

## COMPARATIVE STUDY OF EPIC HERO ARCHETYPES IN EURASIAN FOLKLORE

**Nurmukhamedova Mohira Uralovna**

*Lecturer, Samarkand State Institute of Pedagogy*

*mohiranurmuhamedova63@gmail.com Tel: +998 97 922 79 28 Samarkand, Uzbekistan*

**Abstract:** *Epic folklore occupies a significant place in the cultural heritage of Eurasian peoples, reflecting their historical memory, moral values, and national identity. This article presents a comparative study of epic hero archetypes in Uzbek, Korean, and Russian folklore through the examples of Alpomish, Jumong, and Ilya Muromets. The research focuses on the origins, character traits, heroic functions, and symbolic meanings of these epic figures. Despite cultural and geographical differences, the analysis reveals common archetypal features such as supernatural strength, devotion to homeland, struggle against evil forces, and the role of the hero as a protector of society. At the same time, each epic hero embodies unique national characteristics shaped by specific historical and cultural contexts. The study demonstrates that epic hero archetypes serve as universal cultural models while preserving distinct national identities.*

**Keywords:** *epic hero, archetype, folklore, Eurasia, Alpomish, Jumong, Ilya Muromets*

### INTRODUCTION

Epic narratives have played a crucial role in the formation and preservation of cultural identity among Eurasian peoples. Through heroic characters, epics convey collective ideals, ethical norms, and historical experiences. The concept of the epic hero is central to folklore studies, as it represents both universal human values and culturally specific worldviews.

This article aims to conduct a comparative analysis of epic hero archetypes in Eurasian folklore, focusing on three prominent figures: Alpomish from Uzbek epic tradition, Jumong from Korean mythology, and Ilya Muromets from Russian bylinas. By comparing these heroes, the study seeks to identify shared archetypal features and distinctive national elements. [1]

**Theoretical Framework and Methodology.** The research is based on comparative and typological methods commonly used in folklore and literary studies. The concept of the “archetype,” as introduced by C. G. Jung, is applied to analyze recurring heroic patterns across different cultures. Textual analysis of epic narratives and secondary scholarly sources is used to examine the origins, functions, and symbolic meanings of the selected heroes. [2]

**Alpomish as an Epic Hero.** Alpomish is one of the central figures of Uzbek heroic epic tradition. He embodies physical strength, courage, loyalty, and devotion to

family and homeland. The narrative of Alpomish emphasizes trials, separation, captivity, and eventual triumph, symbolizing perseverance and moral integrity. His heroism is closely connected to tribal unity, social justice, and the protection of honor. Alpomish's actions are not merely individual feats of strength; they symbolize the collective will and resilience of his people. Each trial he faces—from overcoming rival tribes to rescuing his beloved—reflects the importance of loyalty, courage, and moral integrity in maintaining social cohesion. Through his struggles, the epic communicates the values of courage, responsibility, and the indispensable role of the hero in safeguarding both family and community. [3]

Moreover, Alpomish serves as a moral exemplar for successive generations. His virtues—honesty, fairness, and dedication—illustrate the ethical framework within which society is expected to operate. By embodying both physical prowess and ethical wisdom, he represents a model of balanced heroism where power is guided by justice and respect for communal norms. This duality reinforces the epic's enduring relevance and its function as a cultural and educational narrative in Uzbek folklore.

**Jumong in Korean Epic Tradition.** Jumong, the legendary founder of the Goguryeo kingdom, occupies a significant place in Korean mythological narratives. His origin is often associated with divine or supernatural elements, highlighting his predestined role as a ruler and hero. Jumong represents wisdom, leadership, and strategic intelligence in addition to physical bravery. His story reflects the importance of state-building, harmony with nature, and legitimacy of power in Korean culture. Jumong's journey is not only a personal quest but also a foundational myth for the Goguryeo kingdom, illustrating the responsibilities and challenges of leadership. His victories and strategic decisions emphasize the need for wisdom, foresight, and moral integrity in governing, highlighting how a hero's role extends beyond physical bravery to shaping the political and social order of his people. [4]

Furthermore, Jumong embodies the spiritual and cultural ideals of his society. His connection with divine ancestry and supernatural elements reinforces the belief that legitimate power must be both morally grounded and sanctioned by higher forces. This intertwining of human action with cosmic order demonstrates how Korean epic narratives use heroic figures to teach ethical governance, social cohesion, and the harmony between humanity and nature. As a result, Jumong serves as a timeless symbol of leadership, justice, and cultural identity in Korean folklore.

