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KAZACHŲ ETIKOS ISTORIJA

The History of Ethics of Kazakhs

SUMMARY

This paper analyses the history of ethical thinking of Kazakhs and its context in the nomadic traditions of Central Asia, which arises from an ancient branch of Turkic-speaking culture and includes layers of Indo-Iranian, Chinese and Arab cultures. The position of Kazakhs on the Silk Road has meant that ethical thought has been influenced by ideas from across Eurasia. However, even with the coming of Islam and later invasions, Kazakh thought has retained its distinctiveness and elements dating back to its early origins. The paper explores the evolution of ethical thinking from Korkyt-Ata in the VIII century to that of the Abai Kunanbayev in the XIX century Kazakh Enlightenment. Throughout Kazakh history, the expression of ideas and their relationship with society (rulers and people) has been through poetry and song. Kazakh poetic philosophizing is a fusion of mind and heart, Sufi mysticism and rational knowledge. Further traditions, such as the principle of hospitality, are also key elements in the evolution of Kazakh ethical thinking.

SANTRAUKA

Straipsnyje analizuojama kazachų etinio mąstymo istorija ir jos kontekstas klajokliškose Vidurinės Azijos tradicijose, kylančiose iš senovės tiurkų kalbą vartojančios kultūros šakos ir apimančios indoiraniečių, kinų ir arabų kultūrų sluoksnius. Kazachų lokalizacija Šilko kelyje reiškė, kad jų etinei mąstysenai įtakos turėjo visos Eurazijoje išplitusios idėjos. Tačiau net atėjus islamui ir vėlesnėms invazijoms, Kazachstano mintis išlaikė savo išskirtinumą ir elementus, susijusius su jo ankstyvąja kilme. Straipsnyje nagrinėjama etinio mąstymo raida nuo Korkyt-Ata VIII amžiuje iki Abai Kunanbajevio XIX a. Kazachstano Apšvietos evoliucijos. Per visą Kazachstano istoriją idėjos ir jų santykiai su visuomene (valdovais ir tautomis) buvo reiškiami per poeziją ir dainą. Kazachstano poetinė filosofija yra proto ir širdies, sufijų mistikos ir racionalių žinių sintezė. Kitos tradicijos, tokios kaip svetingumo principas, taip pat yra pagrindiniai Kazachstano etinio mąstymo evoliucijos elementai.

RAKTAŽODŽIAI: etika, istorija, tiurkų kilmė, kazachai, laimė, moralė, tolerancija.

KEY WORDS: ethics, history, Turkic origin, Kazakhs, happiness, morality, tolerance.

INTRODUCTION

Careful analysis of the history of the ethical ideas of Kazakhs gives grounds to consider it a part of world philosophical and ethical thought. This becomes evident by considering the problems and ideas around which Kazakh ethics developed. Kazakh philosophical ethics developed in accordance with philosophical thought in the world. It can be understood only in the context of the world history, "including in the context of Turkic history and the history of the Golden Horde" (Abdildin, Abdildina 2010, p. 179).

In addition, it is important to note that the ethical idea of the Kazakh people, being a part of the world culture, is also unique. It should also be remembered that in the conditions of modern globalization processes, which are giving mankind qualitatively new levels of development, are strengthening economic, political and cultural relations between countries on the one hand, and, on the other hand, are contributing to the formation of a cosmopolitan culture that aggressively resists national traditions and the uniqueness of cultures and the lives of peoples. It is clear that there is a

need to strive for active inclusion, creatively borrowing from experience, technology and knowledge across the world, to be competitive, but also not to lose cultural uniqueness and originality.

The ethical idea of Kazakhs has never been at a stop: the sociocultural context affecting Kazakh philosophical ethics has changed and developed, resulting in constant evolution as this connects with new problems and challenges over time. All the main periods of the history of Kazakh ethics connect with the formation of new significant ideas through which the steppe thinkers hoped to change the fate of their people for the better.

In our opinion, methodologically Kazakh ethics as a historical reality should be considered not simply in the order of a chronological series of its events and facts, but in the task-oriented historical analysis of ethical thought. It is necessary to reveal "only basic and key stages in its development, which became essential in the process of formation of the spiritual culture of the nation" (Nurlanova 1987, p. 38). This approach promotes the movement of knowledge to new results and the direction of future perspectives.

