

A Tuvan Hero Tale, with Commentary, Morphemic Analysis, and Translation

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INTRODUCTION

Tuvan is a Turkic language spoken by both nomadic and sedentary populations in South Siberia, Western Mongolia, and the People's Republic of China. The Tuvan epic tale represents a living but endangered oral genre of considerable antiquity. In the example tale presented here, the heroine, a girl named *Bora-Šeelei*, must conceal her sex, assume her dead brother's identity, and embark on a difficult quest with the ultimate goal of restoring her brother (*Boktu-Kiriš*) to life. She sets out, armed only with her own wits, her magical powers, a bow and arrows, and clever talking horse. In the course of the tale, she overcomes challenges and works feats of deception, prowess, and magic needed to bring about the happy ending. The text presented here is a phonemic transcription, with annotation and translation, of a short version of the tale told in 1998 by a prominent Tuvan storyteller, Mr. Šojdak-ool Xapilakovič Xovalig (born 1929). The tale and accompanying analysis afford insights into Tuvan grammatical structures, performativity, oral genres, and the culture of Inner Asian nomads. It is prefaced with a commentary describing the cultural context of epic tales, the social context of this endangered genre, and structural (linguistic) aspects of the tale itself. A video recording to accompany this article may be downloaded at <http://tuvan.swarthmore.edu>. The video shows the tale told in its natural setting at a nomadic camp, to a Tuvan audience, with domestic animals and ambient sounds.¹

TUVAN MATERIAL AND SPIRITUAL CULTURE

Tuvans are linguistically a Turkic people (Castrén 1857, Katanov 1903, Menges 1955), residing in what is considered to be the ancient Siberian homeland of the Turks, the Altai mountain region extending across South Siberia and Western Mongolia. According to a 1989 census (cited in Monguš 1996), there are over 198,000 Tuvans in the titular republic, and a few thousand more outside its borders, including some just to the north in the Krasnoyarsk district, several thousand in Western Mongolia, and a few hundred in Xinjiang, China.

Though Tuvans have been traditionally transhumant pastoralists and hunters, most are now sedentary, residing in villages and towns. It is difficult to get an accurate estimate of the

None of this work would have been possible without the talent and generosity of the storyteller, Mr. Šojdak-ool Xovalig, to whom I am deeply grateful. This tale was recorded in August 1998 in the course of fieldwork funded by IREX. Subsequent field expeditions in 2000–2004 were funded by a grant from VolkswagenStiftung. Initial transcription was done by Mr. Muslim Doržu and Mr. Alexander Ondar; the latter also assisted with translation. The author thanks Stephanie Jamison for her editorial oversight, two anonymous JAOS reviewers for their instructive and detailed comments, Tuva experts Dr. Gregory D. S. Anderson, Dr. Theodore Levin, and Stefan Kamola for assessing drafts, and Robbie Hart and Luke Smith for editing final copy. Students in my "Structure of Tuvan" seminar at Swarthmore College in the spring of 2005 contributed many helpful comments. Any mistakes rest with the author.

1. Recorded in August 1998 near Aryg-Uzüü village in central Tuva, on Hi8 digital videotape and DAT audio tape, assisted by Mr. Afanassij Myldyk. The materials shown here and in the video file should be regarded as the intellectual and cultural property of the storyteller and the Tuvan people.

numbers of Tuvans who still live as nomads, but knowledgeable estimates put that number at approximately one-quarter of the current Tuvan population, perhaps under 70,000 people. Nomadic Tuvans migrate with their animals four to five times a year to long-established seasonal campsites. A typical nomadic camp (*aal*) will have from two to five yurts housing from two to eight people, usually all members of an extended kin group. Yurt camps vary in composition and membership depending on the season, location, resources, and other factors. The basic dwelling is the yurt (*ög*), made of a collapsible wooden lattice frame covered with a thick layer of handmade felt. Tuvan nomads herd (subject to local conditions) domesticated yaks, cows (or yak-cow hybrids), camels, horses, sheep, and goats. Hunting of birds, marmots, bears, wild pig, wild deer, squirrels, and mountain goats supplements their diet and provides fur. Traditional technologies central to nomadic life include the processing of milk products, production of leather and felt, blacksmithing, making of wooden household implements, sewing, hunting, and animal domestication (Vainshtein 1980). The nomads' material culture and transhumant, pastoralist life figure prominently in this and all Tuvan stories.

Spiritual culture also figures prominently in Tuvan oral tradition. Tuvans are animists who believe in the presence of local or "earth" spirits (*čer eezi*) residing in significant topographical features (e.g., springs, mountain passes, caves) and animals (especially the bear). The Tuvan cosmology also includes a large number of supernatural beings (demons, devils) inhabiting the lower world and a similar number in the upper world or "nine heavens" (*tos deer*). Inspirational practitioners known as *xam* ("shamans") were and remain a traditional accompaniment (though not an essential element) to the practice of animism. Tuvans are also, since the seventeenth century, Lamaist Buddhists, and they have long practiced Buddhism and animism in parallel and to a significant degree in syncretism (Monguš 1994). It is the pre-Buddhist Tuvan animist cosmology that appears in epic tales. In fact, such tales, along with shamans' songs (Kenin-Lopsan 1994) and other sacred texts, provide the primary source for knowledge about this belief system.

THE TUVAN EPIC TALE

Storytelling was once a profession in Tuva, as well as an avocation practiced by both men and women living as nomadic herders. An itinerant storyteller (*tooldžu*) might visit a nomadic encampment for an extended period, telling a single epic story in installments over a succession of evenings. A story would typically begin at evening teatime, after the day's major outdoor chores had been completed and the animals were in the stockade. With the opening words *šijaan am*, formulaic speech roughly translatable as "once upon a time," a story would begin. Listeners might from time to time call out *šijaan*, intended to urge on the teller in his or her performance. Many older Tuvans, when interviewed, could recall storytelling sessions from their childhood that would extend late into the night and continue for several evenings. A tale could be accompanied by playing the *igil*, a bowed horse-head fiddle made of wood, or *bizaanči*, a bowed two-stringed instrument with a skin-covered resonator, but instrumental accompaniment was not essential.

The tale presented here, *Boktu-Kiriš Bora-Šeelei*, is a hero tale (Grebnev 1960), the continuation of an ancient oral tradition. The Turkic epic tale has survived as a living, spoken genre in a number of Turkic daughter languages (Chadwick and Zhirmunsky 1969, Reichl 1992, Shoolbraid 1997). The most celebrated of these is the Kyrgyz epic *Manas*, said to comprise over half a million lines. A number of motifs common to folktales the world over appear in *Boktu-Kiriš*. These include the arming of the warrior; wrestling; disguised identity,

cross-dressing, and gender play; a talking horse that gives advice; magical objects (e.g., a ring); magical powers (e.g., divination, shape-changing ability); successions of three (e.g., competitions, beasts, circumambulations); the use of a cave as a hiding place; animals symbolizing specific traits (e.g., hare = swiftness), and use of symbolic numbers (e.g., three, four, nine). Other motifs more specific to the Tuvan context include references to animal organs (e.g., fat, liver, intestines); the “taiga” (mountain forest); Tuvan-style wrestling; images of meat piled high to denote abundance; a metaphor of the future as being located behind and the past out in front; frequent reference to cardinal directions.

The Tuvan epic tale, called a *tool*, has two recognized subgenres: *maadirlig tool*, ‘hero tale’, and simply *tool* (all other types) (Orus-ool 1997). The longest Tuvan epic tale in print is a version of *Boktu-Kiriš* in Tuvan numbering 9,654 lines and consisting of portions told by various storytellers edited into a single, amalgamated tale (Orus-ool 1995). A shorter version numbering 5,060 lines with parallel free translation into Russian was published in 1997 by the Russian Academy of Sciences (Orus-ool 1997). Though a few Tuvan texts have been translated into Russian (Taube 1994, Orus-ool 1997), German (Taube 1978, 1980), and English (Kenin-Lopsan 1997), no Tuvan epic tale has been translated into English. Linguists have been audio-recording Tuvan oral genres since at least 1962 (Orus-ool 1997). Recordings from the 1960s and later are effectively unavailable, existing only on reel-to-reel and other legacy format tapes in the archives of the Tuvan Institute for Humanitarian Researches (TIGI) located in Tuva’s capital city of Kyzyl. Making new recordings in digital video should be an urgent priority, given the perilous status of the genre.

Tuvan epic storytelling is now a seriously endangered genre. In expeditions undertaken in Tuva and Mongolia in 1995, 1998, 2000, and 2003, the author found no competent storytellers under the age of forty-five. By contrast, it is still easy to locate speakers of all ages who can recite some other oral genres including praise songs (*maktal*), blessing songs (*jörel*), tongue-twisters (*dürgen čugaa*), shamanic chants (*algış*), stories (*čugaa*), metered verse (*šülük*), Buddhist prayers (*mörgül*), songs (*ır*), aphorisms (*üleger sös*), and riddles (*tivizik*). There are hopeful signs, however, that within some families the epic tradition is indeed being passed on. In western Mongolia in 2000, the author recorded a female storyteller, age fifty-two, whose nineteen-year-old son sat next to her and lip-synched many of her lines as she told the story, but would not himself consent to tell a story solo. The demise of epic storytelling can be attributed to many factors. Among these are the invasion of pop culture, which diminishes the attraction of oral tales, the decrease in the nomadic lifestyle which is the most natural setting for tale-telling, and the advent of widespread literacy, which diminishes the perceived need to memorize long tales. Unlike “throat-singing,” the immensely popular Tuvan cultural export (Levin and Edgerton 1999, Levin and Süzükei 2006), epic storytelling has not yet attracted a foreign audience. Nor is it likely to, given its relative lack of theatrics and demanding linguistic complexity. Tuvan youth with talent are increasingly drawn exclusively to throat-singing and its promise of a lucrative stage career, leading to a neglect of epic genres. This neglect was most evident in a Tuva-wide story-telling competition held in 2003, in which master storyteller Šojdak-ool Xoivalig took first prize in the epic genre category. He wistfully recounted that his reward was “twelve tea bowls and an empty thermos.” This modest prize may be compared to the horse and cash prize awarded in the biennial throat-singing competition and the new car awarded annually to the best Tuvan wrestler. Professional throat-singers with whom the author discussed the status and lack of support for the epic tale genre expressed little desire to learn it personally or incorporate it into their repertoires. Nor is there any obvious reason why they should. Throat-singing does not seem to have been a necessary part of tale-telling, which requires only minimal,

recitative-style singing. Though a few talented individuals might have done both, they are largely separate avocations. One genre now thrives while the other withers away.

