

Personal Meaning of the Kazakh Philosophy in the Space of Intercultural Dialogue

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ABSTRACT

In the development of spiritual and cultural heritage, the Kazakh renaissance, which began with the implementation of the "Cultural heritage" national project, has exposed the problems of self-identity, uniqueness, national and global relations. One reason is misunderstanding of nomadism as a kind of "anti-civilization", an embodiment of the destruction and ignorance forces. The aim of the article is to analyze the development of the Kazakh philosophy and its communication with the global philosophical knowledge. In the article, the Kazakh philosophy is regarded as a spiritual quintessence of nomadic culture with its characteristic type of ontology and anthropology. The whole problem of tolerance is built around the phenomenon of understanding and acceptance, the achievement of which requires personal dialogue. The Kazakh philosophy, by reconstructing the rich philosophical heritage of the Kazakh people, due to the free world philosophical hermeneutics heritage, determined the new opportunities and future directions of research. These include the philosophy of mutual understanding, the modern Turkic philosophy, planetary ethics, Islam phenomenology, Nomadic epistemology, the philosophy of Tengrianism, the Neofarabi studies, Kazakhstani Eurasianism. The findings showed that the active development of the global and national cultural and philosophical heritage is an essential tool for the growth of national consciousness; it creates the prerequisites for the rise of a new form of philosophy, which connects the global and national philosophical experience.

KEYWORDS

Kazakh philosophy, cultural heritage, national self-identity, personal dialogue, integration of philosophy

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Introduction

In Soviet times, such terms as "Kazakh philosophy", "Muslim Philosophy", "Turkic philosophy" did not exist in the scientific literature. A simple reference to them could cause nationalism, Pan-Islamism and Pan-Turkism charges. The philosophy was interpreted in the spirit of Eurocentrism, so as a unique pattern was used the Western philosophy model: rationalistic, scientific, abiding to strict laws and principles. Eastern philosophy, which did not meet these canons and criteria, was considered "poetry" and "exotics" (Kerimbayev & Akramova, 2015).

Still, the philosophical experience of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries turned out to be much more democratic and open (Tolen, 2013). Diverse life and philosophical practices were revealed, as well as the philosophy's ambition for going to the areas, bordering with art, science and religion, for invading psychology and the context of everyday life. The whole type of philosophy and image of the philosophers has changed. The past academicism and great philosophy's arrogance

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found their viciousness. Then, the simple truth was revealed: philosophy can be diverse, when in alliance with mythology, poetry, music, religion, literature, technology (Alimzhanova, 2015).

The first and foremost task of Kazakhstan's philosophy in terms of independence was the intensive development of the rich philosophical heritage of the Kazakh, recreation of the unique national image of the world with its value and life-purpose features. The perception integrity of the world and men, the unity of mind and heart, spiritual and moral priorities of truth, goodness and justice, a special type of tolerance and goodwill – all these lessons of the Great Steppe were absorbed by the Kazakh philosophy, which turned out to be modern from the point of fundamental ontology of M. Heidegger (2014) and the Jean Paul Sartre's (2015) existentialism. In the years of independence, the term "Kazakh philosophy" has firmly stuck into the philosophical vocabulary, so researches in this area now make up the golden fund of Kazakh philosophy.

Literature review

For centuries, the spiritual world of the Kazakhs has incorporated various cultural influences by melting and assimilating them in the furnace of their native Turkic steppe traditions (Karipbayev, Razumov & Soloschenko, 2016). This has contributed to the constant reproduction of certain mental structures of perception of the world and an unusually high level of development of the historical and social memory of the people.

Still, the spiritual heritage of Kazakhs bears the deep imprint of social upheavals, as well as the catastrophic nature of the Central Asian history (Tapper, 2013). In the past, political storms in Kazakhstan often led to the destruction of the traditional culture centers, to the spread of new religions, to a change in writing and philosophical worldview (Kerimbayev & Akramova, 2015).

The nature, type, essential features, philosophical traditions, language – all this allows us to consider the spiritual heritage of the Kazakhs as the ancient steppe branch of the rich Turkic culture, including the deep stratum of Indo-Iranian culture and the developed in close cooperation with neighboring civilizations and peoples of East and West (Yeshpanova & Kurmangaliyeva, 2014). However, the problem of the interaction of diverse cultural and philosophical traditions in Kazakhstan and the role of the ideological synthesis of the spiritual formation of the Kazakh people still remains little studied (Sadykov, 2014).