TURKIC ORIGINS OF KAZAKHS' ETHICAL IDEAS

Kazakh ethical thought should be considered as an ancient steppe branch of Turkic-speaking culture, including deep layers of Indo-Iranian, Chinese and Arab cultures. It developed in close cooperation with neighbouring civilizations and the nations of the East and the West.

For centuries, the ethical world of Kazakhs absorbed many cultural influences, melting and assimilating them in the crucible of their ancestral steppe Turkic traditions. These traditions were so deep and strong that neither political catastrophes, nor wars, nor cultural expansion of the great neighbours, such as

China and Iran, nor Arab and Mongolian influence, nor Islamization, could change them radically.

It is known that oriental philosophical thought was traditionally subdivided into Chinese, Indian and Arab-Muslim branches and the Turkic branch was simply absent in philosophical thinking, including that of the Kazakhs. Until recently, huge areas of Eurasia “from China and Mongolia to the Volga River, from the Siberian taiga to the area of the Amu Darya and the Syr Darya remained a “white spot” in philosophical terms” (Orynbekov 2001, p. 115).

The topic for an interesting discussion is the issue: “Why was Turkic philosophy, including the Kazakh branch, denied its recognition?” Because, in our opinion, the European model, bringing together philosophy with science was accepted as a paragon. One particular historical type of philosophy stood out from all and was declared an authoritative representative of philosophy in itself. However, many types of philosophy and its convergence not only to science but also to poetry, folklore and folk wisdom are historically known. Philosophical perception of the world can be expressed by unconventional means. In the consciousness of people, “there are intertwined different levels and layers, and philosophical comprehension of reality can develop in latent form, say in philosophical-religious, philosophical-artistic ones” (Barlybayeva 2011, p.53). Therefore, we are of the view that there cannot and should not be any singling out and preference in this diversity of worldviews.

Consideration needs to be given to the forms of development of philosophical

perception under the terms of nomadic life. Philosophy as independent theoretical knowledge and a thought tradition arises and develops not necessarily in every civilization, whether sedentary or nomadic. Are there few settled peoples whose contribution to the development of philosophical knowledge is quite modest? In addition, is settlement a guarantor of the indispensable development of philosophy, and does the nomadic way of life, in contrast, exclude it completely?

The nomadic lifestyle, undoubtedly, contributed to the formation of a peculiar mental universe and spiritual space, reflecting the worldview through a discursive tool with special nuances of thinking, ideas and images. Thus, “nomads understood the universe, history, time, space, “man-society” and “man-nature” ratios, the hierarchy of material and moral and spiritual values, the ideal of life, the Code of Honour and many other things in a special way” (Akhinzh-anov 1989, p. 236–237). They discussed the specific problems caused by the nomadic lifestyle.

As historical sources testify, nomadic peoples had a deep awareness of the peculiarities of their culture and perception of the world in comparison with settled peoples. In our opinion, the ancient traditions and deep roots of steppe culture are known to us much less than the culture of settled countries, because the remnants of their material culture – felt, leather, wood and furs are not preserved as well as stone. The idea of philosophy as a form of public consciousness is viewed as atypical for nomadic civilization. Oriental ethic philosophy, and Kazakh ethics in particular, should not be

considered as the polar opposite of Western philosophy. The culture of the East is a manifestation of the dialectics of common and singular in the history of World spiritual culture.

It is noteworthy that up to the XIV century it does not make sense to divide the unified Turkic culture into different nations and ethnic groups. The creative heritage of Korkyt-Ata and Al-Farabi, J. Balasaguni and M. Kashgari, Khoja Ahmed Yasawi and many others is a common heritage for Kazakhs and Uzbeks, Kyrgyz and Kara-Kalpaks. Considering that the works were written in the Arabic and Uighur languages, Chagataysky and Altaic, it is necessary to consider these peoples as having contributed to the history of Turkic culture. The first Turks, *Huns*, as it is known, originated from the Altai, and the tribe of *Kipchaks* actively participated in the genesis of all the Turks of Central Asia, as well as Tatars and Bashkirs, Nogais and Balkars. With regard to *Oghuzes*, they actively participated in the genesis of Turks and Turkmen, although historically they belonged to the shores of the Syr-Darya and the Aral Sea. All this reveals the need to write a common history of the Turkic peoples living in the area from the Arctic Ocean to the Mediterranean Sea, and also makes it possible to value a unified Turkic culture, as a culture having a common framework.