LINGUISTIC STRUCTURES

Tuvan syntax follows SOV order and is characterized by pro-drop and frequent use of auxiliary verbs. Morphologically, the language is almost exclusively suffixing, and has agglutinating morphemes. In the transcription presented here morpheme boundaries are marked by hyphens in both the first tier (phonemic transcription) and second tier (morpho-syntactic tagging). Abbreviations for morpho-syntactic tags are given at the end of the article. Tagging conventions largely follow those used in a recent grammar of Tuvan (Anderson and Harrison 1999). For a fuller discussion of Tuvan grammar, I refer the reader to that work. Here, I shall merely point out those linguistic devices that most directly serve the epic story-telling style. These include the following:

- (i) frequent use of emphatic/focus enclitic =*daa* ~ =*taa* (line 37), and emphatic/focus suffix -*la* ~ -*na* ~ -*le* ~ -*ne* (lines 38, 40).
- (ii) reference to antagonists using full names plus kinship terms, which appear in 3SG possessed form, e.g., 'his younger sister', 'her elder brother' (lines 29, 33).
- (iii) a special ameliorative register that palatalizes word-final consonants (lines 201, 213).
- (iv) alliteration of first words in successive or paired lines (lines 25, 26, 27 and lines 185, 186, 187 all begin with [k]). Longer stretches of text show mnemonic structure. For example, lines 242–53 consist of four sets of three lines, each beginning with a similar consonant (*d d t / e e e / k x x / k k k*). Within each triplet, an adverb appears as the first element, an animal name as the second, and a body-part as third or successive: 'very' / 'kite' (*birdname*) / 'head'; 'very' / 'eagle' / 'shoulder'; 'very' / 'hare' / '... tailbone', etc.
- (v) emphatic prefixing reduplication (line 49).
- (vi) special narrative past form, constructed by adding to a verb root the same subject marker followed by the genitive case marker (lines 52, 58).
- (vii) archaisms, including many compound forms (lines 27, 31).
- (viii) special phrasing, prosody, and intonation (not described herein, but may be observed by viewing the video clip).
- (ix) recitative-style singing (lines 6–62).
- (x) a heptasyllabic line scansion (for reasons of space, scansion is omitted herein in favor of longer lines. Punctuation within the phonemic tier indicates phrasing).

With the exception of (viii) through (x), none of these features individually marks the narrative as an epic tale, but taken all together they unmistakably characterize the genre.

THE STORYTELLER AND THE SETTING

The version presented here was told in August 1998 by Mr. Šojdak-ool Xovalig (b. 1929), of the village of Arig-Uzüü in central Tuva. By profession a combine driver on a collective farm, Mr. Xovalig recalls learning tales at a young age from his grandmother and others, and, as an adult, reciting them during his many hours driving combines in the wheat fields. He told stories throughout his adult life as an avocation, but reported in 2001 that finding an audience had become more and more difficult. By that time he was being invited just once or twice a year to tell stories at the village community center. He lamented that the size and

attention span of his audiences had dwindled with the popularity of television and “Jackie Chan” action films on video.

When this author first approached Mr. Xovalig in 1998 with the request to tell part of an epic tale, he immediately agreed. But he insisted he could tell it only in its proper setting with an audience, not simply sitting before a video camera in his small log house in the village. And so the next morning we set off to visit his relatives, nomadic horse herders, who were camped about ten miles outside the village. We arrived at their camp at about 7:00 A.M. and entered the yurt to find sleepy faces and inquisitive glances at Šojdak-ool’s announcement, “I’m going to tell a tale.” Within twenty minutes people had dressed and washed, morning chores had been partially done, and the horses let out of their stockades. To the dismay of the entire camp, one horse had disappeared during the night and was presumed stolen. That misfortune notwithstanding, tea bowls were set out and the entire extended family of eight persons, ranging in age from about seven to over eighty, assembled on the grass at the side of the yurt to hear the tale. Mr. Xovalig donned a traditional Tuvan robe and hat. Adults present assumed the traditional seated pose with one knee up, one leg folded under. The youngest family member, a seven-year-old girl was exhorted by the eldest, a man of over eighty, to “listen well!” and the tale began. The text below may be read to the accompaniment of the video file.

A TUVAN HERO TALE: *BOKTU-KIRIŠ BORA-ŠEELEI*

tiva ulustuŋ boktu-kiriš, bora-šeelej dep,
Tuvan people-GEN Boktu-Kiriš Bora-Šeelei QUOT

1. A Tuvan people’s tale called *Boktu-Kiriš Bora-Šeelei*,

dika xöj janzi tool-dar-i bar.
very many different tale-PL-3 COP

2. of which there are many different versions.

ol kajgamčik-tig solun tool-dar-niŋ eŋ-ne kiska-zi-n,
this wonderful-ADJ interesting tale-PL-GEN most-EMPH brief-3-ACC

3. The briefest of these wonderfully interesting tales,

on beš-le minut bol-gaš doos-t-u be-er kiska tool-du,
ten five-EMPH minute be-SS finish-PERF-CV AUX-PF brief tale-ACC

4. a short one, finished in just fifteen minutes,

siler-niŋ kičeengej-in-er-ge baraalga-di-pt-ajŋ. šijaan am
you-GEN attention-2.PL-DAT present-CAUS-PERF-FV1 FORM FORM

5. I present to your attention. Once upon a time . . .

[sung recitative style begins with line 6]

šijaan am, ertengi-niŋ erte-zin-de, burungu-nuŋ murnun-da,
FORM FORM morning-GEN early-3-LOC long.ago-GEN before-LOC

6. Once upon a time, in the very earliest morning of time, before the long, long ago,

ekki šag-niŋ ekt-in-de, bagaj šag-niŋ baž-in-da,
good time-GEN shoulder-3-LOC bad time-GEN head-3-LOC

7. at the end of the bad times, before² the good times,

elik xülbüs, sün mijgaa ezim-in-ge siŋi-š-pas,
white.tailed.deer.stag doe elk.stag elk.doe forest-3-DAT fit.into-RCP-NEG\F

8. when the deer and doe, the wild elk stag and elk doe overflowed from their woods,

2. Literally, “with the good times at (over) the shoulder and the bad times at the head”; the future is interpreted as located physically behind a person, with the past out in front.

- àrga čuŋma, kojgun, torlaa àrga-zin-ga sinji-š-pas,*
forest wild.mountain.goat hare grouse forest-3-DAT fit.into-RCP-NEG\F
9. the mountain goat, the hare, and the grouse overflowed from their forests,
- magadandžig baj bajlak ekki šag-da čüvenj irgin.*
wonderful rich plentiful good time-LOC DISC DISC
10. a rich, wonderful, and plentiful good time it was, so they say.
- šijaan am aralčala-ar čiraa sajak*
FORM FORM change.gait-PF brown.with.black.mane.and.tail mixed.gait
11. Once upon a time, (riding along) on a mixed-gait brown horse with black mane and tail,
- ajan-kula àt-tig*
A-K horse-ADJ
12. named Ajan-Kula,
- aldın iškaš kaas čaraš*
gold like well-dressed handsome
13. was splendid as gold, handsomely dressed (Boktu-Kiriš),
- bora-šeelej kis diŋma-lig,*
B-Š girl younger.sibling-ADJ
14. with his younger sister Bora-Šeelei,
- boktu-kiriš, sajın er-i čor-up tur eves be.*
B-K Sajın male-3 go-CV AUX NEG QUES
15. Boktu-Kiriš of the Sayin clan. He was going along, wasn't he?
- šijaan am boktu-kiriš, bora-šeelej*
FORM FORM B-K, B-Š
16. Once upon a time Boktu-Kiriš and Bora-Šeelei,
- ališki-lar, deerge, èd-i eg-i-n aš-kan,*
sibling-PL POST meat-3 shoulder-3-ACC pass.over-PST
17. these two siblings, had meat (piled) higher than their shoulders,
- mal-i baž-i-n aš-kan,*
livestock-3 head-3-ACC come.over-PST
18. and livestock reaching higher than their heads.
- övür čer-niŋ özen-in-ge döŋ-ne-p xavır-ar*
southern place-GEN hollow-3-DAT hill-VSF-CV round.up-PF
19. In a southern land in a hollow on a hill they rounded up
- öle -bula čilgi-lig,*
gray -gray³ horse.herd-ADJ
20. the herd⁴ of gray horses.
- arı čer-niŋ arga-zin-ga*
northern.slope place-GEN forest-3-DAT
21. In a forest on a northern slope
- döŋ-ne-p xavır-ar ala -šokar inek-ter-lig,*
hill-VSF-CV round.up-PF striped -spotted cow-PL-ADJ
22. they rounded up the striped and spotted cows.
- xovu čer-niŋ delgem-in-ge*
field place-GEN wide.space-3-DAT
23. On a wide and even plain

3. *öle-bula* is a compound, which as a whole means 'gray'. Compounds are shown in the phonemic tier herein as two elements separated by a tab-space, with a hyphen inserted before the second one. In Tuvan, one or both compounded works may lack independent lexical meaning.

4. The unit *čilgi* denotes a herd of (about) forty horses.

- döŋ-ne-p xavir-ar xoor -sarig teve-lig,*
hill-VSF-CV round.up-PF brown -yellow camel-ADJ
24. they rounded up the brown and yellow camels.
- kašpal čer-niŋ xaja-zin-ga döŋ-ne-p xavir-ar*
ravine place-GEN cliff-3-DAT hill-VSF-CV round.up-PF
25. At a cliff in a ravine they rounded up
- kažaa siŋ-mas xaragan=deg xoj öškü-lüg,*
livestock.pen⁵ fit.into-NEG\F tumbleweed=like sheep goat-ADJ
26. their sheep and goats—they were as numerous as tumbleweeds and nearly didn't fit into their pen.
- kajgamčik-tig baj -širak, ažil -išči*
amazing-ADJ rich -strong work -effort
27. Amazingly rich, wealthy,⁶ and hard-working
- ališki-lar, čüven irgin ijin oŋ.*
sibling-PL DISC DISC DISC DISC
28. were the siblings, so they say.
- šijaan am boktu-kiriš aki-zi*
FORM FORM B-K elder.brother-3
29. And so it was that elder brother Boktu-Kiriš
- arga sin-niŋ aŋ-i-n aŋna-ar,*
forest mountain.ridge-GEN animal-3-ACC hunt-PF
30. hunted animals of the forested mountain ridge.
- ekker -eres adigži,*
brave -courageous archer
31. He was a brave archer,
- bizani-ir, čazani-ir, dargan-na-ar, bižan-na-ar.*
butcher.wild.animal-PF sharpen-PF smith-VSF-PF carpenter-VSF-CV
32. he could butcher wild animals, sharpen tools, do blacksmithing and carpentry.
- bora-šelej kis diŋma-zi*
B-Š girl younger.sibling-3
33. Bora-Šeelei his younger sister
- mal-i-n maga-ni-n kadar-ar xavir-ar,*
livestock-3-ACC cattle-3-ACC herd-PF round.up-PF
34. herded the livestock, watched the cattle,
- äš čem-i-n, sa-an sava-zi-n ištēni-ir,*
food food-3-ACC milk-PST container-3-ACC fill-PF
35. filled up the food and milk containers,
- daarani-ir-i-n, šuptu kil-ir,*
sew-PF-3-ACC everything do-PF
36. and could sew and make anything.
- kondžug=daa us -šever ališki-lar, čüven irgin ijin oŋ.*
very=EMPH art -master sibling-PL DISC DISC DISC DISC
37. The siblings were extremely skilled, so they say.
- šijaan am bir-le kattap boktu-kiriš aki-zi*
FORM FORM one-EMPH once B-K elder.brother-3
38. Once upon a time, her elder brother Boktu-Kiriš

5. A *kažaa* is an animal pen or stockade. Depending on locally available resources, these may be made of split logs, woven branches, or stacked stones.

6. *baj širak* literally 'rich strong', meaning 'very rich'.

