russia, USA, India, Germany, France, Turkey, Malaysia, etc. through acknowledged exchanging programs.

Kyrgyzstan starts to realize that education is an important element in supporting economic and political reforms, facilitating trade, and academic and scientific exchange. Therefore, quality of education is a major debated issue and importance of it must
be specifically stressed out. But, unfortunately quality has depreciated in many universities of the country over the last 5 years. To face this problem the Ministry of Education now has a Quality Assurance Division. The Universities are also obliged to introduce QA departments. However, a strategy on improving quality of education does not yet exist. This, as well as lifelong learning will be addressed in the framework of aligning with the Bologna process.

The system of government financing has improved dramatically since the introduction of the National Testing System in 2002, funded by USAID. The idea is that the system administers a universal admission test in all regions of the Republic which is free of charge and is open to all prospective students (high school graduates) willing to apply for government sponsorship of their studies. Top scorers are awarded government scholarships (as well as stipends). In previous times, universities were allocated quotas by the Government and independently distributed their shares of government scholarships. The former system was highly criticized for discrimination, corruption and ineffectiveness. The National Testing System improved access to free education to young people from remote districts.
The National Strategy for Higher Education Development assumes the creation of accreditation bodies, independent from the Government. Kyrgyzstan has never had independent accreditation. The debate around it has been there since 2001, however, nothing has been done yet to promote independent accreditation.

Curriculums in most universities suffer from overloading and irrational hour allocation. In many respects they remain poorly structured and do not reflect students’ needs. In principle, most existing curriculums were not adapted to expectations of potential employers at all. With the exception of economics, business, and a few others, courses are taught in same manner as in the beginning of 1990s. The contents of courses have undergone very little changes. The labor market and the educational services are in many respects isolated from each other. The existing state educational standards are too rigid and do not allow new approaches to developing academic programs. However, the Ministry of Education is flexible and recognizes academic programs that do not conform to state standards although, but bear real market value. According to the information given by the universities the number of employed graduates is about 70-75 %, meanwhile according to official
returns this number is only about 20%. Most likely universities are not well informed.

As for researches and scholarships, there is a big obstacle which is a general lack of competence in European languages among educated Kyrgyz. At the time of globalization, the necessity of having competency in English as a linkage with the world is growing rapidly. Globalization process demands contacts with the outside world and it is getting increased dramatically; many Kyrgyz students, scholars, and officials have to travel to Middle Eastern and Western countries for specialized and technical training. So far, syllabi on English language courses have not improved either and require a great attention as well.

To alleviate the situation the President’s Administration has called for the implementation of two cycle system and introduction of credit-point based academic programs. Although the Ministry has not yet prepared a legal basis for transforming a 5-year Soviet system into a new two cycle system, 16 bachelors and in 6 master programs were implemented in several local universities. Five higher education institutions actively have introduced to a different extent a credit-point system. Recent research shows that 40 percent of students are in favor of increasing the number of contact hours, 37 percent would prefer
to allocate more hours for independent work, and 38.5 percent requested additional office hours during which they could get consultations from their professors are introduced.

Thus, our educational system has been undergoing a drastic reorganization since emerging from the ideological control of the Communist Party. Although there is still a long way to go, it has been done quite a lot in improving the educational system of the country in many terms.

Section (B)

Aitmatov on the Problems of Education and Upbringing of the Youth

The role of philosophy by means of literature and art in educating man, in formation of his personality is enormous. Nothing can replace literature and art in nurturing different values in man. Defining the purpose of literature, Maksim Gorki says that it is “to help man understand himself, to strengthen his faith in himself and to develop a strive for truth, to fight against the a-morality in people, to find in himself the ability of assuming the best in people…”98 If to say more of the significance of literature, its immense role in bringing

98 Gorki M. Sobranie Sochineni. T. II. Moskva; Politizdat, 1949. s.195
up/nurturing the youth, in imbuing the youth with right values, there are so many well known explanations of it, such as an intelligencer of future, an imaginative re-production of life, a just evaluation of life and so on.

Chyngyz Aitmatov, who is one of the most outstanding contemporaries of ours best known not only in Kyrgyzstan but all over the world as well for his creative writings, emphasizes the purpose of literature in his famous creed as follows: “There is no any purpose of literature but to take part in forming of a person of the future, to influence on person’s moral perfection”99.

Chyngyz Aitmatov was born 12 December 1928 in the village of Sheker, Talas region, Kyrgyzstan. His father, Torekul Aitmatov, was one of the first Kyrgyz communists and a regional party secretary. In 1937, while attending the Institute for Red Professorship in Moscow, Torekul was arrested and eventually liquidated.