One of the distinguishing features of Turkic ethical thought is that it was initially created as the art of a good way to live, as the rules of wisdom, giving examples of practical attitudes to reality. As correctly pointed out by the researchers "the uniqueness of Turkic philosophy

is the organic combination of tradition and openness to innovation, nomadic and sedentary experiences of familiarization with the world, sacral, profane and chthonian, it is characterized by tolerance, love of freedom, word primordiality and optimism" (Turkic philosophy: Ten Questions and Answers 2006, p. 133).

It should be noted that, taking into consideration its foundations and origins, Turkic philosophy is the philosophy of nature and philosophy of life in many aspects. Studying Turkic thought, it is possible to feel echoes of Chinese philosophy, and the philosophy of Buddhism and Zoroastrianism within it.

The man of wisdom, from whom, in essence, Turkic ethic thought begins, was the legendary thinker, Korkyt-Ata. The legends about him were most widely spread among Kazakhs, as direct heirs of Oghuz-Kipchak culture, and the neighbouring Turkmen. It is noteworthy that all Turkic people consider it their own, so, beyond any doubt, the legacy of Korkyt-Ata is a common Turkic heritage.

The VIII century – the period of life of the folk storyteller was a time of transition from the ancient beliefs of Tengrianism, Shamanism and Zoroastrianism to Islam. In Korkyt a follower of ancient beliefs joins Islam like a sore thumb; that is, on the one hand, he believed in Allah, accepted Muhammad as the Prophet, and on the other hand, the following of ancient beliefs was dominant in his nature.

As is well known, the idea of the inevitability of death and its divine predestination is one of the dogmas of Islam. In this sense, the creativity of Korkyt-Ata, who challenged death, is essentially pre-Muslim by nature. In his

work, "Traces of shamanism among Kyrgyz" the outstanding Kazakh scientist and enlightener Ch. Ch. Valikhanov wrote: "Escape from death by itself, not allowed by Islam, is one of the constant themes of the legends of Shamanic peoples. In Kyrgyz (Kazakh – authors) Shamans, there is a legend about Korkyt, the first shaman who taught them to play on Kobyz and to sing Sarn "(Valikhanov 1985, p. 65). The Thinker also noted that "the Shaman is a man endowed with magic and knowledge, above everything else he is a poet, musician, the Clairvoyant and at the same time a doctor" (Valikhanov 1985, p. 52).

It should be noted that today Korkyt-Ata is an ideological thought leader, "patron" of Kara-Kalpak, Kyrgyz, Uzbek, and Kazakh *baksy*-shamans according to the orientalist I. Castanier (Castanier 1999, p. 90). A musician and thinker's *kobyz* became a cult. Playing the instrument helped the *batyrs*, who got into trouble, to save themselves, as evidenced by epic tales.

Korkyt-Ata remained in the memory of descendants as the expresser of fundamental ethical values of Turkic peoples, their spiritual and philosophical searches, and evolution of their consciousness towards new heights. These ethical values were created in the early religious systems, they have been formed and perfected slowly during the long historical process, tempered in the furnace of endless wars and coups. The ethical ideas of Korkyt-Ata have survived until today. Time itself has selected the ideals of good and justice, having a common human nature.

Throughout all of his life Korkyt sought the true value of human existence; he wanted to escape from the habitual shackles of self-deception, rejecting death – a merciless alternative to life. He vainly sought the antidote against death, creating various means of compensation, forming the appropriate symbols, which is called the symbolism of immortality in his psyche. Korkyt's symbol of immortality became the *kobyz* created by him. In this regard, M. O. Auezov and L. S. Sobolev wrote: "Korkyt in the lonely thorns has hollowed out Shirgai from a tree – the first *kobyz*, has stretched strings on it and has played, pouring out the painful thoughts and feelings. He put all his soul into these melodies, and the marvellous sounds of his strings sounded to the whole world, reached the people, captured and captivated them. Since then, the melodies of Korkyt and his *kobyz* have walked the earth, and the name of Korkyt remained immortal in *kobyz*'s strings and in the hearts of peoples" (Auezov 1961, p. 100).

Indeed, the legendary father of music and the creator of the song on Earth Korkyt found immortality servicing humanity by the first Art created by him. Fleeing from physical death, he reached a peak in spiritual immortality, which allows us to search for and find answers to complex issues concerning the meaning of life.