39. *àrga sin-dan aṇna-p čoru-t-kaš,*
 forest mountain.ridge-ADL hunt-CV go-PERF-SS
 went hunting on the forested mountain ridge,
40. *šuuṭ-la is čok čid-e ber-ipt-ir.*
 completely-EMPH track NEG disappear-CV INCH-PERF-PF
 and disappeared without a trace.
41. *bora-šeelej kis diṇma-zi,*
 B-Š girl younger.sibling-3
 Bora-Šeelei his younger sister
42. *šo -tölge sal-ir kiži čüü bo-or,*
 divining -bones do-PF PN DISC PROB-PF
 was a person who could read divining bones.
43. *šo -tölge sal-gaš kör-üp olur-ar-ga,*
 divining -bones put-SS see-CV AUX-PF-DAT
 When she had laid out the divining bones, she saw (that)
44. *aki-zi arzajti de-er ala tajga-niṇ aar ij-in-dže*
 elder.brother-3 A. call-PF A. taiga-GEN northern slope-3-ALL
 her elder brother, on a northern slope named Arzaity in the Ala mountains,
45. *öl-üp kal-gan,*
 die-CV AUX-PST
 had died.
46. *ajan-kula àd-i čan-in-da igla-p tur-ar mindig bo-op tur eves=pe.*
 A-K horse-3 side-3-LOC cry-CV AUX-PF thus PROB-CV AUX NEG=QUES
 And his horse Ajan-Kula stood crying at his side, so it seemed.
47. *šijjan am bora-šeelej kis diṇma-zi,*
 FORM FORM BS girl younger.sibling-3
 And so it was that his younger sister Bora-Šeelei
48. *xuul-upt-ar kiži čüü boor,*
 change.appearance-PERF-PF PN DEIC PROB
 was a shape changer.
49. *dop=doraan xartiga bo-op xuul-up al-gaš-tiṇ,*
 RED=immediately hawk PROB-CV change.into-CV SBEN-SS-GEN
 She immediately changed into a hawk,
50. *už-up čed-e ber-geš-tiṇ,*
 fly-CV arrive-CV SBEN-SS-GEN
 and flew to that place.
51. *ajan-kula àd-i=bile čugaala-ž-i ber-ipt-ir.*
 A-K horse-3=INS speak-RCP-CV INCH-PERF-PF
 She began to speak with Ajan-Kula, his horse.
52. *ajan-kula tur-gaš-tiṇ:*
 A-K AUX-SS-GEN
 Ajan-Kula said:
53. *men iškaš bagaj àt kajda bo-or,*
 Me like poor/bad horse where.to PROB-PF
 "A poor horse like me, what could I do?
54. *aṇ siviṛ-ip čügür-üp olur-gaš,*
 animal chase-CV run-CV AUX-SS
 (I was) tracking animals, galloping along,
55. *xajirakan üṅgür-ü-n kör-be-en,*
 bear cave-3-ACC see-NEG-PST
 and I failed to notice a bear's den.

- iji xol-um ki-ir bas-kaš, doŋgaj-a düž-er-im-de,*
two arm-1 enter-PF fall.into-SS stoop.down-CV descend-PF-1-LOC
56. When my two arms⁷ went into that hole and I suddenly fell down,
- boktu-kiriš sajin er, ekki ee-m,*
B-K S. male good master-1
57. Boktu-Kiriš of the Sayin clan, my good master,
- aŋdar-il-gaš-tiŋ, molduru-u čar-il-gaš, öl-üp kal-gan,*
fall.back-PASS-SS-GEN spine-3 break.apart-PASS-SS die-CV AUX-PST
58. having fallen off me, broke his neck and died.
- ol-la=dir dep igla-p tur-ar mindig bo-op tur eves=pe.*
that-EMPH=DEIC QUOT cry-CV AUX-PF thus PROB-CV AUX NEG=QUES
59. And that's it," said (the horse), crying, "that's what happened."
- bora-šeelej kis diŋma-zı*
B-Š girl younger.sibling-3
60. Bora-Šeelei his younger sister
- aki-zi-niŋ aži-i-n aži-p,*
elder.brother-3-GEN bitter(ness)-3-ACC swallow-CV
61. swallowed her bitterness about her elder brother,
- igla-p-la olur-gan, igla-p-la olur-gan, igla-p-la olur-gan.*
cry-CV-EMPH AUX-PST cry-CV-EMPH AUX-PST cry-CV-EMPH AUX-PST
62. and she sat and cried and cried.
- [Sung recitative ends with line 62; spoken narrative style is used hereafter.]
- indžalza=daa čeže=daa igla-ar-ga*
nonetheless=EMPH however.much=EMPH cry-PF-DAT
63. But no matter how much she may have cried,
- ažik duza čog-u-n bil-ip ka-ap-kaš, igla-ar-i-n soska-dı-p-kaš-tiŋ,*
use help NEG-3-ACC find.out-CV AUX-PERF-SS cry-PF-3-ACC stop-CAUS-PERF-SS-GEN
64. she understood that crying was of no use or help, so she made herself stop crying.
- öl-gen aki-zi-n kandža-p dirgizi-p al-ir čo-or deeš,*
die-PST brother-3-ACC do.how-CV make.live-CV SBEN-PF AUX-PF POST,
65. To find out how she could make her dead brother live again,
- šo -tölge sal-a ber-ipt-ir.*
divining -bones place-CV INCH-PERF-PF
66. she began to lay out her divining bones.⁸
- šo -tölge sal-gaš kö-ör-ge,*
divining -bones place-SS see-PF-DAT
67. When she laid out the divining bones, she saw
- bireves bora-šeelej kis diŋma-zı*
if B-Š girl younger.sibling-3
68. (what would happen) if Bora-Šeelei the younger sister
- boktu-kiriš aki-zi bo-op,*
B-K elder.brother-3 PROB-CV
69. would become Boktu-Kiriš the elder brother,

7. The horse not only talks and cries, but is anthropomorphized to the extent that he has 'arms' or 'hands', not legs or hooves.

8. Divination is still widely practiced in Tuva, and is by no means limited to specialist practitioners (e.g., shamans). Common methods include sheep knuckle bones (*kažik*), a sheep shoulder blade (*čarin*) burned in the fire, and divining pebbles (*xuvaanak*). Divination requires inducing some pattern (either by burning, or by (re)arranging objects in a ritual fashion), then interpreting that pattern for good or ill omens.

- er kiži bo-op xuul-up al-gaš-tiŋ*
male person PROB-CV change.into-CV SBEN-SS-GEN
70. by changing into the man
- čiŋe soŋgu čük-tü ežel-ej töre-en*
straight north direction-ACC rule/occupy-CV be.born-PST
71. born to rule the lands directly to the north.
- šaŋ xaan-niŋ čaraš kiž-i*
Š. X.-GEN beautiful girl-3
72. (And if he would take) the beautiful daughter of Šang Khan,
- Aŋgır-čečen aldin daŋgina-ni kadaj kil-d-ir*
A-Č golden princess-ACC wife do-CAUS-PF
73. the golden princess Angyr-Chechen, as his wife
- kudala-p ekke-er bol-za, ol-la aldin daŋgina*
wed-CV bring-PF AUX-COND this-EMPH golden princess
74. and marry her, then that very same golden princess
- boktu-kiriš-ti ölüm -čidim-den=daa kamgala-ar,*
B-K-ACC death -demise-ADL=EMPH protect-PF
75. would protect Boktu-Kiriš, even from death.
- ölü-p=daa ka-ar-ga dirgiz-i domna-p ekke-er,*
die-CV=EMPH AUX-PF-DAT make.live-CV do.by.magic-CV bring-PF
76. And even if he had died, she would make him live again,
- mindig kondžug ertem -šilbi-lig daŋgina=dir dep*
thus such knowledge -magic-ADJ princess=DEIC QUOT
77. because the princess possessed such strong magic.
- šo -tölge körgüs-ken=dir.*
divining -bones show-PST=DEIC
78. So the divining bones showed.
- küžür bora-šeelej kis diŋma-zı,*
poor B-Š girl younger.sibling-3
79. Now poor Bora-Šeelei his younger sister
- xuul-upt-ar kiži čüü bo-or,*
change.shape-PERF-PF PN DISC PROB-PF
80. was a shape-changer.
- boktu-kiriš aki-zi kil-d-ir xuul-up-la egele-en=dir.*
B-K elder.brother-3 do-CAUS-PF change.into-CV-EMPH begin-PST=DEIC
81. She began to make her elder brother Boktu-Kiriš by changing herself into him.
- xuul-up xuul-up al-gaš,*
change.into-CV change.into-CV SBEN-SS
82. After changing and changing,
- köründžük-ke kör-dü-n-gen köründžük-ke kördün-er-ge*
mirror-DAT look.at-CAUS-PASS-PST mirror-DAT look.at-PF-DAT
83. she looked at herself in the mirror. When she looked at herself in the mirror,
- kirbej kara sal-diŋ, čoon kara kežege-lig,*
short/thin black beard-ADJ thick black braid-ADJ
84. she had a thin black beard and a thick black braid of hair,
- kadır xavak-tiŋ, kalčan baš-tiŋ, ajak=deg ala karak-tiŋ,*
steep forehead-ADJ bald head-ADJ tea.bowl=like striped eye-ADJ
85. her forehead was steep, her head was shaved bald in front, and her eyes were striped and big as a tea-bowl.
- albıs šulbus aks-i=deg aažok ulug aas-tiŋ,*
devil demon mouth-3=like very large mouth-ADJ
86. Her mouth like a devil's was extremely large.

- aki-zi kara olčaan, am-i baž-i,*
elder.brother-3 completely similar face-3 head-3
87. She was just like her brother, like his face and head,
- möček-möček šinggan-nar-lig*
strong-RED muscle-PL-ADJ
88. and she had strong, strong muscles,
- möge širak, ulug čaagaj-i deerge*
wrestler powerful big full.grown-3 POST
89. full-grown and big like a wrestler's.
- ana bir adig -maažalaj=deg, appar-gan=daa bol-za,*
simply one bear -bear=like become-PST=EMPH COP-COND
90. She had become just like a bear, but nevertheless
- kis kiži-niň sin-i-n kaasta-an,*
girl person-GEN figure-3-ACC decorate-PST
91. she still had a girl's figure,
- čaja-an čaza-an iji emi-i xeveer,*
create-PST carve-PST two breast-3 same.as.before
92. created and carved out with two breasts.
- baza aži-töl-dü čaja-ap božu-ur,*
also offspring-offspring⁹ -ACC be.fated-CV give.birth.to-PF
93. And she had something created to give birth to children,
- ači-lig bujan-nig aldin ežik,*
kind.heartedness-ADJ nobleness-ADJ golden door
94. a noble and kind golden door,
- kis xindi-i baza xeveer bo-op=tur eves=be*
girl genitals-3¹⁰ also as.before PROB-CV=COP NEG=QUES
95. she still had her woman's genitals, the same as before, so it seemed.
- am kandžal-zi-m-za ekki=l? dep*
now do.thusly-COND-1SG-COND good=DEIC QUOT
96. "Even though I've changed, what good is it?"
- ajan-kula ad-in-dan ajtir-gan=dir.*
A-K horse-3-ABL ask-PST=DEIC
97. she asked her horse Ajan-Kula.
- ajan-kula ad-i mindža de-en=dir:*
A-K horse-3 thus say-PST=DEIC
98. Her horse Ajan-Kula said:
- sen ol iji emi-iň-ni=daa, kis xindi-iň-ni=daa*
you these two breast-2-ACC=EMPH girl genitals-2-ACC=EMPH
99. "Those two breasts of yours and your girl's genitals,
- kandža-ar=daa ösker-ti-p šida-vas sen,*
do.thus-PF=EMPH change-CAUS-CV be.able-NEG\F you
100. you cannot change in any way.
- indžalza=daa janzi=bürü arga-lar-ni ažiġ-la-p tur-gaš-tiň*
nonetheless=EMPH different=QUAN methods-PL-ACC use-VSF-CV AUX-SS-GEN
101. However, by using various methods,

9. *aži-töl* (compound noun) 'descendants, offspring'.