He began his own literary career in 1952 with the publication of two stories in Russia: *The Newspaper Boy Dziilio* and *Ashim*. His first story written in Kyrgyz was *Ak Jaan* ("White Rain"), which appeared in 1954. He worked as roving correspondent for *Pravda* in Kirghizia from 1958 to 1966. His collection of short stories *Tales of Mountains and Steppes*

---

99 Aitmatov Ch. Ovet’ sebe. – Pravda. – 1967. – Avgust, 5
(1963), won him the **Lenin Prize**. In 1967 he became a member of the Executive Board of the Soviet Writers Union, and in 1968 he won the Soviet State Prize for literature for his novel *Farewell, Gulsary!*. Aitmatov won two more State Prizes in 1977 and 1983, and was named a **Hero of Socialist Labor** in 1978.

He was First Secretary and Chairman of the Cinema Union of Kirghizia from 1964 to 1985, and in 1985 he was named Chairman of the Kirghiz Writers Union.

Chingiz Aitmatov, our country's greatest writer, the winner of many literary prizes, national and international, he became an adviser to Mikhail Gorbachev in the Soviet Union's twilight years and a Kyrgyz diplomat when the Kyrghyz Republic gained independence. His books, including Jamila, Farewell, Gulsary!, The White Ship, Ascent of Mount Fuji and The Day Lasts More Than a Hundred Years, have been translated into many languages and published to critical acclaim in Asia, Europe and North America.

a treatment of ordinary people of Central Asia with a science fiction plot of space stations, aliens, and new planets. Aitmatov has received numerous foreign awards, including the Gold Olive Branch of the Mediterranean Culture Research Center (1988), the Academy Award of the Japanese Institute of Oriental Philosophy (1988) and the Austrian State Prize for European Literature (1994).

He is currently a member of the Kyrgyzstan's Parliament and serves as his nation's ambassador to the European Union, NATO, UNESCO, Belgium, Luxemburg and the Netherlands and is based in Brussels. He has a son and a daughter.

"He was an active participant of the socialist cultural transformation of the Republic and was also a witness to the collapse of the Soviet Union and the systematic transition to market economy. Aitmatov is an interesting example of a writer who has adapted to and accommodated himself within systems in transition."100 In fact, he has witnessed much more – the periods of the Second World War, Post war reconstruction, Stalinism, the Thaw, the Stagnation, Perestroika and Post Socialism with its Democracy. Witnessing all these most major events of the 20th century by himself gave him a great opportunity to be a 'critical analyzer', to see and analyze the

100 Doraiswamy R. The Post Soviet Position: Chingiz Aitmatov in the 90's, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi, 2005, p. 85
negative and positive sides of them and their consequences in his creative works.

Over the past three decades, Aitmatov has dealt with the full spectrum of the interactions of Soviet culture with the indigenous cultures of Central Asia. We can trace the development of this trend from an excessive praise of the Soviet way (e.g., in Jamila, 1973) to an utter condemnation of the same e.g., in I dol'she Veka Dlitsia Den' (The Day Lasts More Than A Century, 1986). On the one side of this spectrum is the uneducated view of socialism and its attraction for the working classes (cf., Jamila, for instance), while on the other side lies the views of those with a better grasp of reality. "As a realist writer true to his profession, Aitmatov could hardly ignore the discrepancy and, had he ignored it, he could hardly remain a viable commentator."101 Being open to change is said to be the best indicator of a writer's loyalty to his craft. This openness can, of course, be easily confused with vacillation. But Aitmatov's record of the past two decades supports the conclusion that he has been steady, informed, and loyal to his craft. Furthermore, he believes in Gorky's assessment of the contribution of the writer. Gorky specifies that the writer, rather than listening to

101 Ahmataliev T.B Aitmatov kak realist, Ilim, Bishkek, 1996, p. 73
the echo of his own soul, must himself or herself become an echo of the soul of society.

Of singular importance, especially these days when we face a sudden transition which causes erosion of values and threatening to destroy the frame of the society, his judgments upon the problems of education and upbringing which is another main theme if works, are unique for their pedagogical erudition, sincere and profound concern about the real state of education and problems of youth upbringing. There is no single work, article or speech where he does not say anything of education and youth upbringing. He is neither a professional educationist nor pedagogue, but nevertheless he advances many ideas which are of tremendous value as pedagogically and scientifically stated ideas.

He is bothered a lot by the present state of the education and upbringing of the young generation. The time has changed, people have changed and the thing people believe in, in particular values, have changed as well. The immense progresses in science and technology and their application in the developing country like Kyrgyzstan have influenced life stile of the people and caused major changes in values. The minds of the youth are captivated by the western culture projected on the small screen through the satellite TV. Life has become faster and more
complex and people have little time to look at the perennial strength of our traditional (national) culture and erosion of human values. The shift in attitude from spiritualism towards materialism is causing a never ending race to acquire the latest items available in the market as the line dividing the concept of need and luxury is getting thinner. The modern communication media offers in a very attractive way all sorts of stimuli and inputs about what to believe, how to behave, what models to follow, what type of life-style to copy etc. The peer group influences ideologies of political leaders, movie stars and other important lay of society and adds to the confusion of the confused mind and poses a dilemma to the youth today.