In a certain sense, it is possible to assert that the history of the Kazakh people begins with Korkyt-Ata as his name is present everywhere: in music and literature, cosmology and ethnography, philosophy and history. The rebellious spirit of the singer and chronicler is pre-

served in Kazakh legends, tales, proverbs and sayings. Korkyt's ethical teaching, in the centre of which there is a man, philosophical reflections of the Thinker about death and immortality, good and evil, the dualism of being, where light and darkness fight, entered the fabric of the spiritual structure of the Kazakh ethnos and became the fundamental topics of Kazakh ethics.

According to Korkyt, "... houses where the guest does not come, it is better for them to collapse. Bitter herbs, which the horse does not eat, better not grow; bitter waters, which man does not drink, it would be better not to leak; rude son, from whom there is no glory to the name of the father, it would be better not to leave a spine of the father, not to enter into mother's womb, not to be born. Glorifying the name of his father, the son given to the joy is good to be. Lying speeches would be better not to appear in this world. It would be better for the truthful people to live three decades" (The Book of my Grandfather Korkut 1999, p. 358). In this fragment from "The Book of my Grandfather Korkyt", perfectly translated by the famous scientist-orientalist V.V. Bartold, the truest, in our opinion, Korkyt's understanding of the meaning and purpose of human existence, which is impossible for the Turkic Thinker without the unity of truth, goodness and beauty.

The patriarch's ethical ideas remained forever in the historical memory of the Kazakh people, influenced the symbols and orientations of the Kazakhs and became the spiritual source of Kazakh ethical thought. Melodies of Korkyt-Ata, as well as his philosophical musings,

were repeated and developed further in the XII century by Ketbug, in the XIV century – Sypyr-Zhyrau, in the XV century – Asan kaigy, in the XVIII century – Bukhar-Zhyrau. Shakarim, the greatest Kazakh philosopher-ethicist, whose intellectual aspirations were directed to the affirmation of timeless eternal truths of kindness, mercy and justice in his own life and the life of the people surrounding him, wrote about Korkyt (Kudaiberdiev, 1988, p. 224–225). In many works of Magzhan Zhumabaev – Kazakh people and the whole Turkic world's opinion former, the greatest Kazakh poet and thinker – ethicist of the XX century themes of light and darkness, good and evil, life and death stand up against each other. In Magzhan's view, life and death constantly accompany each other, without one there is not the other. His position is perfectly revealed in the poem "Korkyt", which was dedicated to the legendary Turkic man of wisdom, musician and spiritual Patriarch (Zhumbabayev, 1989, p. 230). It is noteworthy that Magzhan, reviewing death as an inevitability, which subordinates the person, recognized and emphasized that it is necessary to be able not only to live worthily, but also to die with dignity.

Korkyt-Ata as a philosopher, ethicist, clairvoyant, musician and man of wisdom is a golden thread connecting centuries in Kazakh thought tradition. It is a timeless source of inspiration for outstanding representatives of Kazakh ethics. Thanks to this process, the legendary Turkic thinker begins to interpret our life, acts as a living participant in the dialogue, as a confessor, and sometimes

as a perceptive psychotherapist, who first confronts modernity with its own bitter truth.

The ethical world of Korkyt is a binding thread of generations, a living string of moral traditions, an inexhaustible source of optimism and a fount of wisdom, from whence the Kazakh people drew love for surrounding nature, the

Fatherland and its heroic past. Understanding the spiritual foundations of the Kazakhs' existence, their national identity and specificity presuppose a return to the spiritual heritage of the Turkic thinkers whose ethics are imbued with the sense of fullness of existence and the search for meaning and purpose of man in this world.

ETHICS OF KAZAKH AKYNS AND ZHYRAUS

The ethical thought of the *akyns* and the *zhyraus* of the Kazakh steppe was rather peculiar, not only in the form of its expression, but also in a considerable degree in the form of content. The form of a flow of thoughts of steppe sages at all times took the shape of finished poetic text, transmitted to succeeding generations by multiple repetition and memorization. However, their poetry creation did not match fully with poetry in the classical sense of this word. In the poetry of Kazakh *akyns* and *zhyraus* the idea dominated over the image, sometimes this idea was expressed by them directly without compilation in the form of an image-bearing parallel, often with a pronounced desire to embody the idea in the concept, such as Bukhar-Zhyrau and Shal-Akyn did. It is known that they often used such categories as time and space, frailty and eternity, good and evil, and others.

