



The System Of Spiritual And Ethical Values Of Epics Of The "Goro'gli" Series: Typology Of Four Axiological Layers

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ABSTRACT

The thesis presents, as an integrated system, the moral-spiritual value structure embodied in the "Go'ro'g'li" epic cycle across four interrelated axiological layers: courage-valor-patriotism, family-parental respect-generational continuity, loyalty-friendship-humanism, and justice-honesty-diligence. Each layer is grounded in concrete textual examples, including the paired "Loyalty" and "Disloyalty" didactic poems from the "Xiromon Dali" tale. The thesis concludes that the four layers form a linear chain — labor → honest property/word → social trust → a just society — and that this axiological system methodologically complements the six artistic-pedagogical mechanisms ("how education happens") examined in the author's earlier thesis ("what is being instilled").

KEYWORDS: "Go'ro'g'li"; axiological layer; moral-spiritual value; loyalty-disloyalty antithesis; family value; justice.

INTRODUCTION

The study of the moral and spiritual potential of folk epics has acquired particular significance in contemporary humanities and educational research, as traditional narratives preserve not only historical and cultural memory but also systems of values that regulate individual and collective behaviour. Epic works transmit socially significant ideals through characters, conflicts, narrative situations, proverbial expressions, didactic speeches, and the consequences of moral choices. In this respect, the epic heritage of the Turkic peoples represents an important cultural and pedagogical resource for examining how concepts such as courage, loyalty, family responsibility, justice, honesty, and human dignity are represented, interconnected, and transmitted from one generation to another. The "Go'ro'g'li" epic cycle occupies a particularly important position within this heritage because its numerous narratives construct a broad moral universe in which personal virtues are consistently connected with social responsibility. The contemporary relevance of examining the value structure of the "Go'ro'g'li" cycle is determined by the growing need to identify culturally grounded approaches to moral and civic education. Modern education increasingly requires not only the transmission of knowledge but also the development of ethical judgement, social responsibility, respect for others, commitment to justice, and the ability to make morally responsible decisions. In this context, traditional epic narratives may be approached not merely as literary monuments or manifestations of folklore, but as complex cultural texts containing historically formed models of desirable and undesirable behaviour. Their educational potential, however, cannot be



adequately understood unless the values represented in the narratives are systematically identified and structurally classified.

Previous studies of the “Go’ro’g’li” tradition have addressed its genesis, poetic structure, historical-cultural foundations, character system, motifs, variants, and national characteristics. Folkloristic scholarship has also paid considerable attention to the heroic ideal, the image of Go’ro’g’li, the relationship between the individual hero and the community, as well as the aesthetic and ideological functions of epic motifs. Nevertheless, the moral-spiritual values embodied in the Uzbek versions of the cycle have not yet been sufficiently systematized as an integrated axiological structure. In particular, there remains a need to distinguish between the content of the values being transmitted and the artistic-pedagogical mechanisms through which those values are transmitted. Such a distinction is methodologically important because the same value may be represented through different narrative and pedagogical devices, while one artistic mechanism may simultaneously serve several axiological purposes.

This distinction constitutes the conceptual starting point of the present study. In the author's previous research, the question of “how moral-spiritual education is realized” in the “Go’ro’g’li” cycle was examined through a typology of six artistic-pedagogical mechanisms. The present study addresses the complementary question of “what is being instilled” by identifying and systematizing the principal value content represented in the epic cycle. On the basis of a systematic reading of thirteen epic narratives, four interrelated axiological layers are identified: (1) courage, bravery, and patriotism; (2) family, parental respect, and generational continuity; (3) loyalty, friendship, brotherhood, and humanism; and (4) justice, honesty, and diligence. These layers are not treated as isolated thematic categories. Rather, they are conceptualized as interconnected components of a unified moral-spiritual value system.

The first axiological layer concerns courage, bravery, and patriotism as values associated with collective security, defence of the community, personal dignity, and readiness to assume responsibility in situations of danger. The epic narratives demonstrate that courage is not reduced to physical strength or military ability. It may also take the form of moral endurance, resistance to injustice, preservation of dignity, and the ability to overcome fear. Thus, the heroic ideal constructed by the cycle combines physical courage with ethical responsibility, making bravery a socially meaningful rather than purely individual quality.