Thus for the time being we are going through/undergoing reorientation of values and as it is pointed out by Chyngyz Aitmatov, very often not to the right direction. Quite often we ignore/neglect the nation's requirements to morality and attitude and very often we give first preference to the western way of behaving which are not acceptable in our society. Thus, the media, TV, radio do a lot to imbue western stile in everything. One can not help agreeing with Chyngyz Aitmatov since his worries are not baseless and we must look deeper into his worries. It is vital to act upon his advice which is indeed on time.
His thoughts about national (indigenous) upbringing are of tremendous interest and not at all less important for contemporary pedagogy: “The problem of indigenous upbringing is one of the most complicated because it has been ... turned into some stereotypes on the level of spellings and slogans. We load small children, high school students, who are thirsty for knowing everything about adults, by the ballasts of phraseology without exploring the essence and meaning of the life necessity for the term “internationalism” with concrete examples and on concrete situations concerning their families, surrounding, cities, regions and republic. What is being done by our teachers, nurses are not clear for the children. Reports, salutations, slogans and empty phrases replace the vivid living examples”.

According to Aitmatov “one of the principal aspects of internationalism is a language policy”. Emphasizing the mutual coherence of Kyrgyz and Russian languages, he assumes unadvisable to “push out” one of them. Instead, he is for bilingualism. He says: “... in all regions there must be a valuable and parallel coexistence of the national language with Russian provided by the constitution. What does ‘valuable’ means? It means that vernacular language coexisting with Russian must have all the facilities for its development and practice... .

102 Aitmatov Ch. Sena Praxrenia. – Ogonek. -1987. – N 28, s. 11
Bilingualism, on one hand, can provide keeping and development of the national language; on the other hand, it can provide knowledge of Russian language. Such process is quite possible for the children and teachers as well. Bilingualism should be considered as a new historical phenomenon, as a cultural achievement of the 21st century. The culture of bilingualism can give a new potential possibility for spiritual development of our nations. This will be like two wings of a bird... Like a bird with two wings, each person in the national republics will know two languages – his own mother tongue and the common one for the whole country – Russian.”103

Year by year, Yssyk – Kul Lake which is considered as a pearl of Kyrgyz land, gets shallow and less. That is another issue of vital importance. So, bothered by that problem as well, Aitmatov says: “Seeing... how it is getting shallow and less, I think about another “lake” - which is the national sanctuary as well, - language. If there are no any new and big rivers falling into the language in the form of new generations and if they can not manage to learn their mother tongue, if there are no any facilities for learning it, no necessary institution, then it is also a

103 Ibid s. 12
swallowing of the language, it is also national disaster, if not ecological”\textsuperscript{104}

He continues his thought: “When we theoretically suppose that in time, in some far future, all the languages will join together and there will be only one or two languages in the world and occupied by this perspective, we scarcely are aware that the world will get much poorer by that. These “winner” languages will not have a surrounding environment. Sameness can not provide development. Therefore it is important to keep the plurality of languages as long as possible.”\textsuperscript{105}

Being in favour of bilingualism, however, Aitmatov is for the priority of the mother tongue: “Immortality of the nation is in its language. Each and every language is great for its own people. Each of us has an obligation to the nation as its son, which has given a birth to us and has gifted its biggest wealth to us - its language: keep its purity and increase its richness”\textsuperscript{106}.

Thus, Aitmatov sought to revive interest in the Kyrgyz language as a mother tongue.

According to Aitmatov, moral upbringing is connected with the notion “personality”, with the person’s strivings to self affirmation. He assures that our time needs vivid personalities

\textsuperscript{104} Ibid, p. 12
\textsuperscript{105} Aitmatov Ch. Sena – \textit{Jizn}. Literaturnaia Gazeta, 1986; Avgust, 13
\textsuperscript{106} Ibid
and education, particularly secondary, can not help paying much attention to the most important fact that the special feature of man’s character is desire to express himself as an individual (person). If there is no such possibility, then desire to be creative gets over what causes disappointment and real qualities of a person will be hided behind the faceless mask of an ordinary person.

Aitmatov believes that mankind's socio-political, economic, and ideological, even environmental problems would disappear if education could be advanced beyond rote memorization, and if a true community concern, a true love, could meld humans and nature. Aitmatov’s dialectics of love view man for what he is rather than for what he seems to be.