The poetry of the Kazakhs is a special type of philosophizing by itself, saturated with serious thoughts about the spiritual existence of the people. Kazakh poetic philosophizing is a fusion of mind and heart, Sufi mysticism and rational-

logicalized knowledge, philosophical publicity and lyrics.

If we refer to the history of the issue of the correlation between poetry and philosophy, it turns out that ancient thought considered this problem too. Already in ancient times, two great thinkers, Plato and Aristotle, faced each other on this issue. Plato subjected poetry to a strict judgement and passed a negative verdict on it, condemning it on the grounds that poetry is not a philosophy. In contrast, Aristotle neglected the role of arbiter for the Art, set himself the goal not to condemn poetry, but to explain it. In accordance with this goal, Aristotle tried to prove that the poetry (and, together with poetry, all Art in general) is related to philosophy.

According to Plato, poetry was "childish fun", "not a serious affair" – it was only an immersion in a private representation. Aristotle took a completely different position. According to him, poetry is related to philosophy, even more than a special science. "Poetry is more philosophical and more serious than history since poetry speaks more about the general, and history is about the singular,"

Aristotle emphasized the similarities between philosophy and poetry and thus offering direct opposition to Plato's view of Art (Aristotle 1983 p. 655).

In the end, both poetry and philosophy grow, according to Aristotle's views, from the same root, and this root is human nature. "All people, by nature, aspire to knowledge," Aristotle begins his "Metaphysics", and this aspiration to knowledge creates both philosophy and poetry (Aristotle 1976, p. 65). Therefore, poetry (not less than philosophy) is in cognitive relation to reality; poetry is a form of cognition of reality.

It would be wrong to conclude that Aristotle had equated poetry with philosophy. On the contrary, Aristotle's greatest merit is that he distinguished poetry from philosophy with such precision, which was alien even to Plato and this formed a firm basis for the theory of poetry. Aristotle first established that the main difference between poetry and philosophy is that philosophy seeks concepts, and poetry creates images or characters.

After Plato and Aristotle, the problem of the relationship between philosophy and poetic art never lost its acuteness, although at different times it was solved in different ways. Still, fundamentally new ideas about the relationship of poetry and philosophy in the further development of aesthetic thought have not appeared. Everything moved mainly in the circle of aesthetic concepts, first explored in the ancient world.

Taking into account the above ideas of ancient philosophers about the correlation of poetry and philosophy, it would be correct, in our opinion, to understand Kazakh literature as a way of

existence of Kazakh philosophy and ethics and to apply the method of philosophical thinking to works of fiction, trying to reveal the philosophical and ethical content that is included therein.

Philosophical and ethical comprehension of the world, man, its place and role in life is a characteristic feature of Kazakh thought tradition. The essence of man, his ethical and aesthetic appearance was deeply exciting for Kazakh akyns and zhyraus. We would like to emphasize that ethics and the range of ethical problems – issues of happiness, good and evil, debt, a human conscience, mission, meaning and purpose of his being, are the core of Kazakh philosophical thought.

Without knowing the genesis of any phenomenon, we will not understand its essence. Therefore, in our opinion, to reason correctly about the ethics of Kazakh akyns and zhyraus it is necessary to study the origin of these words: "akyn" and "zhyrau".

There are two versions of the origin of the Kazakh word "akyn". A number of scientists believe that the word "akyn" goes back to the Persian "akhund", meaning "scientist", "educated", "respected", "clever man", and other researchers think that the word "akyn" comes from the word "agyn" («ағын», flow), citing the fact that the improvisations of akyns flow like a rapid stream.

The well-known scientist E. Tursunov in his monographic study "Appearance of baksy, akyns, *seri* and zhyrau" noted that both of these etymologies have weaknesses (Tursunov 1999, p. 108). If the word "akyn" comes from the Persian "ahund", it is difficult to explain why this name was fixed for the akyns. In

fact, the knowledge and wisdom of the *zhyrau*, *zhyrshy* and *sheshens* are not inferior to the knowledge and wisdom of the akyns, and sometimes exceed them. Improvisations of the same *zhyrau*, *sheshens* and *synshy* are pouring in the same stormy stream as improvisations of akyns, and meanwhile only the last are called akyns.

