

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Philosophical Essence of The Karakalpak Zhyrau Tradition

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Abstract

This article discusses the life and creative paths of Karakalpak folk zhyraus, their performance skills and unique aspects, the zhyrau schools founded by them, and their successors. At the same time, the history of the study of the life and creative paths of the zhyrau, the opinions of scholars, are highlighted.

KEY WORDS

Zhyrau, dastan, folk art, poet, kobyz, heritage, Nogai period.

INTRODUCTION

Karakalpak folk epics are the spiritual nourishment of the Karakalpak people since ancient times, a mirror of the life of the people, a historical source of information about the past of the people. In the preservation of folk epics to this day, the merits of their performers are special, these are zhyrau, bakhshi, and storytellers. Despite the difficulties of the time and difficult lifestyle, they memorized these examples of national heritage as a treasure of our people and passed them down from generation to generation. In our article, we would like to briefly discuss the life and creative paths of jirovs, who are considered performers of heroic epics.

METHODS

In this study, a number of scientific research methods were used to reveal the philosophical essence of the Karakalpak zhyrau tradition. First of all, the stages of formation and development of the Karakalpak zhyrau tradition were studied using the method of historical and logical analysis. With the help of this method, the historical roots of the art of zhyrau, its place in the system of oral folk art, and its significance in the life of society were analyzed.

Also, using the comparative-analytical method, the creative heritage of Karakalpak zhyraus was compared with the epic

traditions of other Turkic peoples. This made it possible to identify the general and specific aspects of the zhyrau tradition. In the research process, a textual (textological) approach was also used, and philosophical ideas in epic works performed by folk epics and zhyraus were analyzed.

In addition, based on a systematic and conceptual approach, spiritual and moral values, ideas of humanism, patriotism, and justice reflected in the Karakalpak zhyrau tradition were studied. In the study, based on the theoretical views of folklore studies and philosophical sciences, the spiritual and educational significance of the zhyrau tradition was scientifically substantiated.

As a result, the methods used served to deepen the philosophical essence of the Karakalpak zhyrau tradition and determine its place in the development of national culture and spirituality.

DISCUSSION

Soppasli Sipira zhyrau is considered one of the founders of the Karakalpak zhyrau art, who managed to create his own school. Due to the sharpness of his words, he was a wise man who could fairly resolve disputes between khans. Its name can also be found in the history of Kazakh, Nogai, Tatar, and Bashkir

cultures. However, all sources state: "Soppasli Sipira zhyrau is the founder of the Karakalpak zhyrau school"[1.179]. As a result of scientific expeditions conducted in recent years, many of Soppasli Sipira zhyrau's *terme-tolghu*, *dastans*, and poems were recorded from among the people, and according to the results of research, it was established that he was a famous zhyrau and poet who lived in the 14th century.

The *dastan* "Yedige" in the performance of Soppasli Sipira zhyrau is considered one of the cultural heritage of ancient times. The *dastan* mainly describes the events of the Golden Horde in the 14th-15th centuries. The existence of manuscript copies of the *dastan* "Yedige," copied by calligraphers in the 18th-19th centuries, has been established [2.52]. Judging by the fact that it was copied by scribes, the *dastan* undoubtedly means that it was one of the favorite epics of the people. Among the Karakalpak people, to this day, there is a belief: "If he sings "Yedige," the day will come." Thus, this *dastan* testifies to the fact that the people were witnesses to sorrowful days. The *dastan* "Yedige" is truly a *dastan* written in the artistic language and life of the people.

Soppasli Sipira Zhyrau participates as the main character in the *dastan* "Yedige." In his participation as one of the characters of the work, he is compared to Bayan, the main character of the "Epic of Igor's Regiment." Academician D. S. Likhachev, who studied the history of ancient Russian literature, wrote about the image of Bayan: "Bayan is considered one of the main characters of the epic about Igor's regiment, as well as the author who saw that event with his own eyes"[4.77]. The same can be said about Soppasli Sipira Zhyrau. He was a poet who experienced all the events of the Nogai period and was able to express his opinion about it.