Thus, Chyngyz Aitmatov says that nowadays there is a big necessity for moral purification, for making moral codes in the frame of democratic renewing of the society. This important task is, first of all, of the school, of teachers. “We can see most negative events in embryo what means we can foresee about its development and localization...”107.

Assertion of virtues in human relationships, accordingly, in the hearts and spirits of the new generations is a holy duty of teachers. And to fulfill this duty we must keep in mind that we,

adults, should think and look deeper upon our relationships with children. Aitmatov alerts about the fact that in the process of personality forming, moral values such as honesty, conscience and decency are not preferable ones nowadays. It has almost become a conception that dodgery, being high-handed, having some cushy job somewhere in the markets or being at service abroad are the tools for success. Thus, the conception of the social justice is distorted; the criteria of human being's real significance are getting changed.

In essence, the evolution of his creation is an evolution of the philosophical rethinking of the crisis of education and culture. “Crisis of education today is obvious phenomenon. It is a reflection of social crisis of former USSR”¹⁰⁸.

The idea of social 'mankurtizm' (being without any memory or state of ‘memory less’) as a fundamental base of the crisis of education and culture goes through all his works. All his works represent artistic embodiment of the fight of two cultural powers - creative and destructive. The people who are a great power creating and making culture present the first one, and the second one is bureaucratic intelligentsia which is a power of destructing in the face of some Soviet bureaucrats - 'chinush'.

¹⁰⁸ Boldjurova I.S., Ne zabluditsa v labirintah istorii, Bishkek, 2001. s.148
Crisis of education and culture is clearly as a crisis of, first of all, the whole nation conditioned by the absence of moral principles of some people, particularly, of nomenclature intelligentsia. Crisis of culture, expressed in the form of national crisis, has been conceptualized as a crisis of Conscience, crisis of Morality and crisis of Memory. "The crisis of education and culture is clearly as a crisis of the nation, conditioned by the absence of moral principles"\textsuperscript{109}. So, to make everyone the same in obedient subordination, servility without knowing his/her own language, own traditions and customs and knowing only the rules of absolute subordination was an essence of the crisis of soviet system of education and culture. So, deep breaking of moral values has been being a phenomenon since the twilight of Soviet period.

Another fact that makes Aitmatov to worry about is the problem of cultivating/developing a taste for our youth. "Stupefying mass consumption of art does very unkind things... - show of rude and brutal western movies where killing, fighting, chase are! Mature people can look at that from the critical point of view. But inexperienced and unscrupulous kids, teenagers take them up automatically and imbibe and imitate them."\textsuperscript{110}

\textsuperscript{109} Asanova U., \textit{Filosofia Obrazovania}, Bishkek, 2001. s.142
\textsuperscript{110} Aitmatov Ch. \textit{Slujenie Idealam Obschestva}. – Studencheski Meridian. – 1981. - # 4
We can not beg to differ from his statement that "...cultural politics is of immense importance than financial success. Any of these can not compensate a moral PREJUDICE..., to fight against the hasty taste by appeals only is not possible. It is necessary to oppose to it with the examples of high art."111

According to the writer, youth's passion for commonplace and vulgar movies is "a very evidence of certain expenses in aesthetic upbringing of people. The reason is not only the fact that the qualified and keened people are not working enough upon this problem. The real facts can easily destroy the things which have been imbued to human being, all the more so, to young being. Because all the published, watched on TV, listened from radio, that is the entire low rated, empty, pseudo works, which develop nasty taste, can depreciate any educative work. One should not forget that pure amusement; easy access may orient and tune people."112

Thus, true spiritual value is out of board. "The sophisticated art which requires deliberate concentration, insisting thinking, tension of thoughts seems to be unnecessary and strange. Moreover, it irritates, sometimes even causes an indignant."113

111 Ibid, p.125
112 Ibid, p. 7
113 Aitmatov Ch. Kak Cheloveku Chelovekom Byt.- Iskusstvo kino. – 1975. - #6
“No one is going to bring up our youth, our young spirits for us. And we should not take life easily hoping that nothing horrible will happen: now they are harsh, heartless and arrogant but when they got grown they will become better... . They will never get better. It is difficult. To suppose that if we provide mass secondary education, it will solve all the problems, - reckoning this way is at least is too naïve. Contrary, the higher the level of literacy, the more difficulties and complications are in the process of upbringing, therefore we need to be more accurate regarding our methods, examples; we need to be more flexible and refined.”

He assures that nothing is easy and simple in life. For everything good in us we have to ‘fight’ with perseverance and purposefulness towards our aim. In his article “Snega on Manas Ata” he writes: “... life is never easy if one takes serious approach to it, if to dare, but not to look for a careless life. Wherever one has got careless life, there he is over as a whole personality.”