An interesting and noteworthy point of view about the etymology of the word "akyn" was expressed by the researcher E. Tursunov himself. He is convinced that the ancient Turkic "akyn", the Turkic "akyn", the Azerbaijani "akhyn", the Uighur "yekin" are variants of the same ancient Turkic word, which means "the one who commits the attack", "the one who swiftly attacks", "the one who tries to sow confusion and panic in the enemy's camp" (Tursunov 1999, p. 110). After all, the essence of *aytys* (competitions of akyns) consists of this, as it is known, in the conditions of the Kazakh reality *aytys* was the main poetic genre, which allowed the akyn to be called an akyn.

Some scientists refer *zhyrau* to be the most ancient variety of akyn, others are sure that there is no reason for the unqualified assertion of the antiquity of *zhyraus* compared with the akyns. However, one thing is clear: the meaning of the word "zhyrau" is the performer of *zhyrs* (epic tales). "Zhyrau", therefore, derives from "zhyr" (song) and means "storyteller of historical songs". Most importantly, a *zhyrau* is undoubtedly the creator.

Kazakh *zhyraus* were considered to be prophetic poets, who are seers of the future. Having a great authority, they were at the *Khan's* placing and took an

active part in the decisions of state affairs, concerning the whole *Khanate*. The creative appearance of the *zhyrau* is connected with the position it occupies in society. *Zhyrau* does not talk in vain, does not intervene in everyday affairs or does not raise votes on trifles. Only in wartime, at great gatherings and festivities, or in the days of great strives, does he speak to his companions, acting on them with the power of his poetic word.

It should be noted that in the views of Kazakh akyns and *zhyraus* there is no clear watershed between philosophical and sociological issues and closely related political, as well as legal ideas, because all of these are intertwined, representing sides and aspects of the whole. But in the centre, beyond any doubt, is a human being and his/her ethical image, the world of his/her feelings and ideals, the purpose and meaning of his/her life. The thinkers thought about the senselessness of wars, dreamed of a peaceful and harmonious life of people, and wrote with deep sorrow about the destruction and poverty of the people.

Patriotism, dreams about unity and solidarity of the Kazakh people, struggle for individual freedom, human rights and his love are the main ideas in the ethical views of the akyns and *zhyraus*. Their world-view is an example of a world-view oriented towards preserving the harmony of peace and nature, which has an internal dynamism of development and, therefore, does not require the arbitrariness of human intervention. Ethical reflections of the steppe sages, expressed in a poetic form, elevated the individual, lifted him/her over the everydayness of being and were determined by one fun-

damental idea that worried every Kazakh thinker without exception – this is the idea of serving his people.

It is noteworthy that in the XVIII century Kazakh society experienced the rise of ethical thought, as evidenced by the almost simultaneous emergence on the stage of a whole galaxy of famous zhyraus and akyns, such as Bukhar-Zhyrau, Umbetey-Zhyrau, Shal-Akyn and others.

The predominant theme of all the storytellers and singers of this time was praise of the khans and batyrs, who courageously went into battle against strong and treacherous enemies. These works inspired the people to fight for the freedom of their homeland, for the honour and glory of the name of their famous ancestors. Each of zhyraus and akyns of the past with the deepest sorrow glorified the names of the fallen batyrs, in order to leave them forever in the memory of descendants.

It is known that oriental ethical thought, and Kazakh ethics in particular, developed mainly in the fold of religion. The calls for sympathy and mercy, kindness, pity and humanity inherent within Islam found their vivid embodiment in the creative heritage of Bukhar-Zhyrau. The Kazakh thinker, being a fair Muslim, believed that obedience and service to Allah is not only a duty but also the greatest joy for man, the pledge of his happiness.

Bukhar-Zhyrau preferred to express his ethical views in the form of moral sentiments, advice, guidelines, messages and speeches. Deep thoughts about wisdom and rationality, truth and lies, generosity and friendship are scattered throughout his creative heritage and his

ethical thinking about the questions of good and evil, happiness and justice, duty and honour greatly enriched the philosophical ethics of the Kazakhs and contributed to its further development.

In the works of zhyraus the Kazakh people are glorified as something whole, a single people, neither rich nor poor. By the good and the bad, he meant not members of different social groups, but members of the whole society. He wished for all, without exception, “peace, tranquillity, unity and well-being” (The Poets of Five Centuries. Kazakh Poetry of XV–beginning of XX Centuries, 1993, p. 101).