One reason for this state of affairs is the widespread notion of nomadism as a kind of "anti-civilization", an embodiment of the forces of destruction and ignorance (Wear, 1990). In this approach, a nomadic way of life is considered the main and almost the only source of social and political catastrophes, wars and aggression in Asia, and the relations between Iranian and the Turkic-speaking peoples are reduced to confront Iran's sedentarization, representing the creative work, the ancient culture and the nomadic Turan. Nomads play the role of "humanity's drones", looking at the riches of the settled peoples with "slanted and greedy eyes", the invaders and looters who did not have a developed statehood, urban development, craft, trade, literacy.

This view is certainly not conducive to the adequate consideration of the history and culture of the Muslim East, and especially of the former nomadic Turkic peoples: Kazakhs, Uzbeks, Turkmens, Uyghurs, Kyrgyz, Karakalpak, Bashkirs, Tatars. This, in turn, negatively affects the overall assessment of the



philosophical heritage of one nation or another, the understanding of its special features, origin, ways of development, the role and place in world civilization (Abazov, 2007).

Twenty years of independent development of Kazakhstan showed that without spiritual culture, without a systematic and thoughtful education of youth in the spirit of high life values, the progress towards material welfare is unlikely, due to the fact that pragmatism and success is often create values, which are far from spirituality (Suleimenov, 2015). World experience shows that not only Kazakhstan, but also many other countries, especially in periods of modernization and transformation, go back to their spiritual roots, to their history, culture and traditions in the context of the new requirements of modern era (Gu, 2011).

In the modern scientific literature, the attention is focused on three conceptual positions, exploring the cultural heritage as a spiritual basis for the formation of national consciousness and national identity (Pieper, 2009). The first focuses on the cultural heritage of the past, as a systemically important factor of national identity and national consciousness of the people. The second – on the harmonious combination of cultural heritage of the past and the present. The third – on the contemporary culture and its aspirations for the future. The general cultural basis of national self-identity and processes of national uniqueness in the context of transformation and modernization of society is a very complicated and painful practice. Perhaps, with the exception of Japan, it difficult to name a country, successfully combining the traditions and cultural heritage of the past with the needs and demands of the technological, information and post-economic society (Huffman, 2013).

Cultural heritage, which plays an important role in the formation and development of consciousness of the people, is an important catalyst for social development and the basis for the formation of a new system of values (Nicoll, 2004). The notion of national security, as well as human security, includes understanding not only of threats – internal or external, but the whole set of conditions, measures to ensure a full and meaningful spiritual life of a man and society, in which a decent attitude is produced and maintained towards cultural traditions and great values of past (Zatov & Kantarbayeva, 2015).

In modern society, the threats to the humanitarian, moral and spiritual security are considered a part of the all-round growth of the imitated culture, and often sheer barbarism, of the self-preserving Mankurtism phenomenon, of obtrusion of alien views and ideologies, worldviews and behavior. The range of these threats is wide enough, from the pressure on mass culture and extremist ideas to rabid chauvinist statements. And one of the Kazakhstan's priorities is to preserve and increase the accumulated cultural and historical experience in the dialogue with the cultural heritage of other nations, as well as to educate the next generation of Kazakhs in the spirit of respect and acceptance of both traditional and modern culture, to raise the general level of culture, tolerance and educatedness of population (Puzikova, 2015; Yessenbekova, 2016). This will serve as one of the conditions of "ideological filter", which will give the opportunity to spread ideas and views, the content of which is contrary to the universal human values and the approval of humanistic values of democracy in Kazakhstan.

One of the most important stages in the "Cultural heritage" national program (2004-2009) is the reconstruction of "philosophical heritage of the Kazakh people from ancient times to the present day". Today in Kazakhstan, as well as in other

countries of the former Soviet Union, the issue of succession and connection of our past with modern realities is relevant and strategically important (Ashwin, 2000).

Purpose of Study

To analyze the development of Kazakhstan's philosophy and its communication with the world of philosophical knowledge.

Research question

What values considers the Kazakh philosophy?

How does the communication between the Kazakh and the world philosophy takes place?

Methods

The methodological and theoretical basis of the study is a set of principles developed in the field of history and philosophy. Namely, such principles, as historicism, objectivism, the dialectical unity of the historical and logical, as well as the use of the comparative historical and analytical methods. Among the common methods, abstraction and generalization were applied.