“Incumbent youth has all the ways to knowledge, intelligence and creativity open. But intellect and erudition don’t come themselves just like this, it comes with struggle – it was like this and will be like this all the times. One needs perseverance, purposefulness and, if he wants, courage to gain

---

115 Aitmatov Ch. Snega na Manas-Ata. - Ogonek, - 1995. - #19
spiritual heights. One needs to learn how to overcome himself, his laziness, inertness and weak will, and ultimately his fear of the goal to be achieved."¹¹⁶

Thus, education, value crises and character building, upbringing of youth - all this is one of the main streams in Aitmatov's creative works. He has alerted the society to the danger of these social phenomena but did not offer any solution to it. However, this alert has a vital importance for further steps to be taken by the society in order to undergo these crises with worthy consequences.

Section (c)

National Education and Indigenous Values

National education of the Kyrgyz has its roots back to the beginning of the 20th century. Although pretty few fellows are considered to be the first builders of the national education, what they have done has a historically important meaning and it has been being a national pride of the Kyrgyz. And they are scholars like Kasym Tynystanov, Torokul Aitmatov, Jamal Arabaev and others. Unfortunately, most of them came under the inquisition period and become victims of the 'inquisition

¹¹⁶ Aitmatov Ch. Mir Stanovitsa Sloynee. Molodoi Communist.- 1973.- #3
machine' for their great efforts to build the national education of Kyrgyz.

**Kasym Tynystanov** was born in 1901 and lived only for 37 years, as long as Alexandr Pushkin lived. He was not only the main figure in the educational activity of the republic but also a direct participant in the planning and writing textbooks. As the first National Commissar of Education of the Kyrgyz ASSR, Kasym Tynystanov conducted especially important state and public works while simultaneously continuing to work on the writing of textbooks which are still valuable today for their high level of content and their scientific accuracy.

He was one of the first to raise questions about the transition from the Arabic to the Latin alphabet, having published the article: “Why Are We Gravitating to the Latin Alphabet?” In his article he argued that the purpose for accepting Latin did not intend to destroy the oriental *hadj-mullas*. The goal was to create an original literature and culture more naturally. Clearly understanding that the introduction of a new alphabet was not easy, he created the Society of Friends of the New Alphabet. In 1925 at the scientific conference his concept was approved.

Kasym Tynystanov created a book for reading for the schools called *Ene Til* (Mother Tongue).
Linguists state that Tynystanov described with great knowledge about the sounds of the Kyrgyz language and classified them, offering definitions that to this day have not lost their value. He is counted among the founders of national phonology. Then he undertook the enormous task of writing textbooks on the Kyrgyz language. His work is worth the highest praise even according to the strict criteria of the modern time. On the basis of the compositions of Kasym Tynystanov, an entire generation of the Kyrgyz became literate and studied Kyrgyz writing. The *Morphology of the Kyrgyz Language* became the standard school textbook. The textbook that followed was *The Syntax of the Kyrgyz Language*.

As a statesman Kasym Tynystanov paid a great attention to the development of education, national science, culture and art. In response to Tynystanov’s request, the very well known historian V. Bartold got intended to write a composition about the history of the Kyrgyz. He fulfilled his promise in his book *The Kyrgyz*. This is one of the most outstanding researches in Turkish studies in twentieth century. The world famous scientist E. Polivanov was invited to Kyrgyzstan by again Kasym Tynystanov in order to assist in the development of Kyrgyz sciences. The lives of the two scientists who subsequently
became friends came to a tragic end. Such was the ruthless nature of the totalitarian system of that time.

He was also outstanding poet; his poems were published in Moscow in 1925 in Kyrgyz language as a separate collection and unfortunately this was the first and last collection published by the poet.

The center of all of the creative and scientific inquires of Kasym Tynystanov was the epos Manas. He has written the poem *Memorial of Manas*. He gave several lectures devoted to Manas, in particular, on the problems existing in the study of Manas.

Kasym Tynystanov did high positions in the party. As mentioned earlier, he was the first Peoples Commissar of the National Committee of Education and this was his calling. However he could not avoid the tragic end and that was the fate of many outstanding personalities of that time. On the 1st of August, 1937 he was arrested. Almost everyone who was involved in popularizing the epos Manas in those years was subject to repression. Among the people who fell at the hands of Stalin's executioners was Professor Kasym Tynystanov.

He died when he was still young; he was taken away with so much left unfinished. The severe regime did not give him an opportunity to reveal his personality in all its depth.
Like any other nations, the Kyrgyz had, have and will have their indigenous values and these indigenous values are to be on the surface despite the changes and challenges happening due to the development processes in the society. Because indigenous values are the ones which associate with the spirit of a nation and it acts as an identity of the national spirit, as one of the main forming elements of a national identity. Also all the nations have some specific sources which preserve and carry the indigenous values from generation to generation. For the Kyrgyz, the greatest recourse of their indigenous values is epos Manas.