In his ethical judgments, Bukhar-Zhyrau defined goodness as self-worth, without which life would be devoid of moral nature and dignity. Good is good deeds, it lives in actions, the thinker believed. Kazakh ethics was convinced that good deeds sow the seeds of good, and evil ones generate a chain of harm and suffering. In the creation of good, the thinker saw the meaning of human life.

Only that person can attain the truth and do good deeds, who observes certain moral requirements. Good presupposes the presence of such virtues as reverence of parents, fidelity to the home, bravery, justice, humanity, ability to undertake heroic acts for the sake of the motherland, believed Bukhar-Zhyrau.

Philosophical reflections about the good, about the person and about the frailty of all existence led him to thoughts about an eternity of the good name of a person and eternity of knowledge. The thinker believed that “a good name remains with the person who has behaved morally, having made good to the people by serving the interests of the people

to whom he belonged" (The Poets of Five Centuries. Kazakh Poetry of XV–beginning of XX Centuries, 1993, p.104).

The picture of the troubled time in which he lived is reflected in the writings of the Kazakh philosopher-ethicist. He is not happy with the historical events of his epoch. However, Bukhar-Zhyrau considered the variability of time as a natural phenomenon and believed in a bright future. The method of comparing the morality of the past with the morality of the present is inherent with ethical views of the thinker. The new time taking the place of the time flying past also creates new generations of people, for whom the old morality becomes a kind of clothing that has become close to the person who grew up from it. Therefore, the old morality is replaced by a new one, which, as Bukhar-Zhyrau stressed with undisguised regret, is not always the best, but at the same time is necessary due to time.

Ethical reflections of Shal-Akyn overlap with Bukhar-Zhyrau's views on good and evil, who also emphasized that the essence of a person is determined by his/her moral actions: what are the actions of a person, such as his/her moral dignity. At the same time, the concept of "goodness" is given in a very specific form by Shal-Akyn. Good deeds are a benevolent attitude to people, to help people in trouble. Only well-mannered and reasonable people do good deeds. A reasonable man is wise. Because he/she combines knowledge with good deeds. That one is good, thought Shal-Akyn, who brings the started business to an end, and a bad one is a man of little culture and is lazy. The fire of good

is manmade and the smoke of evil is manmade as well. The radiance is from the good, the calamity is from the bad; everything is connected with the person, Shal is convinced. He praises and raises the Good, and condemns the evil, trying to make the evil repulsive to people's perception.

Shal-Akyn believed that it is necessary to take care of the inner purity of the soul, and not to try to look just outwardly respectable. Goodness and truth in the ethical heritage of the akyn are interrelated. He argued that our inner motives must be true, for Allah loves goodness. "The truth is the way to the good, the poet and thinker felt" (The Poets of Five Centuries. Kazakh Poetry of XV–beginning of XX Centuries, 1993, p.131).

Human happiness, its meaning and ways of achievement are the central issues of ethics of all times and peoples. Different approaches and different solutions were offered. For example, hedonism considered aspiration for pleasure as the basic principle of behaviour and the supreme good. In contrast, eudemonia saw supreme goodness and the purpose of life in the pursuit of happiness itself.

The eudemonistic principle of life understanding was typical, for example, for all Arab-Muslim philosophy. Happiness is the leitmotif and the main category of all reflections of oriental peripatetics about a man; this is one of the main characteristics of Arab-Muslim philosophy as a whole. "Happiness is a goal to which every human being aspires," wrote Al-Farabi, whose ideas had an echo effect in the further development of Kazakh ethical thought (Al-Farabi 1973, p. 3).

The ethical category of “happiness” was of particular importance in traditional Kazakh society. Perhaps this is the only concept that optimally combines the various benefits expressed in the sense of inner satisfaction with the way of whole life. In the content of happiness, it is customary to distinguish between what depends on the person and what is beyond his control, prejudged by external conditions. Kazakhs understood happiness as a grace that was given to him/her from on high and does not depend on his/her will and desires.