**Ilya Muromets in Russian Folklore.** Ilya Muromets is a prominent hero of Russian bylinas, symbolizing strength, faith, and patriotism. Initially depicted as physically weak, he gains extraordinary power through miraculous means, emphasizing spiritual transformation. Ilya Muromets serves as a defender of the homeland and protector of the people against external threats, reflecting the ideals of service, resilience, and moral duty. His feats, including battles with invaders and mythical creatures, symbolize the triumph of justice and courage over chaos and evil.

Unlike some epic heroes whose focus is primarily personal glory, Ilya's heroism is deeply rooted in communal responsibility, illustrating the Russian cultural emphasis on collective welfare and the protection of society as a moral imperative.

Moreover, Ilya Muromets exemplifies the integration of spiritual strength and human virtue. Initially portrayed as physically weak, he gains extraordinary abilities through divine or miraculous means, highlighting the theme that true heroism requires moral integrity and inner development as much as physical power. His narrative reinforces the values of perseverance, faith, and selfless service, making him a timeless exemplar of ethical and civic responsibility in Russian folklore. [5]

**Comparative Analysis.** Despite differences in narrative structure and cultural background, Alpomish, Jumong, and Ilya Muromets share several archetypal features. All three heroes possess exceptional abilities, face significant trials, and act as protectors of their communities. Their journeys follow a common heroic pattern: origin, challenge, struggle, and victory.

At the same time, each hero reflects unique national values. Alpomish emphasizes familial loyalty and tribal honor, Jumong represents political leadership and divine legitimacy, while Ilya Muromets highlights spiritual strength and defense of the state. These distinctions demonstrate how universal archetypes adapt to specific cultural contexts. While Alpomish, Jumong, and Ilya Muromets all embody the core traits of courage, loyalty, and protection of their people, each hero also reflects the unique historical, social, and spiritual values of their respective cultures. This illustrates the flexibility of the epic hero archetype, showing how shared human ideals can be expressed in diverse narrative forms that resonate with local traditions and moral codes.

Furthermore, the comparative study of these heroes highlights the role of folklore in preserving and transmitting cultural identity. By adapting universal archetypal patterns to national contexts, each epic not only entertains but also educates and reinforces societal norms. The heroes serve as both symbolic models for behavior and vessels for cultural memory, ensuring that the values, struggles, and aspirations of each society are passed down through generations in a form that is both accessible and inspiring. [6]

**Conclusion.** The comparative study of epic hero archetypes in Eurasian folklore reveals both shared and distinctive characteristics of heroic narratives. Epic heroes function as cultural symbols that transmit moral values, historical memory, and national identity. Alpomish, Jumong, and Ilya Muromets exemplify how universal heroic archetypes are shaped by unique social, historical, and cultural factors. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of cross-cultural connections in Eurasian folklore and highlights the enduring relevance of epic traditions. By comparing Alpomish, Jumong, and Ilya Muromets, the study demonstrates that,

despite differences in historical context and cultural background, epic heroes across Eurasia share fundamental human concerns—courage, justice, loyalty, and the protection of community. These commonalities suggest that folklore serves as a universal medium through which societies articulate ethical ideals and collective aspirations.

Moreover, the analysis underscores the dynamic nature of epic narratives, which evolve to reflect the values, challenges, and historical experiences of each culture. The continued study of such heroes not only enriches our understanding of literature and folklore but also provides insights into cultural identity, moral education, and the ways societies preserve their heritage. Epic traditions remain relevant today because they connect past and present, local and universal, offering models of heroism and virtue that continue to inspire audiences across generations.

### REFERENCES:

1. Jung C. G. (1968). *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 3–41.
2. Propp V. (1968). *Morphology of the Folktale*. Austin: University of Texas Press, pp. 25–65.
3. Alpomish. (1999). *Uzbek National Epic* (translated and edited edition). Tashkent: Sharq Publishing House, pp. 7–52.
4. Kim, Busik. (2012). *Samguk Sagi: Historical Records of the Three Kingdoms*. Seoul: Korean Classics Library, pp. 112–145.
5. Bailey J. (1998). *Russian Epic Poetry*. London: Routledge, pp. 87–130.
6. Lord A. B. (2000). *The Singer of Tales*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, pp. 67–102.