The epos Manas is not only a historic and artistic creation of the Kyrgyz people. The Kyrgyz national consciousness, which has been developing for centuries, is based on a number of basic values and has a variety of sources in our life. Epos Manas is one of these sources and truly serves as a fundamental basis of our history, that is, it provides ground, air and water for our history and identity as well. “The Manas epic to the Kyrgyz people is not just a time-honored classic but a work that is at the roots of their culture and identity.”117 “Today Manas has been designated as the ‘Kyrgyz spiritual object’ and is one of the most important markers of the country’s identity…”118

118 Doraiswamy R. The Post Soviet Position: Chingiz Aitmatov in the 90’s, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi, 2005, p. 50
National epos Manas 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. Manas is known around the world. According to the decision of the United Nations and UNESCO in 1995, the Kyrgyz celebrated thousandth anniversary of the epos Manas as one of the world's greatest literary works. As a result, Manas has become known all over the world.

Thus, the epos is over thousand years old and for about nine hundred years it remained purely oral. It survived “on the lips of the old bards, and in the minds and hearts of Kirghizian folk.”119 According to May Walter, who has translated the epos into English and published in 1995 on the anniversary of the 1000th year of Manas (the original text in Kyrgyz was the version given by a famous Manaschi named Sagymbai Orozbakov, from whom 250,000 verses of the epic were recorded in 1930), the epic did not come to be written down until the 1850’s and that its conception can not be traced to any author or moment in time. So, pre revolutionary written records of Manas date back to 1856 when the Kazakh scholar and ethnographer Chokan Valihanov wrote down the excerpt called “The Funeral Banquet of Koketei.” Between 1862 and 1869, the Russian scholar and

119 May W., Manas Trans, Introduction, Vol.1, Moscow and Bishkek, 1995, p. 4
academician V. Radlov also wrote down some episodes from Manas. A complete written version came into being only after the Revolution in 1917. There were more than eighteen versions of the epic, collected from various reciters. A major part of the epic was published in late 1950's and a four volume edition of it came into being in 1984.

It was extremely difficult during Soviet times to promote and popularize the epos. The first efforts to publish and popularize the epos Manas were undertaken in 1925. Its advocates were Kasym Tynystanov and Torokul Aitmatov. The decision for publishing the epos was continuously obstructed and initiators persecuted. “After the studying a thick set of documents, received from the Academy of Sciences of Kyrgyzstan in response to my request for information concerning the events surrounding Manas in the past sixty years and the tragic destinies of the people who were involved in these events, I became convinced that the epos, along with its great artistic value, has significant political value and was capable of influencing the situation in Kyrgyz society. Regressive measures with the purpose of further blocking the epos’ “road to the people” could, in new conditions of Perestroyka, have a negative influence on political moods.”

Its main epic hero is named “Manas the Magnanimous”.

“Heroism and nobleness have continued to develop and have received powerful reinforcement by the epos Manas which has a spiritual influence on the national consciousness of the Kyrgyz. With a deep for religious beliefs, I hope that I do not offend the feelings of those of faith when I say that the epos Manas has influenced national consciousness like a religion.” 121 Heroism and nobleness were considered to be the main and great features of the Kyrgyz national character. “My interpretation, which more fully corresponds to the content to the Kyrgyz national epos, is that an epos promotes ideas of humanity and nobleness. Not without reason was Manas called “Manas the Magnanimous”. The truth is this symbolical name is confirmed by the hero’s actions within the epos. However, it would be possible to interpret Manas from a different ideological point of view, for example, by connecting its content with the idea of “The Great Kyrgyz Empire”, which was a great part of a certain historical part of the Kyrgyz. The symbolical name “Manas the Warrior” would not contradict the content of the epos, but it would add a different dimension to the nature of the major national hero of the Kyrgyz. I personally have become more accustomed to the names “Manas the Magnanimous” or “Manas the Noble”. These

121 Ibid, p.12
names, more than anything else, express the deep essence of Kyrgyz national character.”122

“The real hero Manas, whose name has become a unifying national symbol, served in the creation of an epos that has no equivalent in the world.”123 So, Manas is a great force uniting people. Over many centuries the epos has developed into a legend that has been passed from generation to generation by the most talented storytellers of the Kyrgyz people. These storytellers were/are able “to retain hundreds of thousands of poetic lines, improvise creatively during performances, integrate new stories of the heroism of fellow tribesmen into the brightly colored poetic fabric of the epos, and thereby further develop and enrich this great creation of the Kyrgyz people.”124 The Kyrgyz consider the epos as the greatest talent and the manaschis (storytellers, Manas bards) were lifted up by the people and looked upon as heroes. So, all the Kyrgyz people have been familiar with the hero Manas since the childhood. They perceive him as a mighty hero for he fought for his country and lost his life in a battle to protect his own people.