10. *xindik* (noun) has multiple meanings: 1. navel, bellybutton, 2. genitals, 3. (archaic) crown, top of head, 4. (archaic) a round silver ornament woven into the hair braid of a woman or a bridegroom.

- iji emi-iŋ-ni=daa, kis xindi-iŋ-ni=daa*
two breasts-2-ACC=EMPH girl genitals-2-ACC=EMPH
102. even your two breasts and your woman's genitals
- kim-ga=daa körgüs-pe-jn,*
who-DAT=EMPH show-NEG-1\MOD
103. I will not let anyone see.
- boktu-kiriš aki-ŋ bo-op, er kiži bo-op*
B-K elder.brother-2 PROB-CV male person PROB-CV
104. As your elder brother Boktu-Kiriš, as a man,
- bügü-le möörej-ler-ni aŋ-ŋ ün-geš-tiŋ,*
all-EMPH competition-PL-ACC go.over-CV go.out-SS-GEN
105. overcoming and winning all the competitions,
- čige songu čük-tü ežel-ej töre-en*
straight north direction-ACC rule/occupy-CV be.born-PST
106. born to rule in the lands directly to the north,
- šaŋ xaan-niŋ aldın čaraš kiz-i*
Š. X.-GEN golden beautiful girl-3
107. (taking) Šang Khan's beautiful, golden daughter,
- aŋgır-čečen aldın daŋgina-ni*
A-Č golden princess-ACC
108. Angyr-Chechen, the golden princess,
- kadaŋ kil-dı-r kudala-p ekel-geš-tiŋ,*
wife do-CAUS-PF wed-CV bring-SS-GEN
109. and bringing her as his wife to wed,
- öl-gen aki-ŋ-ni dırgis-tir-ŋ a-pt-ar arga-ŋ bar kiži=dir sen.*
die-PST brother-2-ACC enliven-CAUS-CV SBEN-PERF-PF method-2 COP person=DEIC you
110. you are the person who's able to bring your dead brother back to life.
- dürgen-ne aki-ŋ-niŋ idik -xev-i-n kettin-ivit,*
quickly-EMPH elder.brother-2-GEN shoe -clothes-3-ACC put.on.clothing-PERF\IMP
111. Hurry up now, put on the shoes and the clothes of your elder brother,
- čoru-pt-aalı,*
go-PERF-DUAL\IMP
112. and let's go, the two of us.
- oon baška ında ada-an möörej egele-er dep bar-dı.*
or else there call-PST competition begin-PF QUOT COP-REC.PST
113. For the announced competition is just about to begin.
- xamik küdee-ler, deerge,*
all suitor-PL POST
114. As for all the suitors,
- čig-l-ŋ kel-gen, margi-ž-ŋ tur-lar, dep*
gather-PASS-CV come-PST compete-RCP-CV AUX-PL QUOT
115. they have already gathered to compete,"
- ät mindžan-gan=dir.*
horse do.thusly-PST=DEIC
116. said the horse.
- ındža de-er orta, bora-šeelej kis dıŋma-zı čüü bo-or,*
Thus say-PF as.soon.as B-Š girl younger.sibling-3 what PROB-CV
117. As soon as the horse said so, what could younger sister Bora-Šeelei do?
- öl-gen aki-zi-n iri-ves, čidi-vas*
die-PST elder.brother-3-ACC rot-NEG\F stink-NEG\F
118. So that her dead elder brother would not rot and stink,

- doŋ èt=deg kıl-dı-r doŋ-ur tarbida-p-kaš-tiŋ,*
frozen meat=like do-CAUS-PF freeze-PF do.magically-PERF-SS-GEN
119. she magically turned him into frozen meat.
- dedir aas-tiğ kara kuj-ga suk-kaš-tiŋ,*
back mouth-ADJ black cave-DAT put.in-SS-GEN
120. She put him into the mouth of a black cave,
- ask-i-n büdün turug xaja kıl-d-ır duj tarbida-p-kaš-tiŋ,*
mouth-3-ACC whole vertical cliff do-CAUS-PF tightly.shut do.by.magic-PERF-SS-GEN
121. magically concealed the cave's mouth with a vertical cliff,
- aki-zi-niğ bürün idik -xev-i-n ket-keš,*
elder.brother-3-GEN all shoe -clothing-3-ACC put.on.clothing-ss
122. put on her brother's shoes and clothes,
- ča -sogun-u-n čükte-eš-tiŋ, ajan-kula àt-ti mun-gaš-tiŋ,*
bow -arrow-3-ACC take.on-SS-GEN A-K horse-ACC mount/ride-SS-GEN
123. took up his bow and arrows, mounted the horse Ajan-Kula,
- čige soŋgu čük-če užu-du-p čoru-p-kan.*
straight north direction-ALL fly.away-CAUS-CV go-PERF.PST
124. and made the horse fly away directly to the north.
- čige soŋgu čük-te šaŋ xaan-niŋ aal-in-ga ke-er-ge,*
straight north(ern) direction-LOC Š. X.-GEN campsite-3-DAT come-PF-DAT
125. When she came in a straight northerly direction and arrived at Šang Khan's campsite,
- àt baž-i orgu-p, kiži baž-i kizirt.*
horse head-3 spread.out-CV person head-3 multiply\SYMB
126. there were horses and people spread out as far as the eye could see.
- čon=bile čugaala-ž-ıp kö-ör-ge,*
people=INS talk-RCP-CV AUX-PF-DAT
127. After having talked to people,
- am daarta ada-an möörej egele-er.*
now tomorrow call-PST competition begin-PF
128. (she found out) the announced competition would begin tomorrow.
- šaŋ xaan üš möörej čarla-an.*
Š. X. three competition announce-PST
129. Šang Khan had announced three events:
- bir-le dugaar-in-da eres adigži-zi-n kö-ör, ča -sogun=bile.*
one-EMPH number-3-LOC brave archer-3-ACC see-PF arrow -bow=INS
130. "First of all we will find out who is the bravest archer;
- küdee-ler-niŋ čas-pas ad-ar-i-n kö-ör ča -sogun=bile.*
suitor-PL-GEN miss-NEG\F shoot-PF-3-ACC see-PF arrow -bow=INS
131. we will see who of the suitors will not miss the target with bow and arrow.
- iji dugaar-in-da möge -ššira-a-n kö-ör, xüre-š-tir-er.*
two number-3-LOC wrestler -strength-3-ACC see-PF wrestling-RECIP-CAUS-PF
132. During the second competition we will find out who is the strongest wrestler.
- üš dugaar-in-da eres -kašpagaj-i-n kö-ör, čariš-tir-ar.*
three number-3-LOC strong -agility-3-ACC see-PF horse.race-CAUS-PF
133. During the third competition we will find out who is the most agile horseback rider.
- šak ol üš möörej-ge až-ıp ün-gen eŋ eres küdee-ge*
that.very this three competition-DAT win-CV go.out-PST most brave suitor-DAT
134. To the winner of those three competitions, to the bravest suitor,
- uru-um-nu kadaj kıl-dı-r be-er men,*
daughter-1-ACC wife do-CAUS-PF give-PF I
135. I shall give my daughter as a wife,

- xamik aldın möngün-ü=bile, mal -magan-i=bile,*
all gold silver-3=INS, cattle -livestock-ACC=INS
136. together with all her gold and silver, and with all her livestock,
- ara -albatı-zi=bile, dep*
slave -servant-3=INS QUOT
137. and with her slaves,”
- şan xaan mindig čarlık ün-dür-gen=dir.*
Ş. X. such announcement go.out-CAUS-PST=DEIC
138. Şang Khan announced.
- čaa, küžür er-ler=daa beletken-i-le ber-gen.*
DISC poor male-PL=EMPH prepare-CV-EMPH AUX-PST
139. So, even the poorest men began to prepare for the competition.
- daarta xün-de xamik er čüü bo-or,*
tomorrow day-LOC all male DEIC PROB-CV
140. And the next day what did all the men do?
- baški tañdi-niñ edeen-de*
B. T.-GEN mountain.foot-LOC
141. At the foot of Bashky-Tangdy mountain,
- ča -sogun-u-n keze-geš tur-up-kan.*
arrow -bow-3-ACC prepare-SS AUX-PERF-PST
142. they began to prepare their bows and arrows.
- songu tañdi-niñ edeen-de*
S. T.-GEN mountain.foot-LOC
143. At the foot of Songu-Tangdy mountain,
- üş araattan añ-nar-ni ilčirbe-le-p ka-an.*
three wild animal-PL-ACC chain-VSF-CV AUX-PST
144. there were three wild animals already chained up.
- ol araattan añ-nar deerge karži xajirakan,*
those wild animal-PL DISC cruel bear,
145. These wild, predatory animals were a cruel bear,
- ajıl-dig aržılay, xan-ga pök-pes kök bürü,*
danger-ADJ lion blood-DAT quench-NEG\F gray/blue wolf
146. a dangerous lion,¹¹ and a bloodthirsty gray wolf.
- ol xaan kürüne-niñ mal -magan-in-ga añ-meñ-in-ge,*
that khan state-GEN cattle -livestock-3-DAT animal-RED-3-DAT
147. They all threatened the livestock, the wild animals,
- ara -albatı kiži-ler-in-ge deerge ajıl-dig bajdal-di turguz-up,*
FIG -servant person-PL-3-DAT POST danger-ADJ condition-ACC create-CV
148. and the peasants of the Khan’s state, creating dangerous conditions,
- kalčaara-p tur-gan araattan-nar.*
get.aggressive-CV AUX-PST wild.animal-PL
149. and becoming more aggressive.
- xaan-niñ kadig xoojlu-zun-ga*
khan-GEN firm law-3-DAT
150. So, by the firm law of the Khan,

11. Tuvan *aržılay*, a common Turkic word reborrowed into Tuvan from Mongolian (Tatarintsev 2002), denotes a lion, but also a mythical beast often depicted as a beneficent protector.