One of the most important methods of research is the principle of historicism, which allows to carry out the examination of philosophy based on a particular sociohistorical situation.

The objectivity concept allowed to carry out an unbiased study and comprehensive analysis of the development of philosophy.

Data, Analysis, and Results

In Soviet times, a Kazakh national philosophy was understood only in the context of the philosophy of the Enlightenment. That is why a large number of philosophical research existed as a chaotic miscellany of individual texts and statements corresponding to the ideology of "Enlightenment", which did not give the origin to the genuine Kazakh philosophy. The issue of "amateurish" national philosophy came up more and more frequently, as well as the accusations of its theoretical and analytical inferiority. All this led to the non-constructive criticism of the philosophical heritage of the past. New historical time and modern world perception in Kazakhstan has allowed to develop Kazakh philosophy as the deepest metaphysical reflection. The implementation of the "Cultural Heritage" project has provided the possibility of modern axiological interpretation of the philosophical thought of the Kazakhs.

As the quintessence of historical consciousness, philosophy reveals the meaning of Turkic and nomadic reflection, entering the global flow of human history. The study of cultural heritage is caused by the threats and challenges of the modern globalized world, so it was necessary to develop priorities, new approaches and methods of studying and reconstructing the rich heritage. It is especially necessary in the reconstructing the Kazakh philosophical heritage, which is an ontological identification code, embodying the ethnic and historical memory of the people, spiritual practices and communication with the world.

The revaluation of Soviet values over the years of Kazakhstan's independence has led to the understanding that philosophy can be grasped not only in logical form, but also in poetic. Kazakh philosophy does not fit the standards of the European philosophical thought. As any national philosophy, it goes beyond the



limits and boundaries of scientific knowledge. The unique philosophical and poetic discourse of nomads reveals ultimate grounds and meanings of being their own, worked out in the course of the spiritual and material practice by tools, forms and nomadic concepts.

While western philosophy of the twenty-first century is aware of the need to return to the ontology, focused on a coherent, harmonious relationship between a man and the world, the traditional philosophy of the Kazakh people has maintained a balanced view and attitude to the world. It has polished every poetic form of philosophy in its traditional culture, in the works of the great akyns and zhyrau, in folklore, in the works of Kazakh philosophers. In the days when ideology of Soviet totalitarianism was implanted, the true life of Kazakhs correlated with their traditional culture, contributing to the philosophical reflection, identified as the Kazakh philosophy. It was this attitude towards the world, which turned out to be relevant in the era of formation of a new integral worldview of the humanity, entering a new millennium. The Kazakh philosophy is an essential expression of the spiritual independence of Kazakhstan and the coherent worldview at the turn of Millennium.

The modern renaissance of the Kazakh philosophy has led to the realization that it is necessary to think about the essence of Kazakh philosophy. While the Kazakh national philosophy unfolded in the dialogue between ethics and anthropology, the modern Kazakh philosophy, arising from the national spiritual source, is a part of a dialogue between the philosophy of the East and West, trying to find his own philosophical niche and develop in the context of world philosophies.

At present, the understanding of peculiarities of nomadic civilizations is substantially revised due to the profound criticism of Eurocentrism, recognizing the special historical value of nomadic peoples and their material and spiritual culture, society and state system. According to this concept, nomadism is a unique method of interaction between a society and nature, a particular way of human adaptation to a particular environment, based on the development of nature with biological means of production, mainly harmless to the nature. The conclusion follows, that nomadic life has surely contributed to the formation of a specific mental universe, a spiritual space that reflects the world (the spiritual world of a nomad) through the conceptual tools with special nuances of thought, ideas and images.

Philosophy as an independent theoretical knowledge and intellectual tradition appears and develops not only in the sedentary civilizations. After all, a philosophical worldview can be expressed in non-traditional means. In the minds of people, there are different levels and layers, and the philosophical understanding of reality can be developed in a latent form, say, philosophical and religious, philosophical and artistic, philosophical and poetic.

If philosophy was understood in its original meaning, namely as the love of wisdom, self-awareness and comprehension of life, expressed in the universal thought forms, and not just as a special kind of rational and logical knowledge, than many steppe storytellers – zhyrau and poets – can be rightfully called "nomadic philosophers". From nomadic Scythian environment came the first prophet Zarathustra, who laid the basis of the most ancient world religion – Zoroastrianism, as well as the famous Greek philosopher Anacharsis.