According to historians, epics are not based on the imaginations of authors but on accounts of historical

122 Ibid, p.44
123 Ibid, p.13
124 Ibid, p.46
happenings that are retold with talent in a bright poetic manner. The epos Manas is not exception and contains many connections to the facts and events of history of Kyrgyz nation. “The Manas epic may be called the encyclopedia of Kirghiz people who live among the inaccessible mountains of Central Asia. It is an encyclopedia which contains the tales, the mythology, the way of life of the Kirghiz and the history of their relations with neighbors; and expresses them clustered around the name of a single hero, Manas. It is the Iliad of the Kirghiz.”125 Researchers have opinion that the text of the epic can give out a whole stories of events that took places many centuries ago in sequence and primary original form.

Not only histological events can be restored by the epos, also it is thought that the epos is the moral and cultural fabric of the Kyrgyz.

Another important fact worth mentioning is about the special place Manas occupies in world culture. Manas is distinct not only because of its volume which contains one million lines what is two and half times more than the number of lines in Mahabharata and twenty times more than the lines in The Iliad and The Odyssey. “All other eposes that are part of world culture

continue to exist primarily as artistic phenomena while the epos Manas has reached far beyond its framework, and throughout the centuries it has served and continues to serve as a powerful part of the national, political, spiritual and cultural life of the Kyrgyz. 'The Seven Testaments of Manas' for the Kyrgyz are considered to be the most respected ethical and moral standards.” The sacred seven values from the epos have been summed up as the Seven Testaments of Ancestor Manas by the first President of Independent Kyrgyzstan A. Akaev and are as follows:

1. **Unity and mutual support** – the purpose for all the achievements of Manas the unity of people;

2. **Transethic consensus, friendship and corporation** – one of the key ideas of the epos. The greatness of Manas is in his nobility and magnanimity, in his outstanding to find the best qualities in representatives of other peoples and to offer help during difficult times;

3. **National honor and patriotism** – these sacred values guided Manas and his compatriots during their moments. “Let me sacrifice myself for your sake, my dear Kyrgyz” – this moral self sacrifice, commitment and love for homeland was all that was professed by these heroic people;

---

126 Ibid, p.46
4. Through hard, relentless work and knowledge comes prosperity and wellbeing- a hard work is important and a purpose of life. Our focus should be on labour, knowledge, modern equipment and technology;

5. Humanism, magnanimity, tolerance – humanity and human love are the most important values in the epos. Ancient wisdom says that the health of a society is determined by the health of a society is determined by the health of its families – by the prosperity of its people and the state of its moral values. Manas is a code of honor and an ode to magnanimity;

6. Harmony with nature- the nomadic civilization promoted a careful and respectful attitude towards Mother Nature. Since childhood, a nomad was taught to live in harmony with nature;

7. Strengthening and protecting the Kyrgyz statehood – the life of our ancestors was devoted to this noble task. They established a powerful and prosperous ancient Kyrgyz state.

The number “seven” is sacred to the Kyrgyz people, so not without reason it was lined out exactly seven lessons and these seven lessons has to be a sacred duty of every Kyrgyz.
Thus, the epos is the most authentic and ancient sources of human values for the Kyrgyz. "Manas has, for many centuries, personified the values of the Kyrgyz people – their magnanimity, aspirations for freedom, goodness, justice, noble moral and ethical values, and most importantly, their statehood... . While accessing the Epos Manas from the point of view of the state ideas contained in it, it is easy to see that for ancient Kyrgyz people and tribes the epos was a prototype for the national Constitution, a code of laws and moral decrees, a code of honor and morals, a will for future Kyrgyz generations."127 "National consciousness is a part of personal identity. It is impossible to be member of an ethnic group with its past, historical roots, myths, legends, emblems, and other attributes. The significance of the epos Manas in the life of the Kyrgyz people extends far beyond the literary or artistic framework. It is a direct reflection of our history, and as a national relic, it is a symbol of our national pride."128

These are the values which need to be passed to generations, which have to be preserved despite the changes taking place in our life today. These changes dictate new values, demands replacement of old values by new ones. Nonetheless, seven values of Manas seem to us to be the everlasting values for all

127 Ibid, p. 272, 282

128 Ibid, p.47
future generations of the Kyrgyz, as long as there is a statehood, democratic independent state, country of human rights.

Section (d)

Mother Tongue and All Education in It

Mother tongue is another main marker of nation's identity; it is just embraced within the concepts of identity and nationhood. That is, it is something very crucial for national identity, for nation building. Mother tongue is as old as the nation itself and vital for maintaining and developing the authentic culture of a nation.