- ami-zı-n alzi-ir kil-di-r šiit-tir-gen.*
life-3-ACC take.away-PF do-CAUS-PF decide-CAUS-PST
151. they were sentenced to be killed.
- xaan-niŋ xamık ag -šeri-i algi -kiški=bile bar-gaš-tiŋ,*
khan-GEN all LEX -army-3 outcry -shout=INS go-SS-GEN
152. The Khan's entire army went after them with shouts,
- dirig-ge tutkula-aš-tiŋ am ilčirbe-le-p ka-an.*
alive-DAT catch.with.barking.dogs-SS-GEN now chain-VSF-CV AUX-PST
153. caught them alive, accompanied with a great barking of dogs, and chained them up.
- onu xöj er ča -sogun=bile baški dag-niŋ edeen-den*
them many male arrow -bow=INS B. mountain-GEN mountain.foot-ABL
154. All those men with bows and arrows were to go from the foot of Bashky mountain
- songu dag-niŋ edeen-če bad-ar užur-lug, di-ves-ler be.*
northern mountain-GEN bottom-ALL go.down-PF obligation-ADJ say-NEG\PL QUES
155. down to the foot of the Songu mountain to shoot (them), don't you say?
- čaa! möörej=daa egele-en*
okay competition=EMPH begin-PST
156. Okay, the competition has begun!
- xamık eriŋ=daa ad-ip kir-ip<le>-t-ken.*
all male=EMPH shoot-CV INCH-PERF<EMPH>-CAUS-PST
157. All the men began to make the arrows shoot.
- düş-ke čed-ir at-kan xöj eriŋ deerge,*
noon-DAT reach-PF shoot-PST many male POST
158. The many men shot until noon,
- čaŋgis=taa kiži-niŋ sogun-u čet-pes.*
single=EMPH person-GEN arrow-3 reach-NEG\F
159. but not a single man's arrow reached the targets.
- boktu-kiriš dep at-tig, kirbej kara sal-dig er,*
B-K QUOT name-ADJ short black beard-ADJ male
160. But the man by the name of Boktu-Kiriš with a short black beard,
- ča -sogun-u-n čük-te-p al-gan*
arrow -bow-3-ACC load-VSF-CV SBEN-PST
161. although carrying his bow and arrows,
- at-pas=taa, kilašta-p tur-ar, mindig.*
shoot-NEG=EMPH walk-CV AUX-PF thus
162. did not shoot, but simply walked around like this.
- bo kandaaj er sen?*
this what.kind.of\AMEL male you
163. "What kind of man are you?
- čüge at-pa-jin tur sen? dep öör-ü mindžan-gan dir.*
why shoot-NEG-PST AUX you QUOT friend-3 do.thus-PST DEIC
164. Why don't you shoot, friend?" asked the others.
- indža deerge, men, aki-lar-im,*
this POST I elder.brother-PL-I
165. When they asked him he said: "My elder brothers,
- čerle möörej-ge kir-ž-ip kör-be-en bol-gaš*
always/still competition-DAT enter-RCP-CV see-NEG-PST COP-SS
166. I have never taken part in a competition,
- korg-up tur šej men,*
fear-CV AUX DISC I
167. so I am afraid,

- korg-up, čüre-em čagdat-pajn tur, dep mindig.*
fear-CV heart-1 come.up-NEG\F AUX QUOT thus
168. I'm afraid and my heart will not let me do it," he answered.
- aa! sen=daa anaa ešpi-dej,*
EXCL you=EMPH just woman-DIM
169. "Oh! You're just a little woman,
- ešpi kiži eves sen be? dep öör-ü, mindig.*
woman person NEG you QUES QUOT friend-3 thus
170. you aren't a woman, are you, friend?" asked the other men.
- aa! ešpi, čüü=daa bol-gaj-la men,*
EXCL woman what=EMPH COP-CNCL-EMPH I
171. "Well, I can be a woman, I can be whatever,
- am kandža-ar, aki-lar-im.*
now do.thus-PF elder.brother-PL-1
172. but what can I do, my elder brothers?
- čerle šaam mindig kiži dir men, dep*
always FIG like person =DEIC I QUOT
173. That is just the way I am," he said,
- šak mindža-p tur-up-la kal-gan-na, mindig.*
exactly do.thus-CV stand-CV-EMPH stay-PST-EMPH thus
174. and he just kept standing right there in that same way.
- er<ler>iŋ kežee-ge čed-ir at-kan,*
male<PL> evening-DAT reach-PF shoot-PST
175. All the men kept shooting until evening,
- čaŋgi-zi-niŋ=daa sogun-u čet-pe-en.*
single-3-GEN=EMPH arrow-3 reach-NEG-PST
176. but not a single one of their arrows reached the target.
- adak södlün-de boktu-kiriš dep at-tig,*
very end-LOC B-K QUOT name-ADJ
177. At the very end only the man by the name of Boktu-Kiriš,
- kirbej kara sal-dig anijak er art-ip kal-gan.*
short black beard-ADJ young male remain-CV AUX-PST
178. with a short black beard, remained.
- če sen čaaskaan art-ti-ŋ, er, at! dep*
okay you alone remain-REC.PST-2 male shoot\IMP QUOT
179. "You are the only man left, shoot!"
- er<ler>iŋ mindžan-gan.*
male<PL> do.thus-PST
180. the other men said.
- indža-ar-ga=daa kulugurun kezen-ip kir-ip<le>-t-ken.*
do.thus-PF-DAT=EMPH hero prepare.to.shoot-CV INCH-PERF<EMPH>-CAUS-PST
181. Only after that the hero began to prepare himself for shooting.
- küžür eriŋ=daa čüü boor, deerzin, küžür boktu-kiriš,*
poor male=EMPH what PROB DISC poor B-K
182. What could the poor guy do, poor Boktu-Kiriš?
- bir dugaar sogun-u-n čaja-ap*
one number arrow-3-ACC move.up/down-CV
183. He moved his bow up and down to aim the first arrow,
- tirt-ip tirt-ip tirt-ip sal-gan-na.*
pull-CV pull-CV pull-CV put-PST-EMPH
184. then pulled, pulled, pulled it back and shot.

- karži xajirakan-niŋ xava-a-niŋ söög-ü-n dež-e at-kaš,*
cruel bear-GEN forehead-3-GEN bone-3-ACC hit.through-CV shoot-SS
185. His arrow broke right through the forehead bone of the cruel bear.
- kalbak čarin-in öttür at-kaš,*
flat shoulder-blade-3-ACC crosswise shoot-SS
186. And having shot through the flat shoulder blade of it,
- kara baar-i-n uš-ta ad-ıp ün-dür-üp-ken*
black liver-3-ACC out-LOC shoot-CV go.out-CAUS-CV-PST
187. put out its black liver
- bir dugaar oog-u=bile.*
one ORD shot-3=INS
188. with the very first shot.
- iji dugaar oog-u-n kuluguruŋ, deerge, sogun-u-n*
two ORD shot-3-ACC hero POST arrow-3-ACC
189. The hero (readied) his second shot,
- tirt-ıp tirt-ıp tirt-ıp sal-gan-na.*
pull-CV pull-CV pull-CV put-PST-EMPH
190. pulled, pulled, pulled back and let fly,
- ajıl-dıg aržılaj-niŋ aks-i-diž-i-n uuŋ at-kaš,*
danger-ADJ mythical.lion-GEN mouth-3-teeth-3-ACC out shoot-SS
191. and shot out the teeth of the dangerous lion,
- argak-tıg aldı mojn-u-n adır-a ad-ıp čoru-du-p-kan-na.*
twisted-ADJ six neck-3-ACC separate-CV shoot-CV go-CAUS-PERF-PST-EMPH
192. then shot apart its six twisted necks.
- üş dugaar sogun-u-n kuluguruŋ*
three ORD arrow-3-ACC hero
193. Then the hero, taking the third arrow,
- tirt-ıp tirt-ıp tirt-ıp tirt-ıp sal-gan-na.*
pull-CV pull-CV pull-CV pull-CV put-PST-EMPH
194. pulled, pulled, pulled, pulled back and let fly.
- xan-ga pök-pes kök börü-niŋ möön-ü-n bödürede at-kaš,*
blood-DAT quench-NEGF blue wolf-GEN guts-3-ACC SYMB¹² shoot-SS
195. And having shot out the guts of the bloodthirsty gray wolf,
- börbek baž-i-n üz-e ad-ıp čoru-du-p-kan.*
round\SYMB head-3-ACC separate-CV shoot-CV go-CAUS-PERF-PST
196. he shot its round head right off.
- bir dugaar möörej-ni murnuu čük-ten kel-gen anıjak er,*
one ORD competition-ACC southern direction-ABL come-PST young male
197. “The first competition was won by the young man who’s come from the south
- boktu-kiriš dep čaal-ap al-di! dep xaan čarla-an=dir.*
B-K QUOT win-CV SBEN-REC.PST QUOT khan announce-PST=DEIC
198. and goes by the name of Boktu-Kiriš!” announced the Khan.
- xaan-niŋ büdüü bil-ir šiviškin-i*
khan-GEN secretly know-PF spy-3
199. Then the Khan’s spy, who secretly knew all,
- xaan-ga sir-man=bile kel-geš-tiŋ, kula-an-ga simiran-gan čüve dir.*
khan-DAT SYMB-running=INS come-SS-GEN ear-3-DAT whisper-PST PN DEIC
200. ran quickly to him and whispered in his ear:

- etʃ*, *xaan* *šak* *ol* *bo* *boktu-kiriš* *dep* *tur-ar* *erij*,
EXCL\AMEL¹³ *khan* *very* *that* *this* *B-K* *QUOT* *AUX-PF* *male*
201. “Look, Khan, that very man, the one whom they call Boktu-Kiriš,
er *eves* *kis* *kiži* *čüve=dir*.
male *NEG* *girl* *person* *PN=DEIC*
202. is not a man at all, but a woman.
daarta *xüreš* *üje-zin-de* *xin-ap* *kör-üñer*, *dep* *xaan-ga* *mindžan-gan*.
tomorrow wrestling time-3-LOC check-CV AUX-2PL¹⁴ QUOT *khan-DAT* do.thus-PST
203. Check it tomorrow during the wrestling,” he asked the Khan.
a *kandža-ar* *xina-ar* *ulus* *bis?* *dep* *xaan* *ajtir-gan=dir*.
and do.how-PF check-PF *PN* *we* *QUOT* *khan* *ask-PST=DEIC*
204. “And how are we supposed to check it?” asked the Khan.
če, *xaan* *čarliin-dan* *ert-ken* *čüve* *bar* *eves?*
okay *khan* announcement-ABL pass.by-PST *PN* *COP* *QUES*
205. “Well, an announcement of the Khan is something not to be disregarded, is it?
daarta *xüreš* *üje-zin-de* *šuptu* *čanagaš* *xüreži-ir*, *xöjleñ* *čok*.
tomorrow wrestling time-3-LOC everybody naked wrestle-PF shirt *NEG*
206. Tomorrow during the wrestling, say that everybody must wrestle naked, shirtless.
indžan *kis* *kiži-niñ* *iji* *emi-i* *köst-ü-le* *ber-gej!*
thus *girl* *person-GEN* *two* *breast-3* *show-CV-EMPH* *INCH-CNCL*
207. Then the breasts of the woman will be revealed!”
xaan=daa *čarlık-ti* *ün-dür-gen* *dir*.
khan=EMPH *announcement-ACC* *go.out-CAUS-PST* *DEIC*
208. So, the Khan put out an announcement:
daarta *šuptu* *xöjleñ* *čok*, *čanagaš* *xüreži-ir!*
tomorrow everybody shirt *NEG* *naked* *wrestle-PF*
209. “Everybody will wrestle shirtless¹⁵ and naked tomorrow!”
onu *dıñna-p-kaš*, *boktu-kiriš* *aki-zi* *bo-op* *xuul-up* *al-gan*
that *hear-PERF-SS* *B-K* *elder.brother-3* *PROB-CV* *change-CV* *SBEN-PST*
210. Having heard this, she who had changed into her elder brother Boktu-Kiriš,
bora-šeleej *kis* *dıñma-zi*
B-Š *girl* *younger.sister-3*
211. younger sister Bora-Šeelei,
ajan-kula *äd-in-ga* *sir-maŋ-i=bile* *kel-gen*.
A-K *horse-3-DAT* *SYMB-running-3=INS* *come-PST*
212. came running pell-mell to her horse Ajan-Kula.
kandžaanʃ, *čoonʃ*, *ekki* *äd-im?*
how.do\AMEL *what.do\AMEL* *good* *horse-1*
213. “What can I do now, my good horse?
daarta *xöjleñ* *čok* *čanagaš* *xüreži-ir* *čüve* *dir*.
tomorrow shirt *NEG* *naked* *wrestle-PF* *PN* *DEIC*
214. It turns out that everybody will have to wrestle shirtless and naked tomorrow.

13. Added palatalization on final consonants (e.g., [tʃ] instead of expected [t]) marks a special ameliorative or pejorative register, considered vulgar and colloquial vis-à-vis standard Tuvan.