The second layer encompasses family values, respect for parents, parental responsibility, adoption, and generational continuity. The “Go’ro’g’li” narratives repeatedly demonstrate that family relations are defined not exclusively by biological kinship but also by care, responsibility, loyalty, protection, and the fulfilment of one's word. Episodes involving orphaned children, adoptive parenthood, parental sacrifice, and the transmission of responsibility from one generation to another reveal an ethical understanding of family in which emotional commitment and moral duty may become stronger than blood relations. Consequently, the family is represented as one of the primary spaces in which moral identity is formed and reproduced.

The third layer is centred on loyalty, friendship, brotherhood, and humanism. Its particular significance lies in the explicit opposition between loyalty and betrayal. The “Xiromon Dali” narrative, especially its didactic poems devoted to loyalty and disloyalty, provides a concentrated verbal formulation of this opposition. Loyalty is presented as a source of trust, companionship, and social cohesion, whereas betrayal is represented as behaviour that



destroys interpersonal and communal relations. At the same time, humanism extends beyond friendship and kinship: it includes respect for human dignity regardless of social or material status, rejection of humiliation, compassion, forgiveness, and the possibility of moral correction. This layer therefore establishes interpersonal trust as an essential condition of a stable social environment.

The fourth layer comprises justice, honesty, and diligence and possesses a particularly broad social dimension. Within the epic worldview, these values are interconnected rather than independent. Diligent labour provides the basis for legitimate livelihood; honesty establishes trust in personal and social relations; and trust creates the conditions for a just social order. Conversely, laziness, falsehood, slander, betrayal, and abuse of power disrupt this moral chain. Justice is therefore represented not only as a personal virtue but also as a principle of governance and social organization. The ideal ruler is expected to listen to the grievances of the people, while oppression is portrayed as an action that inevitably produces moral and social consequences.

From a methodological perspective, the four-layer model makes it possible to move from a descriptive reading of individual moral episodes toward a systemic interpretation of the epic's axiological structure. The layers correspond to different spheres of social interaction: public and civic relations, family relations, interpersonal relations, and socio-economic and legal relations. Together, these spheres encompass the principal domains in which an individual's moral identity is manifested. At the same time, the layers intersect. Courage may be required to protect one's family; loyalty may determine the resolution of a conflict; honesty may constitute the basis of justice; and family responsibility may reinforce social solidarity. Their interaction consequently produces a multidimensional rather than linear conception of moral education. The study is also significant from a pedagogical perspective. If the six artistic-pedagogical mechanisms identified in the previous research explain the ways in which moral values are communicated—through exemplary behaviour, testing and conflict, advice and testament, antithesis, and other narrative mechanisms—the four axiological layers explain the substantive content of that education. The two typologies should therefore be understood as complementary analytical dimensions: one concerns the form and mechanism of moral influence, while the other concerns its value content. Their integration provides a more comprehensive framework for interpreting the educational potential of the “Go’ro’g’li” epic cycle.

The relevance of such a framework extends beyond the Uzbek epic tradition. The “Go’ro’g’li” cycle belongs to a wider Turkic epic environment in which heroic courage, solidarity, family responsibility, moral integrity, and communal justice frequently function as fundamental cultural values. Comparative examination with other epic traditions, including “Alpomish”, “Manas”, and the “Dede Qorqud” heritage, may therefore reveal both common axiological patterns and culturally specific forms of their artistic representation. The inclusion of the heritage of Dede Qorqud in UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity further demonstrates the international cultural significance of Turkic epic traditions and their potential relevance for contemporary discussions of cultural transmission and value education.

Accordingly, the aim of the present study is to identify, classify, and interpret the principal moral-spiritual values represented in the Uzbek “Go’ro’g’li” epic cycle as a coherent four-layer



axiological system and to establish their relationship with the artistic-pedagogical mechanisms through which these values are communicated. The study focuses particularly on the textual representation of courage and patriotism, family and parental responsibility, loyalty and humanism, and justice, honesty, and diligence. By conceptualizing these values as an integrated system rather than as a collection of separate moral themes, the research seeks to provide a methodological basis for understanding the "Go'ro'g'li" cycle as both a major folkloric heritage and a culturally grounded resource for contemporary moral and educational studies.