Scholars who have conducted scientific research on the life and creative path of Soppasli Sipira zhyrau include A.Margulan, M.Auezov, S.Mukhanov, E.Ismailov, B.Kenjaboev, Kh.Suyinyashaliyev, M.Magaun, K.Maksetov, N.Dovkorayev, I.Sagitov, K.Ayimbetov, M.Nurmukhamedov, K.Mambetov, S.Bakhodirova, and others. At this point, we considered it appropriate to dwell on some of their opinions. Kazakh academician A. Margulan noted that "Soppasli Sipira zhyrau came from the Kipchak clan and was a venerable elder"[3.111], while M. Magauin, who conducted extensive research on this period, noted that "Soppasli Sipira zhyrau is the founder of the largest epic in Karakalpak literature and the school of zhyraus"[5.9-10]. The sharp-penned writer Sh.Sh. Ualikhanov expresses the following opinion about the zhyrau:

"Soppasli Sipira zhyrau was considered the performer of many epic poems of the Nogai period and is mentioned as the author of the epic "Yedige"" [6.166].

The well-known researcher N. Davkaraev, in his research work of 1946, expressed the opinion that "the founders of Karakalpak literature begin with Soppasli Sipira zhyrau, Asan Kaigy, and Jiyrenshe sheshen, who are considered representatives of the artistic wordsmithy of the Nogai period"[3.111], while the literary scholar K. Maksetov, as a conclusion of his research, recognizes that he lived in the 14th century and was widely known in Kazakh, Tatar, Bashkir, and Nogai folklore during the period of the Nogai or Golden Horde Khanate [2.52].

The reason for the popularity of Soppasli Sipira Jirov's poems lies in the richness and depth of his philosophical ideas. The zhyrau felt the sorrow of the people, the pain of the people with his heart, and this is reflected in his works. In his works, the zhyrau promoted such ideas as equality, justice, freedom, and liberty, which gave hope to the people's faith in tomorrow.

A talented, well-known representative of Karakalpak literature, who lived in the 18th century, is considered to be Jien zhyrau. There are various assumptions about the year of birth of the zhyen zhyrau. Although some sources state that he was born in 1730 and died in 1784, his historical periods in his works did not correspond to each other, which led to the emergence of various views among scientists.

Based on his works, it is said that Jiyen Jirov was born and raised in Turkestan, and because he came from a poor family, he lived a difficult life from a young age. The life of the nephew-jirov was spent in poverty. Sometimes, among the people, he played the *qubiz* and performed *terma-to'lg'ov*. Jiyen jirov is a jirov, a poet who experienced the sorrowful days that befell the country, the difficulties of life together with the people, and was able to vividly depict it in his works. The Jien jirov was also distinguished by his skillful performance of folk epics. There is information that he performed the *dastans* "Buzaman," "Kurbanbek," "Yer Kusay," "Jaskelen," "Alpamysh," "Forty Girls," "Haji-Gerey," "Yer Ziyoar."

Initial information about Jien Jirov can be found in the manuscripts of O. Kozhurov, K. Ayimbetov, S. Maulenov, and Sh. Khojanियазov. Later, Professor S. Akhmedov and Associate Professors B. Ismailov and K. Sultanov created textbooks intended for educational institutions, which included

information about the life and creative path of the zhyrau.

Regarding the works of Jien zhyrau and his place in socio-political life, the representative of literature N. Davkaraev expressed the following thoughts: "Along with being a poet, he was also a famous zhyrau, with whose name many Karakalpak epics have been preserved to this day"[2.74]. Professor K.Ayimbetov said: "This book contains the pearls of words of beloved sons of the Karakalpak people, leaders who led the people, masters of words. There are true words of the beloved sons of the people, such as Jiyan zhyrau, who, in times when the people were living in poverty, took his kubyz in his hands and left the people's regret, pain, and sorrow in history with artistic words"[2.74].

It is known that the works of Jien Jirov have not only been the object of research by representatives of literary studies, but have also been studied by historians. Historians S.P. Tolstov, T.A. Zhdanko studied the work of Jien zhyrau and gave a high assessment of his works. Academician of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan, historian S. Kamalov, asserts that "the well-known, famous poet-jirov of the Karakalpak is considered to be Jien"[2.74].