14. The verb meaning ‘see’, used here as an auxiliary, denotes a polite request, as does the use of the second person plural suffix on a form addressed to a single individual.

15. The traditional dress of the Tuvan wrestler includes high boots (*idik*), tight shorts (*šodak*), and a jacket (*šolap*) with long sleeves and a back piece, but nothing covering the chest or stomach. Some accounts explain the bared chest as intended to prevent women from wrestling in disguise.

- iji emi-im-ni kandža-p-tajn?*¹⁶ *dep indža-p ajtir-ip=tir eves be.*
two breast-1-ACC do.how-PERF-1\MOD QUOT do.thus-CV ask-CV=DEIC NEG QUES
215. What shall I do about my two breasts?" she asked, didn't she?
- ajan-kula àd-i tur-gaş-tiŋ mindž-a dep dir.*
A-K horse-3 AUX-SS-GEN do.thus-CV QUOT DEIC
216. And her horse Ajan-Kula said:
- ol deerge anaa, köŋgüs anaa čüve dir.*
this POST fine just fine PN DEIC
217. "It's fine, just fine.
- seen aki-ŋ-niŋ tos kät čona-a-niŋ ara-zin-da*
your elder.brother-2-GEN nine layer saddle.blanket-3-GEN between-3-LOC
218. Inside the nine-layered saddle blanket belonging to your brother,
- erte küzün at-kan tas dük-tüg xajirakan keež-i bar.*
early in.autumn shoot-CV short.haired hair-ADJ bear skin-3 COP
219. there's a short-haired hide of a bear that was shot down in early autumn.
- šak ol xajirakan keež-i-n*
very.same that bear hide-2-ACC
220. From that very same bear hide,
- xööre-eŋ-ge öj-le-j tögerekt-ej biš-kaš,*
breast-2-DAT fit-VSF-CV make.flat.object.round-CV cut-SS
221. cut out a round piece that will fit your chest,
- iji emi-iŋ-ni duj¹⁷ xərbala-n-dir čišpir tari-di-pt-ar-iŋ-ga*
two breast-2-ACC tightly.fit glue-PASS-CAUS\IMP stick\IMP fit-CAUS-PERF-PF-2-DAT
222. and when you've glued it tightly over your breasts,
- ol-la=dir.*
that-EMPH=DEIC
223. well that's that.
- indžan dük-tüg xörek-tig er=la bo-or dir sen.*
then hair-ADJ chest-ADJ male-EMPH PROB-PF DEIC you
224. Then you'll be a hairy chested man!"
- šak indža-ar xeveer kil-di-r kil-ip al-gaş-tiŋ,*
the.very do.thus-PF the.same do-CAUS-PF do-CV SBEN-SS-GEN
225. Having done just that,
- kuluguruŋ=daa čüü bo-or, daarta xöjleŋ-i-n ušt-a*
hero=EMPH what PROB-CV tomorrow shirt-3-ACC take.off-CV
226. the next day, our poor hero took off his shirt,
- sok-kaš okta-aš-tiŋ,*
hit-SS throw.away-SS-GEN
227. threw it aside,
- xöj möge-ler-niŋ ara-zin-ga olur-up-kan.*
many wrestler-PL-GEN distance.between-3-DAT sit.down-PERF-PST
228. and sat down among the many wrestlers.
- xamık möge-ler-niŋ, möörej-či-ler-niŋ, er-ler-niŋ kara-a*
all wrestler-PL-GEN competition-AGENT-PL-GEN male-PL-GEN eye-3
229. The eyes of all the wrestlers, competitors, and other men
- boktu-kiriš dep anijak er-niŋ xöre-en-de.*
B-K QUOT young male-GEN chest-3-LOC
230. were on the chest of the young man named Boktu-Kiriš.

16. Possibly *kandžaptan*¹, with ameliorative final-consonant palatalization.

17. An adverb, meaning 'by fitting into tightly', e.g., a cork in a bottle.

- bo čerle čüü kandaaj amıttan de-er siler!*
 this now what what.kind\AMEL creature say-PF 2.PL
 231. "What kind of creature is it?"
- xöre-e deerge er kiži xöre-en-ge dömej-le-er užur čok,*
 chest-3 POST male person chest-3-DAT compare-VSF-PF custom NEG
 232. Its chest cannot be compared in any way to a man's chest.
- bir-le xörek er čüve,*
 one-EMPH chest male thing
 233. It is such a manly chest,
- am art-in-da xajırakan düg-ü ün-üp kel-gen.*
 now top-3-LOC bear hair-3 grow.up-CV AUX-PST
 234. and on top of all that, it has bear hair growing out of it.
- bo=daa xajırakan-dan uktal-gan, anaa čerle,*
 this=EMPH bear-ABL originate-PST just still
 235. He must still have some bear ancestry,
- kiži xüreži-ir=daa arga čok,*
 person wrestle-PF=EMPH means NEG
 236. so there's no way a man can wrestle with him.
- čüü ada-m amıttan eves bo? dep,*
 what father-1 creature NEG it QUOT
 237. What kind of creature is it?"
- xöj möge-ler-nin baldır-lar-i sirınejn-ki ber-gen čüve=dir.*
 many wrestler-PL-GEN calf-PL-3 shake-CV INCH-PST PN=DEIC
 238. Many of the wrestlers' calves began to tremble.
- xüreš=daa egele-en-ne!*
 wrestle=EMPH begin-PST-EMPH
 239. So the wrestling began!
- küžür boku-kiriš aki-zi bo-op xuul-up al-gan*
 poor B-K elder.brother-3 PROB-CV change.into-CV SBEN-PST
 240. Being changed into her poor brother Boktu-Kiriš,
- bora-šeelaj kis diğma-zi=daa xürež-ip kir-ip<le>-t-ken.*
 B-Š girl younger.sibling-3=EMPH wrestle-CV INCH-PERF<EMPH>-CAUS-PST
 241. younger sister Bora-Šeelei was made to begin wrestling.
- dendii šırak möge devi-p ke-er orta*
 very strong wrestler perform.eagle.dance-CV come-PF while
 242. When a very strong wrestler came up, waving his arms in an eagle dance,¹⁸
- deeldigen-niğ dezi-i=bile degele-eš-tiğ,*
 kite-GEN speed-3=INS trip.up-SS-GEN
 243. she tripped him with the speed of a kite,
- tej-i-n kudu kil-di-r düžür-üp,*
 top.of.head-3-ACC downwards make-CAUS-PF fall-CV
 244. and dropped him upside down on top of his head.

18. The eagle dance (*ežir sam*) is a mimetic display that begins and ends Tuvan traditional wrestling matches. Wrestlers take wide, slow steps, executing small hops and turns and waving their arms slowly in the air as if flapping wings. They then bring their arms down and slap their palms against their inner and outer thighs. While dance skill has no bearing on the outcome of a match, it is intended to intimidate the opponent and display one's physique and prowess before the match (and afterwards as well, for the victor). Though the routine is mostly fixed, individual wrestlers' creativity in executing dance steps is appreciated and cheered on by spectators.

- emin orta šširak möge eškeded-i-p kel-ir orta*
very middle strong wrestler strut-CV CLOC-PF while
245. When another very strong wrestler strutted up to her,
- ezir kuš-tuŋ erez-i=bile eežeen-den al-gaš-tiŋ*
eagle bird-GEN courage-3=INS heel-ABL take-SS-GEN
246. she took his ankle with the courage of an eagle,
- etk-i-n¹⁹ ažir šivada-p,*
shoulder-3-ACC across throw.down-CV
247. flung him over her shoulder, and threw him down.
- kajgamčik šširak möge xal-ip ke-er orta,*
amazing strong wrestler run-CV CLOC-PF while
248. When an amazingly strong wrestler ran up to her,
- xartiga-niŋ kašpigaj-i=bile kattaj kak-kaš-tiŋ*
falcon-GEN agility-3=INS together start.running.towards-SS-GEN
249. she ran towards him simultaneously with the agility of a falcon
- xajt kil-di-r düžür-üp,*
SYMB do-CAUS-PF make.fall.down-CV
250. and made him fall down in a flash.
- kondžug šširak möge korgu-du-p kel-ir orta*
very strong wrestler fear-CAUS-CV come-PF while
251. When another very strong wrestler approached, trying to frighten her,
- kojgun-nuŋ kašpigaj-i=bile, xos öde xala-aš-tiŋ,*
hare-GEN agility-3=INS empty.space through run-SS-GEN
252. she slipped between his legs with the agility of a hare,
- kurug čer-ge kurguldaj-i-n kuruldur olur-t-a*
empty earth-DAT tailbone-3-ACC painfully sit.down-CAUS-CV
253. and she made him fall very painfully on his tailbone on the bare ground.
- okta-p tur-za tur-za tur-za,*
throw-CV AUX-COND AUX-COND AUX-COND
254. So, throwing one after the other,
- šuptu möge-ler-ni kira okta-p ün-e ber-gen.*
all wrestler-PL-ACC on.back throw-CV go.out-CV BEN-PST
255. she beat all of the wrestlers by throwing them on their backs.
- iji dugaar möörej-ni murnuu čük-ten kel-gen anijak er,*
two ORD competition-ACC southern direction-ABL come-PST young male
256. “In the second competition it is the young man who comes from the south
- boktu-kiriš čaala-p al-di, dep xaan čarla-an.*
B-K take.as.winner-CV SBEN-REC.PST QUOT khan announce-PST
257. named Boktu-Kiriš who has won,” the Khan announced.
- xaan-niŋ būdüü bil-ir šiviškin-i xaan-ga sir-maŋ=bile kel-geš,*
khan-GEN secret know-PF spy-3 khan-DAT SYMB-run=INS come-SS
258. But the Khan’s spy, who knew all the secrets, ran quickly to him
- kula-an-ga simiran-ip=tir. orta čoor be, küžür xaan-im?*
ear-3-DAT whisper-CV=DEIC middle/right what QUES dear khan-1
259. and whispered in his ear: “It’s so, weird, my dear Khan,
- ol boktu-kiriš dep tur-ar kiži-ŋer*
that B-K QUOT AUX-PF person-2PL
260. that man of yours whom they call Boktu-Kiriš