As indicated in the previous thesis, the methodology of the present study is based on the principle of source transparency. The four axiological layers were identified through a page-by-page rereading and systematic analysis of the material contained in thirteen epic narratives of the "Go'ro'g'li" cycle. The textual evidence was examined in its immediate narrative and didactic contexts rather than being interpreted solely on the basis of isolated moral statements. In the dissertation, the identified findings are supported by a total of 692 direct references and textual quotations, which provides a substantial source basis for the proposed axiological classification.

The analysis of the value system is further grounded in the three-component model of moral-spiritual education developed in Section 1.1 of the dissertation. According to this model, moral education incorporates three mutually related dimensions: the cognitive dimension, which concerns the recognition and understanding of moral values; the emotional-value dimension, which involves the internal acceptance and evaluation of these values; and the behavioural dimension, which is manifested through the practical application of moral principles in concrete situations. Accordingly, each axiological layer identified in the "Go'ro'g'li" cycle was examined in terms of how a particular value is presented, emotionally evaluated, and translated into exemplary or condemnable behaviour.

The systematic analysis of the thirteen epic narratives resulted in the identification of four major axiological layers, which together constitute the principal moral-spiritual value structure of the "Go'ro'g'li" cycle. The first layer is represented by courage, bravery, and patriotism. This layer comprises three principal directions and is particularly evident in "The Birth of Go'ro'g'li," "Hasankhan," and "Yunus Pari." The narratives within this group demonstrate how courage is constructed through heroic action, resistance to danger, defence of the community, and the preservation of personal dignity. Importantly, courage is represented not merely as physical strength but also as an ethical quality associated with responsibility and commitment to one's community.

The second axiological layer encompasses family, respect for parents, and generational continuity. It includes six principal directions and is most clearly represented in "The Birth of Go'ro'g'li," "Hasankhan," and "Xiromon Dali." The relevant episodes foreground parental responsibility, maternal sacrifice, adoption, filial respect, family loyalty, and the transmission of moral obligations between generations. Within this layer, family is presented as an important social and moral environment in which an individual's ethical identity is formed. The narratives also demonstrate that parenthood may be understood not only in biological terms but also through care, protection, responsibility, and the fulfilment of one's moral obligations toward a child.

The third and most extensively differentiated layer is loyalty, friendship and brotherhood, and humanism. It consists of ten principal directions and is particularly prominent in "Xiromon

Dali" and "The Condemnation of Avazkhan to Death." The central conceptual opposition within this layer is that between loyalty and disloyalty. Loyalty is associated with trust, companionship, mutual assistance, and social solidarity, whereas betrayal is presented as a destructive moral behaviour that undermines interpersonal and communal relations. The humanistic dimension of this layer is expressed through respect for human dignity, rejection of humiliation and injustice, compassion, forgiveness, and recognition of the moral worth of an individual regardless of social or material status.

The fourth axiological layer comprises justice, honesty, and diligence. With twelve principal directions, it represents the broadest value complex in terms of its social and normative implications. Its principal textual sources include "The Birth of Go'ro'g'li," "Yunus Pari," and "The Condemnation of Avazkhan to Death." The analysis demonstrates that justice, honesty, and diligence are closely interconnected within the epic worldview. Diligent labour is associated with legitimate achievement and honest livelihood; honesty creates the basis for interpersonal and social trust; and trust, in turn, constitutes an important condition for establishing justice. Conversely, laziness, falsehood, slander, betrayal, and abuse of authority are represented as behaviours capable of disrupting the moral order of both individual and society.

Thus, the four layers differ in their immediate thematic focus and the number of internal directions they contain, but they collectively form a unified axiological structure. The first layer primarily addresses the individual's relationship with the community and homeland; the second concerns family and intergenerational relations; the third regulates interpersonal relations and social solidarity; while the fourth extends to socio-economic, legal, and civic relations. Taken together, these domains cover the principal spheres in which moral values are acquired, expressed, and reproduced.