But some people are tent to identify 'mother tongue' with a 'first language' what can cause a bit of confusion about the meaning of mother tongue. "When I first came to Kyrgyzstan, an ethnic German told me that she didn’t know her mother tongue. For me, this was incomprehensible as in Western Europe "mother tongue" is the language a person knows best and usually communicates in... In this context the statement "I do not know my mother tongue" is a paradox - it is simply impossible not to know one's mother tongue"129. “The right of any person to maintain their identity can only be fully realized if

they acquire a proper knowledge of their first language (or the language they learn from their parents) and/or their mother tongue during the educational process." In the first point of view it is very clear that the author does not differentiate at all the notions 'mother tongue' and 'first language', and another one also considers them as synonyms.

To us, mother tongue can not be synonym to first language in any way. Mother tongue is one's native language which comes from one's ancestors and passes from generation to generation. One can not consider his first language as a mother tongue just because he did not have a necessity or chance to know his mother tongue as his first language due to some circumstances. For instance, the Kyrgyz can not say that Russian is his mother tongue since he does not know Kyrgyz language and can speak only in Russian. In such cases, to our opinion, Kyrgyz language is still his mother tongue and Russian language became just as his mother tongue.

Thus, we have attempted to argue for the favor of the statement that one can not consider his first language (if it is different from the language of her/his ethnic belonging), which was learnt from his parents or from the society under some particular circumstances, as a mother tongue just like being a son of 'B'

\[130\] Ibid
one can not call her/himself a son of 'C' biologically since mother
tongue is something which comes with the blood in you.

Now Kyrgyzstan is the only Central Asian country in which
Russian remains an official language. At present, Russian is
designated as the "language of interethnic communication"
among the country's 4.9 million population, which includes
Kyrgyz, Uzbeks, Russians, Germans, Chechens, Uighurs and
other ethnic groups. Kyrgyz ranks as the "State Language," a
somewhat subordinate ranking that obliges members of
government to have a basic understanding of the language.

The recurring issue of language policy in Kyrgyzstan is
much more than an abstract matter for academic debate since it
trends to raise awkward questions about identity and
nationhood as motioned above.

Language issue has come up again since the country
became independent in 1991. The last occasion was five years
ago, when the then president, Askar Akaev, succeeded in
according Russian the status of "official language" while Kyrgyz
kept the title of "state language". It was a compromise that
granted Kyrgyz superior status while allowing Russian to be
widely used in public life. After a lull of several years, the issue
has come up to the fore again as politicians debate the wording
of a proposed set of wide-ranging amendments to the constitution.

"The role played by Russian in soviet time should remain and [even] be increased, and study of the Russian language should continue,"\textsuperscript{131} says Emil Kartagaev, who leads ‘Uluu Birimdik’ movement, one of Kyrgyz nationalist-minded groups. "But the fact that Russian has been made an official language reduces the sphere where the state language is used; it allows people to say they write and speak the official language, which prevents the state language from ever established itself."\textsuperscript{132}

Although Kyrgyz enjoys senior status, little was done to promote it for many years. President Askar Akaev established a state commission to develop its use, but there were long periods when there was no funding for the agency. In part this neglect may be due to the fact that the Kyrgyz elite have tended to conduct their daily business in Russian.

Since March Revolution, some seniors have shown more of an interest in Kyrgyz. For instance, The Defense Minister Ismail Iskakov ordered that all commands and military terminology should be translated in to Kyrgyz, and soldier even began singing their army songs in the language.

\textsuperscript{131} http://www.iwpr.net/?p=rca\&s=f\&o=258200\&apc\_state=henh
\textsuperscript{132} Ibid
Former foreign minister Roza Otunbaeva ordered diplomatic negotiations to be translated into Kyrgyz, while Justice Minister Marat Kayipov that cabinet meetings should be conducted in the state language rather than Russian. A. Kayipov also suggested that the amended constitution should be drafted in Kyrgyz and then translated into Russian.

But we believe without altering the status of Russian, more attention must be paid to promoting the state language.

Mother tongue is crucial for nation building but here we must emphasize another crucial fact that in this rapidly changing world we are becoming a part of the globalization, we can not count only on our mother tongue. In order to assure integration into the broader society we need some internationalized language what for English could be recommended.

It seems that such recommendation is being already realized in Kyrgyzstan a little. There are schools that teach in English. Of course, there are problems of practicing English since there are almost no English-speaking people among the population and it results in poor knowledge of English at the end of the graduation unless a student have not been in some English speaking country for some time and could practice his language.
In such cases this right may not be realized for every individual representative of a minority group because economic factors do not allow for a special school.