19. Possible metathesis; cf. same form line 7 with [kt] instead of [tk].

- er eves kis kiži čüve dir,*
male NEG girl person PN DEIC
261. is not a man at all, it's a woman.
- daarta čariš üje-zin-de xina-p kör-üjer, dep mindžan-gan=dir.*
tomorrow horse.race time-3-LOC check-CV AUX-2PL\IMP QUOT do.thus-PST=DEIC
262. Check it tomorrow during the horserace," he said.
- če, kandža-ar xina-ar ulus bis? dep.*
DISC do.how-PF check-PF PN we QUOT
263. "Well, how are we supposed to check it?" the Khan asked.
- če, xaan čarli-in-dan ert-ken čüve eves?*
okay khan announcement-3-ABL pass.by-PST PN NEG
264. "Well, who would disregard an announcement by the Khan?
- daarta šuptu-zu-n šaldan čariš-tir-ivt.*
tomorrow everybody-3-ACC naked ride.horse-CAUS-PERF\IMP
265. Make everybody race naked tomorrow.
- a šak indžan kis kiži-niñ kis xindi-i kös-tü-le ber-gej.*
and the.same thus girl person-GEN girl genital-3 see-CV-EMPH INCH-CNCL
266. And thus let the girl's female genitals be revealed.
- xaan=daa čarlik-ti ündür-gen-ne:*
khan=EMPH announcement-ACC go.out-CAUS-EMPH
267. So the Khan made an announcement:
- daarta šuptu šaldan čarži-ir!*
tomorrow everybody naked ride.horse-PF
268. "Tomorrow everybody will race on horseback naked!"
- onu diñna-p ka-aš-tiñ boktu-kiriš aki-zi bo-op*
that\ACC hear-CV AUX-SS-GEN B-K elder.brother-3 PROB-CV
269. Having heard this, being changed into her brother Boktu-Kiriš,
- xuul-up al-gan bora-šeelaj kis diñma-zi Ajan-kula àd-in-ga*
change-CV SBEN-PST B-Š girl younger.sibling-3 A-K horse-3-DAT
270. younger sister Bora-Šeelaj came quickly to her horse Ajan-Kula,
- sir-man-i kel-geš, čugaala-š-kan=dir.*
SYMB-run-3 come-SS talk-RECIP-PST=DEIC
271. running pell-mell, and had a talk.
- kandžaan¹, čoon¹, ekki àd-im?*
how\AMEL what.do\AMEL good horse-1
272. "What shall I do now, my good horse?
- daarta šuptu-zu šaldan čarži-ir čüve=dir,*
tomorrow everybody-3 naked race.horse-PF PN=DEIC
273. It turns out that tomorrow everybody must race horseback naked.
- kis xindi-im-ni kandža-pt-ajin?*
girl genitals-1-ACC do.how-PERF-1\MOD
274. so what should I do about my woman's genitals?"
- àt tur-gaš mindža de-en=dir:*
horse AUX-SS thusly say-PST=DEIC
275. Then her horse said:
- ol deerge köngüs anaa čüve.*
that POST just okay PN
276. "As for that, it's just fine.
- doo tur-gan aržaji de-er ala tajga-niñ*
DIST AUX-PST A. say-PF striped taiga-GEN
277. Way over there in a striped mountain forest called Aržaity,

- aar iji-niŋ xöl-de xöj-le ak kas-tar ešt-ip tur-lar.*
 northern side-GEN lake-LOC many-EMPH white geese-PL swim-CV AUX-PL
 278. on its northern side in a lake are swimming a lot of white geese.
- ol ak kas-tar-niŋ arazın-da*
 this white geese-PL-GEN among-LOC
 279. Among those white geese,
- čuduruk=deg močak kızıł xaaj-lig askır ak kas bar=dir.*
 fist=like big red bill-ADJ male white goose COP=DEIC
 280. there's a white gander with a big red bill like a fist.
- šak ol askır ak kas-ti sok-kaš,*
 the.very that male white goose-ACC hit-SS
 281. Having killed that white gander,
- kež-i-n soj-up okta-p-kaš-tiŋ, ak kas-tiŋ köske-e-n*
 skin-3-ACC peel-CV throw-PERF-SS-GEN white goose-GEN goose.part-3-ACC
 282. and peeled off its skin, take the white gander's parts,
- er kiži-niŋ xap-či-i kıl-dı-r,*
 male person-GEN sack-DIM-3 do-CAUS-PF
 283. and make from them a man's testicles,
- a čuduruk=deg močak kızıł xaaj-i-n*
 and fist=like big red beak-3-ACC
 284. and take its fist-like big red beak,
- mojn-u=bile kattaj xaar-a er kiži-niŋ er xindi-i kıl-d-ir*
 neck-3=INS together create-CV male person-GEN male genital-3 make-CAUS-PF
 285. together with its neck, and make from them a man's genitals,
- kis xindi-iŋ-ni duj xırba-la-n-dı-r tarbid-ip aar-iŋ-ga*
 girl genital-2-ACC shut.tight glue-VSF-PASS-CAUS-PF do.magically-CV AUX-2SG-DAT
 286. and when you've magically glued shut your woman's genitals with them,
- ol-la=dir!*
 DEIC-EMPH=DEIC
 287. that's that!
- sidi-iŋ kistiŋ-a ber-ze,*
 piss-2 flow.out-CV INCH-COND
 288. If you need to piss,
- kas-tiŋ xaaj-i-n ködür-üp sikte-er-iŋ-ge*
 goose-GEN bill-3-ACC raise-CV piss-PF-2-DAT
 289. then you'll raise the beak of the goose to piss,
- inaar šariŋajn-ip-la ber-gej dep mindža-p=tir eves be.*
 there run.out.noisily-CV-EMPH INCH-CNCL QUOT do.thusly-CV=DEIC NEG QUES
 290. and let the piss trickle out through it," the horse said, didn't he?
- ol-la xeveer kıl-ip al-gaš*
 that-EMPH the.same do-CV SBEN-SS
 291. Having done exactly so,
- daarta=daa xöj er-niŋ ara-zın-ga*
 tomorrow=EMPH many male-GEN space.between-3-DAT
 292. the next day among the numerous men,
- küžür boktu-kiriš aki-zı bo-op xuul-up al-gan*
 poor B-K elder.brother-3 PROB-CV change-CV SBEN-PST
 293. being changed into her poor brother Boktu-Kiriš,
- bora-šeelaj kis diŋma-zı šaldaŋnan-gaš olur-up-kan.*
 B-Š girl younger.sibling-3 get-naked-SS sit.down-PERF-PST
 294. younger sister Bora-Šeelei sat there naked.

- xamık er-niň kara-a deerge bo boktu-kiriš dep er-de:*
all male-GEN eye-3 POST that B-K QUOT male-LOC
295. The eyes of all the men were on the man named Boktu-Kiriš.
- bo čerle čüü ada-m er bo-or bo? xöre-e deerge xörek,*
that still what father-1 male PROB-PF DEIC chest-3 POST chest
296. “What kind of man is this? With such a chest,
- bir-le xajırakan düg-ü ün-üp kel-gen boor-u-nuň kir-in-da,*
one-EMPH bear hair-3 grow.up-CV CLOC-PST PROB-3-GEN top-3-LOC
297. and on top of all that, bear’s hair is growing out of it.
- bo xindi-i deerge, bo xap-či-i deerge bir-le doňguu=deg,*
that genitals-3 POST those sack-DIM-3 POST one-EMPH teapot=like
298. And as for his genitals, his testicles are as heavy as a teapot,
- kiži=daa u-ur arga čök.*
person=EMPH lift-PF means NEG.COP.
299. there’s no way a person could even lift them.
- bo xindi-i deerge=dir kuškaš=taa xaaj-i iškaš,*
that genitals-3 POST=DEIC bird=EMPH beak-3 like
300. His genitals are like the beak of a bird,
- bir-le mijis, artida diš-tig-dištig,*
one-EMPH horn moreover tooth-ADJ-RED
301. like a horn, and to top it all, covered all over with teeth.
- anaa čerle xalap-tig amıttan bo čüve=dir, dep*
simply still strange-ADJ creature be PN=DEIC QUOT
302. He’s such a strange creature!”
- onu kajga-p tur-da=daa,*
that\ACC wonder-CV stand-LOC=EMPH
303. While they were wondering and gaping,
- doo kamandılak-či=daa²⁰ kamandi-la-j ber-gen dır.*
that command-AGENT=EMPH command-VSF-CV INCH-PST DEIC
304. the start-man began to count down.
- biree, ini,²¹ üš! de-er orta-la, xamık er-ler*
one two three say-PF as.soon.as-EMPH all male-PL
305. “One, two, three!” as soon as he counted down, all the men
- xak-kaš sal-ij-la ber-gen.*
hit-SS run.off-CV-EMPH INCH-PST
306. whipped their horses with riding crops and charged off.
- a boktu-kiriš aki-zi bo-op xuul-up al-gan*
but B-K elder.brother-3 PROB-CV change-CV SBEN-PST
307. But the one who had changed into her brother Boktu-Kiriš,
- bora-šeelej kis diňma-zi tur-up kal-gan.*
B-Š girl younger-sibling-3 stand-CV remains-PST
308. younger sister Bora-Šeelei stayed behind,
- čüge deerge, bora -toolaj bo-op baza xuul-aj be-er-le bol-gaj.*
because POST gray -hare PROB-CV also change-CV INCH-PF-EMPH COP-CNCL
309. because she could also change into a gray hare.

20. A Russian loanword *komanda* ‘command’, used here, forms an agentive noun and verb. In standard Tuvan, the man who starts a race is called *idıkči* or *salıkči*; as a verb it is *idar*, *salır*.

21. Dialect form; cf. Standard Tuvan *iji* ‘two’.

- am bora -toolaj bo-op xuul-up al-gaš-tiŋ*
 now gray hare PROB-CV change-CV SBEN-SS-GEN
 310. But while she was changed into a gray hare,
kiži-ler=bile čarži-ir-ga taar-iš-pas bol-gan-da
 people-PL=INS compete-PF-DAT suit-RCP-NEG\F be-PST-LOC
 311. it wasn't proper for her to compete with people.
indža-ar xuul-ba-jn,
 do.thus-PF change-NEG-PST
 312. So, she didn't actually change into one,
a bora -toolaj-niŋ maŋ-i-n ke-ep ap-kaš-tiŋ,
 but gray -hare-GEN run-3-ACC CLOC-CV take-SS-GEN
 313. but simply took on the running speed of a gray hare.
bora -toolaj maŋ-i=bile maŋna-p iŋaj-la bol-gan.
 gray -hare run-3=INS run-CV away.from-EMPH COP-PST
 314. And with the running speed of a gray hare, she ran far away.
doo xal-č-ip bar-ip čit-kan er-ler-ni doraan ert-ken.
 DIST run-RCP-CV go-CV AUX-PST male-PL-ACC right.away pass-PST
 315. She immediately passed the men who were running way over there.
čaa! er-ler čer ortu-zu bezin čet-pe-en-de,
 EXCL male-PL place middle-3 even reach-NEG-PST-LOC
 316. Hah! before the guys had even reached the halfway point of the race-course,
xaan kadin bašta-an xamik čon-ga
 king queen head.up-PST all people-DAT
 317. (to reach the place) where all the people were headed up by the Khan and the queen,
čed-e maŋna-p kel-gen boktu-kiriš, deerge, čüü boor,
 reach-CV run-CV CLOC-PST B-K POST what PROB
 318. Boktu-Kiriš came running up to that place, and what did she do next?
xöj čül-gan čon-nu üš dolgan-di-r deerigle-eš-tiŋ,
 many gathered-PST people-ACC three go.around-CAUS-PF run.around-SS-GEN
 319. She ran three circles around the gathered crowd.
dedir xev-i-n ked-ip a-ar dees,
 back clothes-3-ACC put.on-CV SBEN-PF POST
 320. Then in order to put her clothes back on,
baški dag-niŋ čan-in-dže ün-e ber-gen.
 B. mountain-GEN side-3-ALL go.out-CV INCH-PST
 321. she ran off, back towards Bashky mountain.
čaa! üš dugaar möörej-ni
 DISC three ORD competition-ACC
 322. "Well, in the third competition
murnuu čük-ten kel-gen anijak er,
 southern direction-ABL come-PST young male
 323. the young man from the south,
boktu-kiriš čaal-ap al-di.
 B-K take.as.winner-CV SBEN-REC.PST
 324. Boktu-Kiriš, has won.
čaraš kiz-im-ni kadaj kil-di-r ber-ip tur men,
 beautiful girl-1-ACC wife do-CAUS give-CV AUX I
 325. I'm giving him as a wife my beautiful daughter.
aŋgır-čečen aldin daŋgina-m-ni
 A-Č golden princess-1-ACC
 326. My golden princess Angyr-Chechen