The methodological significance of this classification lies in the possibility of relating the identified value content to the artistic-pedagogical mechanisms established in the previous stage of the research. In this respect, the four axiological layers answer the question of "what is being instilled," whereas the previously identified six artistic-pedagogical mechanisms answer the question of "how it is instilled." The integration of these two dimensions makes it possible to interpret the educational potential of the "Go'ro'g'li" epic cycle as a coherent system in which moral values constitute the content of education, while narrative structures, character behaviour, conflict, advice, antithesis, testing, and consequences of moral choice function as mechanisms of their transmission.

The first axiological layer is divided into three internal dimensions: collective patriotic duty, personal and military courage, and the moral courage of the younger generation, including the active participation of female characters. An early symbolic representation of courage appears in The Birth of Go'ro'g'li, where a foal suckles and raises the infant who was born in a grave [1, p. 52]. A form of courage combined not with violence but with mutual respect is demonstrated in the wrestling episode of Hasankhan. After being defeated, Hasankhan acknowledges Go'ro'g'li's bravery and voluntarily chooses to become his disciple and son: "You are a brave man; you have demonstrated your courage... You wrestled with me and impressed me. I made my decision and accepted you as my father, Go'ro'g'li" [2, p. 101]. This episode demonstrates the social function of courage, showing that it can serve not as an instrument of warfare but as a means of establishing an educational and interpersonal relationship.



Courage is also represented as an ability to strengthen collective spirit through speech. In Yunus Pari, Takabegi Zamon addresses the people and calls upon them to overcome their fear: "Why are you all so afraid of death? Listen to my words, people of Turkmenistan! Do not be afraid of the Arabs!" [3, p. 263]. His speech encourages the community to overcome fear and demonstrate courage. The narrator further emphasizes the effect of this appeal by observing that "the Uzbeks who had never experienced war became skilled in warfare" [3, p. 269]. This episode demonstrates that ordinary people can also develop courage and become brave fighters when circumstances require it.

A distinct and relatively understudied form of moral courage among the younger generation is represented through the character of Avazkhan. In *The Condemnation of Avazkhan to Death*, he preserves his patience, dignity, and self respect even when he is unjustly sentenced to death and later exiled from his homeland [4, pp. 42–80]. This representation may be interpreted as a form of psychological and moral courage that differs from physical bravery. Its educational significance lies in demonstrating the ability to preserve one's dignity and moral integrity under conditions of injustice, suffering, and social rejection.

The second axiological layer encompasses four principal dimensions: maternal sacrifice, adoption and parental responsibility, the ethics of marriage, and the understanding of a child as a divine gift. After the death of the child's mother, a stranger named Rustambek decides to raise the orphan as his own child and brings him up without distinguishing him from his biological son [1, p. 57]. This principle is concisely expressed in his well known saying: "Bibi Hilol became my sister, my light; they say that one maternal uncle is equal to seven fathers" [1, p. 54]. The episode demonstrates that care, responsibility, and loyalty may become more important than biological kinship in defining parental and family relations.

The depth of maternal affection is also clearly expressed in the orphaned child's lament for his deceased mother: "Why does no milk come to your breast? Because of hunger, mother, my strength has left me!" [1, p. 52]. The emotional force of this lament transforms motherhood from a biological relationship into a profound moral and emotional bond that remains significant even after the mother's death.

The recurring and stable nature of the fatherhood and sonhood model in the epic cycle can be observed through the parallel relationship between Hasankhan and Avazkhan. After being defeated, Hasankhan voluntarily addresses Go'ro'g'li as "father," while Go'ro'g'li responds by calling him "my son" [5, pp. 8–9]. Therefore, the later relationship between Go'ro'g'li and Avazkhan is not an isolated event but another, more fully developed manifestation of the same moral model.

It is also significant that Go'ro'g'li himself openly expresses the suffering caused by childlessness: "Now I have neither patience nor peace; I am childless and therefore have no strength" [5, pp. 5–6]. This confession constitutes an important ethical and philosophical statement. It suggests that power, wealth, and social status cannot compensate for the emotional and spiritual significance of having a child.