Starting in the 1930s, work began on collecting and publishing the works of Jien Jirov from among the people. In 1940, with a brief introduction about Jien Jirov, his poem "Puskan el" ("Posqan el") was published in the collection "Karakalpak Folk Art," and from those years onwards, the study, collection, and publication of Jien Jirov's works were studied separately and included in the textbooks of schools and higher educational institutions, and scientific research was conducted. In 1959 and 1981, the poet's collection of songs was published under the title "Puskan el" ("Posqan yel").

One of the largest Karakalpak zhyraus who lived in the second half of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century is Nurabilla zhyrau. Nurabilla Zhyrau contributed to the widespread dissemination of zhyrau art among the Karakalpaks and was considered a master of words and melodies. The people listened to his works with love and respect. Elderly people remember him and say, "He was the nightingale of the zhyraus."

Nurabilla Jirov was born in 1863 into a poor shoemaker's family in the Chimbay district. Nurabilla lived a hard life from a young age. From childhood, he had a strong interest in singing and poetry. Initially, he performed songs and melodies at small celebrations. As time passed, Nurabilla Jirov's work

also became more refined. There were times when grand celebrations were not held without Nurabilla jirov. He is considered a zhyrau who found a place in the hearts of the people and earned their love.

He first became an apprentice to Turimbet zhyrau in Chimbay district, and then to Paleke zhyrau. He listened to and studied the epics "Alpomish," "Koblan," and "Yedige," which are pearls of our people. Then he went to Yerman jirov and fully mastered the epic "Sharyar," and from Qozoqboy jirov, the epics "Alpomish," "Qo'blon," "Shora," "Yedige," and "Sharyar" [7.321].

Nurabilla belongs to the ranks of master zhyraus who created a unique way of playing musical instruments, singing songs, and skillfully performing epics. He managed to create the "Nurabilla Yuli" school in Karakalpak epic poetry, which can serve as an example for other zhyraus. He was a mentor to such famous zhyraus as Kurbanbay, Kulamet, Abdirasuuly, Yesemurat. The name of Nurabilla is widespread not only among the Karakalpaks, but throughout the entire Khorezm region. Legends are widespread among the people about the performance skills of Nurabilla. In one of them, it is said: "If Nurabilla the zhyrau performed sorrowful epics, then in winter there would be a storm and snow, and in summer it would be a cloud and rain"[8.139]. When we listen to people who listen to him, many emphasize that he had a beautiful voice and was a skilled master of the instrument "who could make the Kubis speak."

Studying the life and creative paths of the zhyraus who lived in each period, we can see that each of them has their own creative path and performance skills. For example, if we consider the works of Soppasli Sipira zhyrau and Jien zhyrau, we will see that they are known among the people not only for their skillful performance of dastans, but also for the creation of songs and poems by their own pen. Now the zhyrau became known among the people not only as an epic performer, but also through the introduction of his creative style to society. Thus, through this, we can understand that development in society has risen to a new level. The reason was that, along with folklore heritage, author's works began to spread widely among the people.

Nurabilla Zhyrau, who was a successor of the art of zhyrau, is known as a talented person who knew many folk epics by heart. Of course, diligently studying and performing many epics requires strength, knowledge, hard work, and skill. Nurabilla Zhyrau is also a zhyrau who left many examples of

our inexhaustible treasures as a legacy for future generations. He trained many students, and later each of them became a major zhyrau and founded schools of zhyrau art. By this time, we can see the growing interest in the art of zhyrau among the people, the increase in the number of living guardians of folk heritage. This means that society, the people, valued and respected the creative path of zhyraus, and therefore their status was high. We see this in the example of Nurabilla zhyrau and his disciples.

CONCLUSION

Thus, as we study the work of zhyraus over time, we can see that the art of zhyrau, which has been passed down to us as an inheritance since ancient times, has developed, been refined, and enriched. Since the Karakalpak people have a strong and deep genealogy of zhyrau, we must study and develop them. We must not allow the art of zhyrau, which is one of our national values, to disappear and be forgotten.

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