- a küde-em-ge boktu-kiriš küde-em-ge ber-ip tur men,*
 and son.in.law-1-DAT B-K son.in.law-1-DAT give-CV AUX I
 327. I hereby give to my son-in-law, Boktu-Kiriš.
- xamik ag -šeri-i, ara -albatı-zi-n baza čarti-i-n ber-ip tur men,*
 all FIG -army-3 FIG -slave-3-ACC also half-3-ACC give-CV AUX I
 328. I'm also giving half of all of my mighty army and slaves.
- mal -magan-im-niñ ekki čarti-i-n baza ber-ip tur men, dep*
 livestock -FIG-1-GEN good half-3-ACC also give-CV AUX I QUOT
 329. I'm also giving him the good half of my livestock,"
- xaan čarlig ün-dür-gen.*
 khan announcement go.out-CAUS-PST
 330. the Khan announced.
- a mege-či šiviškin-i čüve megele-p,*
 and lie-AGENT spy-3 PN lie-CV
 331. And the deceitful spy, who lied
- xaan-niñ xamik šağnal-i-n čettir-ip tur-ar-i deēš-tiñ,*
 khan-GEN all prize-3-ACC desire/seek-CV AUX-PF-3 AUX-GEN
 332. and desired to win all the Khan's prizes,
- sö kimčı-la-t-kaš, oĵla-dı-p-kan.*
 strongly riding.crop-VSF-CAUS-SS chase.away-CAUS-PERF-PST
 333. was given a sound beating with a riding crop and chased away.
- küžür boktu-kiriš čüü bo-or am.*
 poor B-K what PROB-CV now
 334. And what did poor Boktu-Kiriš do next?
- šağ xaan-niñ čaraš kiz-i-n,*
 Š X-GEN beautiful girl-3-ACC
 335. (She took) Šang Khan's beautiful daughter,
- ağgir-čečen aldin dağgina-ni*
 A-Č golden princess-ACC
 336. golden princess Angyr-Chechen,
- köžür-üp al-gaš, čurt-un-dže čan-ip čor-up or-gan.*
 move/migrate-CV SBEN-SS homeland-3-ALL go.home-CV go-CV AUX-PST
 337. and traveled back to the homeland.
- aal-i-niñ čoog-un-ga čor-up kel-geš-tiñ:*
 yurt.camp-3-GEN proximity-3-DAT go-CV CLOC-SS-GEN
 338. When they came up close to the yurt,
- čaa, am aal irak eves,*
 okay now yurt.camp far NEG
 339. "Well, the yurt camp is not far from here,
- men ög öög-ü-n až-ip čida-jın, de-eš-tiñ,*
 I yurt button-3-ACC open-CV AUX-1\MOD say-SS-GEN
 340. I'll go to unbutton the door," she said.
- xal-ip čed-ip ke-er siler, de-eš-tiñ,*
 run-CV arrive-CV CLOC-PF 2PL AUX-SS-GEN
 341. "You come running after me," she said.
- aal-in-ga xal-ip čed-e ber-geš-tiñ,*
 yurt.camp-3-DAT run-CV reach-CV BEN-SS-GEN
 342. And having reached the yurt camp,
- doo kuj-da su-p ka-an öl-gen aki-zi-n*
 that\DIST cave-LOC put.in-CV AUX-PST die-PST elder.brother-3-ACC
 343. (went) to that cave she had put her dead brother in,

- ušt-up al-gaš-tiŋ,*
take.out-CV SBEN-SS-GEN
344. and took him out.
- ög orn-un-da ekke-p sal-gaš,*
yurt bed-3-LOC bring-CV put-SS,
345. Having brought him and placed him on the bed in the yurt,
- ergiz-ip tarbida-p ka-aš-tiŋ,*
thaw-CV do.magically-CV AUX-SS-GEN
346. and magically thawed him out,
- bod-u čaštün-a ber-gen.*
self-3 hide.self-CV INCH-PST
347. she hid herself.
- šan xaan-niŋ čaraš kiz-i angir-čečen aldın dangina*
Š. X.-GEN beautiful girl-3 A-Č golden princess
348. And Šang Khan's beautiful daughter, the golden princess Angyr-Chechen,
- köž-üp čed-ip ke-er-ge,*
move/migrate-CV arrive-CV CLOC-PF-DAT
349. when she arrived at the camp,
- deem čaa xal-dı-p čor-uj bar-gan aša-a*
just new run-CAUS-CV go-CV TLOC-PST husband-3
350. saw her husband, who had just made her run (to the yurt),
- öl-üp kal-gan, orun kīrin-da bo čit-kan*
die-CV AUX-PST bed top-LOC DEIC lie-PST
351. lying there dead on top of the bed.
- oon söl-ün-de kondžug ertem šilig-lig dangina=daa čüü bo-or,*
this behind-3-LOC very knowledge skill-ADJ princess=EMPH DEIC PROB-CV
352. And what could a princess with magic powers do then?
- möŋgün čüstü-ü-n ušt-up ekkel-geš-tiŋ:*
silver ring-3-ACC take.out-CV bring-SS-GEN
353. She took out her silver ring,
- meen aša-am boktu-kiriš šin bol-za,*
my husband-1 B-K true COP-COND
354. (and she said) "If it is truly my husband Boktu-Kiriš,
- siŋ-gan söög-ü dutč-u ber-zin,*
break-PST bone-3 connect-CV BEN-IMP\3
355. let his broken bones join together,
- üzül-gen šööndžü-zü ettin-e ber-zin,*
tear.up-PST intestines-3 become.good-CV AUX-IMP\3
356. let his torn up guts recover,"
- de-eš domna-ar-ga,*
say-SS do.magically-PF-DAT
357. she said, and magically made it happen.
- čarl-ip kal-gan molduru-u anaa appar-gan.*
break.up-PST AUX-PST backbone-3 good become-PST
358. And then his broken backbone healed.
- če, meen aša-am boktu-kiriš šin bol-za tur-a*
okay my husband-1 B-K true COP-COND stand.up-CV
359. "Well, if this is truly my husband Boktu-Kiriš, he will stand up.
- xal-ip-la ke-er iŋnaan, deeš domna-ar-ga,*
run-CV-EMPH CLOC-PF DISC POST do.magically-PF-DAT
360. and surely come running (to me)," she said, working her magic.

- šinap-la tur-a xal-ip kel-geš:*
truly-EMPH stand.up-CV run-CV CLOC-SS
361. After then he really did stand up and came running right to her.
- ok ködek, ert-ir ud-up kal-gan men be?*
oh, cunt overflow-PF sleep-CV AUX-PST I QUES
362. (And he said) “Oh, fuck! Did I oversleep?”
- bo düž-üm-de*
this dream-1-LOC
363. In this dream of mine,
- šan xaan-niň čaraš kiz-i, aňgır-čečen aldın dangina-ni*
Š. X.-GEN beautiful girl-3 A-Č golden princess-ACC
364. Šang Khan’s beautiful daughter, golden princess Angyr-Chechen, and I
- kudala-p tur-gan bol-du-m čop!*
marry-CV AUX-PST be-REC.PST-1 DISC
365. were going to marry, right?
- düž-üm dep boda-an-ım,*
dream-1 COMP think-PST-1
366. I thought that it was just a dream,
- šinap-la kudala-p ekkel-gen*
truly-EMPH marry-CV bring-PST
367. but I really did marry,
- al-gan kiži iškaž=ıl men, de-eš-tiň*
SBEN-PST PN as.if=DEIC I AUX-SS-GEN
368. and bring her home, apparently,” he said.
- aňgır-čečen aldın dangina-ni kuluguruň, deerge,*
A-Č golden princess-ACC hero POST
369. And as for the golden princess Angyr-Chechen,
- čitta-an, čilga-an, deerge, ana šuut kiži magada-ar.*
kiss-PST lick-PST POST simply all person be.amazed-PF
370. he took her and kissed and licked her, and everybody simply admired them.
- dogda kö-ör-ge, doo bora-šeelej kis diňma-zi*
over.there²² see-PF-DAT thatDIST B-Š girl younger.sibling-3
371. And when they looked over yonder, (they saw) his younger sister Bora-Šeelei
- bodu-nuň duštu-u*
self-GEN lover-3
372. together with her own lover,
- karatı xaan-niň kajgal ogl-u kara čüvelekti-ni*
Karaty Khan-GEN brave son-3 Kara Čüvelekti-ACC
373. Kara-Chüvelekti, the brave son of Karaty Khan.
- edert-ip al-gan bo kattır-ž-ip, kłašta-ž-ip olur-gan-nar.*
follow.with-CV SBEN-PST this laugh-RCP-CV walk-RCP-CV AUX-PST-PL
374. Here they came laughing and walking together.
- šak oon söl-ün-de iji ališki, küdee-zi, čaava-zi,*
just that after-3-LOC two sibling brother.in.law-3 elder.brother’s.wife-3
375. So right after that, the two siblings, with his brother-in-law and her sister-in-law,
- dörtele-en,*
do.by.fours-PST
376. the four of them together,

22. Dialect form *dogda* ‘over there’, cf. dialect form *döönda*, standard Tuvan *inda*.

- döŋ čer-ge ö-ö-n ti-p,*
 hill land-DAT yurt-3-ACC set.up-CV²³
 377. encamped their yurt on the hilly lands,
- dölem čer-ge mal-i-n čala-p,*
 high land-DAT livestock-3-ACC invite-CV
 378. and brought their livestock up to the high ground,
- oj-u-n oja čigin čir-e*
 meadow-3-ACC break.through\ADV dell hollow.out-CV
 379. they evened out the vales and hills,
- čurtta-p čor-uj bar-ıp=tir ooo!*
 live-CV go-CV TLOC-PERF=DEIC DISC
 380. and have gone on living there ever since. The end.
- adiš časka-ar!*
 palm clap-PF
 381. Clap your hands!

23. *öön tip < ög tiger* 'to set up / pitch / construct a yurt'.

MORPHO-SYNTACTIC TAGS

\	Boundary between tags in portmanteau or zero morpheme	F\I	future tense 1SG
-	morpheme boundary	FIG	figurative element
=	enclitic boundary	FORM	formulaic speech
< >	infix element	GEN	genitive case
1(SG)	first person singular	IMP	imperative
2(SG)	second person singular	INCH	inchoative aspect
3	third person singular	INS	instrumental enclitic
ABL	ablative case (enclitic)	LOC	locative case
ACC	accusative case	LEX	lexical item found only in compounds, has no meaning
ADJ	adjectival suffix	MOD	modal
ADL	adlative case	NEG	negation
AGENT	agentive	NOM	nominative case
ALL	allative	ORD	ordinal number
AMEL	ameliorative	PASS	passive
AUX	auxiliary verb	PERF	perfective aspect
BEN	benefactive voice	PF	present / future tense
CAUS	causative	PL	plural
CLOC	cislocative	PN	predicate noun
CNCL	conciliatory mood	POST	postposition
COMP	complementizer	PROB	probabilitive mood
COND	conditional mood	PST	past tense
COP	copula	QUAN	quantifier
CV	converb	QUES	question tag
DAT	dative case	QUOT	quotative
DEIC	deixis marker	RCP	reciprocal
DIM	diminutive	REC.PST	recent past tense
DISC	discourse	RED	reduplicant
DIST	distal	SBEN	self-benefactive voice
DUAL	dual (1 & 2 SG)	SS	same subject
EMPH	emphatic	SYMB	sound symbolic element
EXCL	exclamation	TLOC	translocation
F	future tense	VSF	verb stem formant

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