One of the most emotionally powerful representations of family values appears in Avazkhan. After many years of separation, the Turkmen woman Guloyim finds her son Avaz. However, when she realizes that she must entrust him to Go'ro'g'li as an adopted son, she delivers a deeply meaningful testament: "I now entrust my Avaz to you... repay the kindness for which I gave you my salt; protect Guloyim's lamb as your own life. I entrust my Avaz to you" [5, p. 36].



By asking Go'ro'g'li to protect her son "as your own life," the mother transfers parental responsibility to the adoptive father. This episode represents a clear example of an ethical testament based on trust and parental responsibility.

Go'ro'g'li, in turn, promises to remain faithful to the responsibility entrusted to him: "Do not be sad, Guloyim... consider me as you would consider yourself" [5, pp. 36–37]. Adoption is therefore represented not merely as a social or legal relationship but as an ethical and emotional responsibility grounded in trust, loyalty, and the fulfilment of one's word.

The third and most extensively developed axiological layer contains ten principal dimensions. Its central organizing principle is the antithesis between loyalty and betrayal. This opposition is most systematically expressed through two parallel didactic poems in Xiromon Dali. In the poem Loyalty, fidelity is characterized through such expressions as "the loyal one wins the heart of the beloved" and "the loyal one becomes a gentle companion" [6, p. 377]. In contrast, the poem Disloyalty functions as a mirror image of this ideal and explicitly condemns betrayal: "Go'ro'g'li despises such people; they are not human but dragons" [6, p. 378]. This parallel structure provides a particularly clear example of the antithesis mechanism through which desirable and undesirable behaviour are simultaneously presented.

A concise ethical code of humanism is articulated in the advice of Oydin Yusuf Pir: "Do not tell lies. Do not take another person's rights. Do not consider yourself superior to others. Do not harm anyone" [6, p. 383]. These statements formulate humanism as a practical system of interpersonal ethics based on truthfulness, respect for others, humility, and the rejection of violence.

The value of humanism is also tested within the social context of poverty and wealth. Karimberdi, an orphaned apprentice blacksmith, despite his poverty, responds calmly to Xiromon's humiliating remarks: "I am poor and came here on foot because of you... I am wealthy, while you are a poor person without status" [6, pp. 386–387]. His response demonstrates that human dignity is not determined by material circumstances. The dialogue therefore conveys the idea that social and economic inequality cannot provide a moral justification for humiliating another person.

Xiromon's father, Arslonboy, initially humiliates the young man because his daughter has chosen an ordinary dervish's apprentice. However, after Go'ro'g'li intervenes to restore justice, Arslonboy eventually acknowledges his mistake and openly repents [6, pp. 388–390]. His transformation from arrogance and humiliation to repentance and respect expresses the idea that moral correction and personal reform remain possible even after serious ethical failure.

Another narrative manifestation of the loyalty and betrayal antithesis appears in The Birth of Go'ro'g'li. Gajdumbek, the brother of Bibi Hilol, believes that his sister's honour has been violated in the conflict involving Ravshanbek and initially intends to kill him [1, p. 24]. However, Ravshanbek responds courageously and without fear, which changes Gajdumbek's attitude: "This is a brave young man; I will not kill him" [1, p. 25]. The conflict subsequently develops into reconciliation through marriage. This episode demonstrates that even serious hostility within a family can be transformed into reconciliation through forgiveness, respect for courage, and recognition of moral integrity. It therefore represents an important point of intersection between the family value layer and the loyalty and humanism layer.

The fourth axiological layer contains twelve principal dimensions and connects justice, honesty, and diligence through a causal sequence: labour, honest property and truthful speech, social



trust, and a just society. The concept of honesty is particularly concentrated in proverbial and gnomic statements: "The truthful person reaches his goal, while the wicked remain in shame... Through truthfulness, Rustam achieved his goal" [1, p. 61]. Diligence is reinforced through the metaphor of wings in Yunus Pari: "The one who works reaches his goal; the one who has wings can cross many mountains" [3, p. 306].

It is significant that diligence is represented in the epic cycle as the source of honest livelihood, while honesty is presented as a necessary condition for a just social order. A violation at any point in this sequence, whether through laziness, falsehood, or slander, has the potential to disrupt the entire moral system. The epic therefore constructs an interconnected understanding of personal ethics and social justice.