In the history of the Central Asian philosophy, the spiritual heritage of the nomadic philosopher Asan Kaigy (XV century) is of great value. He introduces the tradition of respectful human relation to reality for the purpose of in-depth

knowledge of the mystery of the world. All plans and actions of a human being, their high ideological aspirations, in Asan's opinion, must obey to justice. Justice in society is only possible in mutual agreement and understanding, in the presence of virtuous deeds among men. Asan Kaigy had managed to develop a clear enough definition of a number of ethical concepts, which later determined the direction of development of philosophical ethics in the work of later generations of Kazakh philosophers. Asan Kaigy developed the meaning of such ethical categories as justice, wisdom, cowardice, evil, stupidity, ignorance etc., which was significant because it was done for the first time based on Kazakh reality.

Asan Kaigy's worldview is an example of an attitude, focused on the preservation of the harmony of the world, of nature, which has an internal dynamism of development, therefore not requiring any human intervention. Asan Kaigy's thoughts are known for their bright social orientation. The philosopher has spent his whole life looking for "Zheruyik" land, where his own people would be happy, calm and safe. To find "Zheruyik", Asan Kaigy has traveled across the steppe for many years, overcoming difficulties and hardships. In Asan Kaigy's opinion, "Zheruyik" is the Promised Land, the paradise on earth.

Thus, the Kazakh philosophy is regarded as the spiritual quintessence of nomadic culture with its characteristic, special type of ontology and anthropology. The nomadic ontology does not reproduce neither the Western activism matrix, nor the Eastern matrix of meditateness. The active attitude to nature means being friendly and careful toward it. This type of ontology includes the original unity of man and the world, man and another man, as opposed to Western opposition subject-object, based on the principle of domination. The Kazakh philosophy includes the principle of integrity, avoiding the discord between mind and heart, and the criteria of spirituality and morality.

The crisis of values of Western culture were opposed to the optimism and integrity of the Kazakh philosophy, based on the unity of Goodness, Truth and Beauty. The spiritual vacuum of a Western man, the absolutization of the role of science have caused Kazakh philosophers to seek support in the Kazakh traditional attitudes toward the world.

The systematically intense, deep study of the problems of the Kazakh philosophy will open new bright pages of the national culture, new names and new ideas that meet the demands of the modern world and the era of globalization, which is so needed today in the revival of the principles of tolerance, kindness and humanity.

The experience of personal philosophy reveals that for the creator of the philosophy, the philosophy is the conclusion, the result of thoughts on their majestic life, whereas for imitators philosophy is only a pale copy of someone else's life. The impersonal philosophy is a philosophy that does not lead to understanding, because only a person and the created philosophy carry out the process of understanding. The structure of the personal philosophical language is determined by the structure of personal thinking and personality of the philosopher. Therefore, personal philosophy always means the constitution of the philosopher as a person. The significance and the role of personality in the philosophical systems shows itself in the construction of a philosophy, contributing to a dialogue with other philosophies, systems, schools. In this dialogue, a spiritual connection is present, helping in understanding.



XXI century has clarified the understanding that the communication should be built as a dialogical paradigm of the modern world community. The anthropological context of communication in the era of globalization becomes most important, because today not only creation of the history of humanity is necessary, but also of human history. This is possible only by acknowledging another person in the dialogue, his or her perspective, his or her personal philosophy, his or her right to be themselves. Only when the goal of mutual understanding in our communication is achieved, the communication becomes true.

Modern philosophy of Kazakhstan, represented by various branches and schools, develops through the communicative discourse with different philosophies on the principles of tolerance and personal philosophy. Only the personal philosophy is capable of self-criticism, of recognizing their opinion as non-universal. Since Socrates, tolerance is known as a principle of personal philosophy, because he insisted that the dialogic culture of thinking must be kept by his disciples after his death, for philosophy is not a priestly culture. Truth always lies within communication. This dialogical search is contained in the dialogue between personalities.

The whole problem of tolerance is built around the phenomenon of understanding and acceptance, the achievement of which requires the personal dialogue. Personality in philosophy is always present and shows itself as a tolerant person, who is always ready for the communicational dialogue. Only personal philosophy is capable of implementing a universal acceptance, which is carried out through the preservation and, moreover, encouraging and sanctioning differences. The agreement involves the conservation and promotion of differences; therefore, it is not based on the repression and violence, but on the inner understanding, soul attraction, national character and mentality. This definition of acceptance is introduced in the context of mutual understanding.