Most Kazakh akyns and zhyraus believed that happiness is something that exists in itself; it, like a bird, chooses the place of its “nesting”. Bukhar-Zhyrau believed that Ablay-Khan, who managed to unite all the Kazakh lands and unite the three Kazakh *zhuzhs* – “is the person who touched the bird-welfare, who entered the house-happiness” (The Poets of Five Centuries. Kazakh Poetry of XV–beginning of XX Centuries, 1993, p.110).

According to Bukhar-Zhyrau, happiness is all that is contrary to unhappiness. The Kazakh ethicist does not specifically decipher the content of this concept, but we can conclude that it means to live by faith in God, to be oneself, not to lose face, to be free, not to be rendered in hopeless situations, to protect honour, or live a life of dignity free of humiliations. All this, according to the ethical views of the thinker, means human happiness and a happy life.

Revealing the link between the concept of happiness and material benefits, Kazakh akyns and zhyraus found that wealth, or material benefits, with which people associate the idea of happiness,

turned out to be something ephemeral, because wealth is not constant: the rich man can become poor and, conversely, the beggar – can turn into a rich man.

The steppe sages linked happiness to the married life, considering it an important component of happiness. They believed that the fate of man is directly related to the fate of his/her loved ones. The appeal to married life as one of the factors of happiness, an attempt to understand the relationship between people through the prism of relationships in the family is a true approach. You can live happily only if there are reasonable people nearby. Akyns and zhyraus are convinced that happiness is the result of a spiritualized, virtuous and intelligent attitude towards life.

The wife must be a clever woman, she is the closest person, Shal-akin believed. A clever wife inclines her husband to reasonable, correct decisions, encourages the spread of good opinion about him, entertains guests properly and solves economic issues smartly. All these statements evidence a respectful attitude to the woman in Kazakh society of that time, which, in our opinion, hearken back to the Turkic, pre-Islamic period of development. It is important to note that deference and respectful attitude to her as a mother and reliable support of the family, the mistress of the family hearth, with which the happiness and well-being of the whole house are connected is a characteristic feature of the views of all thinkers of the Kazakh steppe.

Kazakh akyns and zhyraus considered that hospitality is the obligatory element of happiness. Where there is no

hospitality, there is no happiness and joy, they are convinced. The well-known thinker and storyteller, Umbetey-Zhyrau believed that if you refuse to offer hospitality, trouble might arise and well-being would leave. He also stressed that there would be no good name for the Dzhigit who did not meet the guest properly and did not show hospitality.

We believe that hospitality was considered by thinkers as a good, a virtue and a compulsory component of happiness, the tolerance of Kazakhs' worldview was expressed, who for thousands of years have been demonstrating their

adaptive opportunities under constantly changing external conditions. In our opinion, the Great Silk Road, which has run through the territory of Central Asia and Kazakhstan, which was a bridge of interaction, the dialogue of civilizations and cultures of the East and the West, played a large role here.

Kazakh life was reflected in the ethics of Kazakh akyns and zhyraus as in a mirror. In their deep reflections, thinkers put the problems crucial for the people, and their ethical ideas penetrated into the souls of people and developed their spirituality and morality.

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Glossary

Akyn – an improvising singer.

Aytys – a competition of akyns in improvisation genre.

Baksy – a shaman, adopter of the ancient pre-Islamic believes.

Batyr – brave warrior, epic hero.

Huns – the early Turks, great nomadic people coming from Altai.

Kanagat – an ethical phenomenon of moderation, sense of sobriety, person's ability to limit him/herself, ability of being satisfied with one's fate.

Khan – the highest government post in Kazakh Khanate.

Khanate – state formation ruled by khan.

Kipchaks – Turkic nomadic people, lived predominantly in the territory of the Central Asia.

Kobyz – Kazakh national musical string instrument.

Oguzys – Medieval Turkic tribe, lived in the Central Asia and Mongolia until the XI century.

Seri – singers, ringleaders of merriment. They are characterized as proud and generous people with delicate artistic taste and sense of tact in communication with others. Chivalrous behavior and internal world of seri are also important.

Sheshen – a speaker; a person possessing a gift of rhetoric and public speaking art.

Synshy – an expert of people's battle and other qualities.

Zhyrau – a singer and teller of historical songs. He occupied a place by a khan and participated in conduct of very important public affairs. Zhyraus were considered as prophetic poets, predicting the future.

Zhyrshy – a performer of zhyrs.

Zhuz – a group of Kazakh tribal union. There are three zhuzes: Older, Middle and Minor zhuz.