The economic dimension of honesty is expressed through advice concerning inheritance: "Take your property honestly as your inheritance; I am merely a servant, and God knows my condition" [1, p. 68]. Loyalty to an entrusted responsibility is represented in Hiloloy's lament: "My mother's bones remain entrusted to us; I said, do not betray what has been entrusted to you" [1, p. 79]. The opposition between trust and betrayal in this passage extends even to the memory of the deceased, which is treated as a sacred responsibility entrusted to the living.

The specific responsibility of a just ruler is articulated in Go'ro'g'li's advice to Kholdorkhan: "I am just; listen to the grievances of the people" [7, p. 106]. This statement defines justice not as an abstract moral principle but as a concrete responsibility of governance, particularly the ruler's obligation to remain accessible to the people and listen to their concerns.

A broader ethical and philosophical rejection of oppression appears in The Five Kings Attack Chambil: "Evil returns through the hands of the wicked; who does not fear the death that comes to the oppressor?" [8, p. 113]. Through this principle, the epic presents justice not simply as an external institutional punishment but also as a natural moral consequence inherent in wrongdoing itself.

The four layers discussed above do not function independently. Rather, they constitute an integrated axiological system in which each layer complements and reinforces the others. Courage and patriotism primarily emerge within the public and communal sphere; family values operate within the private and familial sphere; loyalty, friendship, and humanism regulate interpersonal relations; while justice, honesty, and diligence extend into the socio economic sphere. Together, these four domains encompass the principal areas of an individual's social interaction and moral development.

Each of the four axiological layers is also directly related to the six artistic pedagogical mechanisms identified in the author's previous thesis. Courage is represented through exemplary behaviour and testing; family values are developed through advice and testament; loyalty and betrayal are constructed through antithesis; and justice is reinforced through the narrative distribution of rewards and consequences. Thus, the four axiological layers answer the question of what is being instilled, while the six artistic pedagogical mechanisms answer the question of how it is instilled. These two dimensions should therefore be understood as inseparable components of a unified educational system.

The four axiological layers identified in the study may be applied in contemporary educational practice through a variety of pedagogical approaches. Courage and patriotism can be incorporated into civic and patriotic education classes as well as extracurricular activities. Family values can be addressed through family education sessions and educational units

devoted to family relationships. Loyalty and humanism can be explored through comparative and didactic activities based on the poems Loyalty and Disloyalty. Their explicitly contrasting structure makes them particularly suitable for classroom discussion, ethical comparison, and reflective learning activities. Justice, honesty, and diligence can be incorporated into civic education and work education.

Such an approach may also have comparative methodological significance beyond the Uzbek educational context. It can provide a framework for examining the educational potential of other oral epic traditions with rich cultural and moral heritage. In this respect, the inclusion of the Heritage of Dede Qorqud/Korkyt Ata/Dede Korkut, Epic Culture, Folk Tales and Music in UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2018 is particularly relevant [9]. The UNESCO description identifies values including bravery, dialogue, physical and spiritual well being, and unity. This correspondence suggests that the four layer axiological model developed through the analysis of the "Go'ro'g'li" cycle may also be subjected to comparative investigation within a broader Turkic cultural context.

In conclusion, the four layer axiological system identified in the "Go'ro'g'li" epic cycle complements the six mechanism typology developed in the author's previous research by providing the substantive dimension of moral and spiritual education. The integrated model makes it possible to describe the educational potential of the cycle through two interconnected dimensions: the content of values and the mechanisms through which those values are transmitted. Such an approach provides a theoretical and methodological basis for interpreting oral epic heritage not only as an important form of cultural memory but also as a potential resource for contemporary moral and educational practice.

Future research may develop in two principal directions. First, the four axiological layers may be subjected to comparative typological analysis in other heroic epic traditions of the Turkic peoples, particularly Alpomish and Manas. Second, specific methodological instruments for integrating this axiological system into contemporary Uzbek school curricula may be developed, including classroom exercises, learning tasks, discussion models, and assessment criteria within literature and civic and moral education. These directions may constitute an important basis for the practical and methodological component of the dissertation's subsequent research.

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