The "Cultural heritage" national project solves a number of important issues. Firstly, the translation and hermeneutics of texts of the world philosophical heritage are made with new, post-non-classical approaches. Free from the old dogmatic interpretations, texts of the great philosophers today speak the Kazakh language, entering the co-creative communicative dialogue with the philosophy of modern Kazakhstan. Secondly, the hermeneutics of the Kazakh philosophical heritage, the reconstruction of Kazakh spirituality, Turkic spiritual experience, Islamic, nomadic and traditional cultural and philosophical discourses contribute to the formation of a new integrated understanding of philosophy in our complicated world. Thirdly, the development of the world philosophical heritage, part of which is the Kazakh philosophy, is necessary for the spiritual and moral development and the formation of national consciousness of the Kazakh people. Ethics is the core of the Kazakh philosophy.

The philosophical experience, represented in this development, encourages Kazakh philosophers to develop problems, corresponding with the current trends in modern philosophy: hermeneutics, fundamental ontology, post-structuralism, post-analytical philosophy of postmodernism. The Kazakhstan philosophy should also have its own philosophical voice in the dialogue of contemporary philosophical and cultural schools, solving the most important current problem in the twenty-first century - the spiritual and moral development of a person.

While, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, it was all about the legitimacy of philosophy, today we face another problem - the problem of the relevance of

philosophy in modern realities. Today, as a result of the development of nanotechnology, information technology, the Western sources have become available due to the international expansion and personal (philosophical) connections. Today, more than ever, there is more or less clear picture of the Western philosophy, so we can determine the Kazakh philosophy, firstly, as a philosophy, free from external ideological imperatives, and secondly, as a philosophy, reviving the national spirituality in modern value paradigm.

Discussion and Conclusion

As the reconstruction of the Soviet model of dialectics is no longer possible, it remains one of the philosophical discourses, and nothing more. Not completely distancing from the dialectic and critical philosophy, modern Kazakh philosophy is a philosophy that must be integrated and, at the same time, critical. Non-criticality, however, does not mean being "omnivorous". For absolute criticism, there is always a threat of becoming a totalitarian philosophy. Consequently, the erosion of the meaning of philosophy is possible in the postmodern positioning. Nevertheless, the reality is that any philosophical branch should be taken as having the right to legitimacy. Still, if we talk about self-determination of the Kazakh philosophy, it must be understood as a whole, taking place in the discourse of modern problem field.

A. Azmukhanova (2013) notes the difficulties of the countries of the former USSR in the pursuit of self-knowledge and self-identification, a process that takes place primarily through the philosophical analysis of the cultural and historical identity. A. Azmukhanova (2013) also draws attention to the problems of globalization; the solution to this problem she sees in the consensus between the global unification and the preservation of national specificities. Still, it is also necessary to consider the further development, objectively leading to a new understanding of the philosophy, which will be joined by the international experience and the national philosophical thought.

The Kazakhstan philosophy, by reconstructing the rich philosophical heritage of the Kazakh people, due to the free world philosophical hermeneutics heritage, identified new opportunities and future directions of research. Among them: the understanding of philosophy, the modern Turkic philosophy, planetary ethics, Islam phenomenology, Nomadic epistemology, Tengrianism, Neofarabi studies Kazakhstani Eurasianism. In the context of contemporary global problems, such (not quite promising in the past) directions, as comparative philosophy and philosophical hermeneutics, are developed again, and actualize the prospect of dialogue philosophy of Kazakhstan in the communicative space of the East and West.

Implication and Recommendation

Saving the rich spiritual and cultural heritage is a natural function of any truly independent state. It can be called fully-fledged, when people have access to specific subjects, expressing their spiritual values, and actively use the accumulated cultural experience. This is the first thing.

Secondly, people are the main subject of the state; it must take care of inner spiritual development of each person. At the same time, the preservation and development of cultural heritage is an important element in strengthening the identity of all ethnic groups living in Kazakhstan, as well as the basis of their fully-



fledged cross-cultural interaction. This, in turn, secures the internal stability and security of modern Kazakhstan in the globalized world.

Thus, the active development of the global and national cultural and philosophical heritage is an essential tool for the growth dynamics of national consciousness and the strengthening of national identity of modern Kazakhs. It also serves as the development of modern philosophy, incorporating the national philosophy and the world, and creating a new stage of Kazakhstan's philosophy as an important source of self-discovery for the entire Central Asian region.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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