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Artistic Culture of the Kazakh People and Its Spiritual-Moral Origins

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Abstract

The article examines the history of origin, formation and development of the artistic culture of the Kazakh people and its spiritual-moral foundations. It presents numerous historical facts and information about the rich heritage of artistic culture of ancient peoples inhabiting the Eurasian steppes. The study analyzes the role of prominent figures who created immortal works of art on Kazakh land during the early and developed Middle Ages, beginning from the Paleolithic era and continuing through the Bronze Age. These civilizations entered history as creators of a distinctive way of life and unique art: the Aurignacian, Magdalenian and Andronovo civilizations, as well as the Cimmerian culture that flourished in Eastern Europe 1000 years BC. Special attention is given to the cultures and spiritual values of Turkic-origin tribes and peoples during the Saka era.

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Introduction

Kazakh culture is a vivid reflection of the history of the nomadic people who have inhabited the Great Steppe for thousands of years.

As it flourished on the land of present-day Kazakhstan, our ancestors shaped a unique worldview, mentality, and spirituality specific to our people. They developed a distinct philosophical mindset and wisdom, traditions, customs, and practices- in short, the unique moral and spiritual values and original culture of the nation.

Main content

Throughout human history, various types of civilizations have emerged and flourished. Their main characteristics have been defined by the degree of their interconnectedness with cultural phenomena. In many cases, the earliest civilizations were established alongside culture, coexisting and evolving together, mutually enriching each other in a close-knit relationship.

“As modern science confirms, the Steppe Eurasia has gone through all stages of human development, growth, and flourishing... The vast history of the Great Steppe in the 4th, 3rd, and 2nd millennia BCE is known to us only through archaeological excavations, which have provided limited but valuable insights. From the Paleolithic era to the Bronze Age, a series of life patterns- conventionally referred to as the Aurignacian culture, the Magdalenian culture, and the Andronovo culture- emerged. By the 1st millennium BCE, these cultural processes evolved into the Cimmerian culture in the Eastern European region. During that period, the Great Steppe was inhabited by various diverse tribes. Around 750 BCE, the powerful wave of the Saka tribes displaced the Cimmerians from the Qiyam Steppe, north of the Black Sea. Later, by the mid-6th century CE, a unified Turkic civilization had formed, representing a direct continuation and renewed development of ancient steppe culture.[Magauin, www...] In the words of the renowned artist and philosopher Nicholas Roerich, “*Culture is the embodiment of true virtue, creative beauty, and enlightening knowledge.*” [Roerich, 1994] German poet, philosopher, and art theorist Friedrich Schiller stated: “*Culture is a great force that leads to the development of civilization and humanity. While ancient human culture was founded on unified principles, the culture of later periods branched into art, science, morality, and kindness, serving the ideals of compassion, beauty, and truth.*” [Schiller, www...] According to Schiller, art plays a pivotal role as the unifying factor of all cultural phenomena. Art is regarded as the equivalent of artistic culture- an embodiment of the spiritual heritage of a people, rooted in virtue and beauty.

In general, there are numerous perspectives that reveal the significance and role of culture and artistic culture in the lives of individuals and society. About half a century ago, Western scholars analyzed world literature and identified nearly 200 definitions of the term "culture." According to Professor Yury Vyazemsky of the Moscow State Institute of International Relations, today there are nearly 600 recorded definitions that attempt to capture the essence of culture. Ultimately, the meanings and ideas behind these various definitions are not significantly different from one another. Any of the aforementioned viewpoints can rightfully serve as a foundation or starting point for a scientific study or analytical article on the subject. Today, cultural values are classified into material and spiritual spheres, and all such values - regardless of category - are the product of human intellect and have been created by human hands throughout the course of history. Based on this perspective, the key to ensuring the successful future development of modern independent Kazakhstan lies in the scholarly evaluation, study, and thorough understanding of our nation's historical and spiritual culture. Only by deeply

comprehending and internalizing the unique identity of our people as a united nation can this goal be achieved.

Materials and Methods The spiritual chronicle of the Kazakh people, formed over centuries, is deeply rooted in national identity. Therefore, the spiritual values that serve as the foundation and source of strength for Kazakh artistic culture should play a fundamental role as the historical and cultural basis of modern Kazakh culture. The term "*artistic culture*" is interpreted in various ways, depending on its historical, ethnographic, philosophical, cultural, art historical, and educational objectives and contexts. When analyzed through the lens of analytical methods, each of these disciplines defines *artistic culture* according to its specific subject of study and professional focus. The thematic directions and scientific research methods applied to this field are also diverse: some view culture as a unique phenomenon of social life, while others understand it as an integral part of a people's cultural identity, such as customs and traditions. No matter which angle these disciplines approach the subject from, they all share a common goal: artistic culture is a synthesis of the highest achievements of human intellect and national artistic values, and it remains the most effective means and instrument for conveying those values to society. Moreover, the concept encompasses all forms of artistic and creative, spiritual and moral activity performed by humans- including language, music, visual arts, film, theater, and more- as well as the processes of spiritual education and the creation of art.

Every nation contributes to the global cultural treasury through its unique artistic and creative works. The Kazakh ethnos, having inherited the cultural legacy of the creative peoples and flourishing civilizations that once inhabited ancient Kazakhstan, today ranks among the nations richest in spiritual values worldwide. This conclusion is supported by scientific evidence rooted in the study of the Kazakh people's 1,500-year historical journey- an unbroken chain of spiritual and moral values and national traditions of unity and heroism. These have been passed down from generation to generation and are now recognized as part of the world's cultural and civilizational heritage.

Discussion and Results According to widely known data, there are currently 256 nations living across the globe. Each of them possesses a unique way of life, national identity, history, culture, profession, arts, worldview, and traditions. Among these is the Kazakh people- one of the most ancient nations in the world, having undergone a lengthy process of formation and possessing a significant place in the civilizational history of Eurasia. The unification and flourishing of the Kazakh nation as a people was greatly influenced by numerous tribes and ethnic groups of the Great Steppe. Over millennia, the region witnessed the continuous convergence of rich cultural traditions from European, Indian, Chinese, Byzantine, Iranian, and other civilizations. Until the 20th century, the Kazakh nation was considered one of the nomadic peoples of Eurasia. Through careful observation and accumulation of knowledge from both East and West, the Kazakhs developed a distinct worldview and way of life.

As a result of these deep interconnections, the people of the Great Steppe formed a unique artistic culture and set of customs and traditions that distinguished them from other nations. According to historian Zhambyl Artykbaev, "Kazakh society, having fully absorbed the cultural achievements of Eurasian nomads, represents a unique phenomenon in both its internal and external structures, and in its meaning. A distinct culture was formed here- one that does not conform to either Western or Eastern cultural standards. Its foundations were laid in antiquity and the Middle Ages. The Turkic peoples, for whom Kazakh land served as the cradle of their civilization, shaped a unique model of both nomadic and settled civilizations, and played a key role in the development of medieval cities and cultural centers, turning them into hubs of artistic culture and science." [Margulan, Akishev, Kadyrbaev, Orazbayev, 1966] As a result, flourishing art forms such as poetry, painting, and music spread widely across Kazakh lands via the Great Silk Road, which connected the East and West and passed through

ancient cities like Taraz, Otyrar, Ispidzhab (now Sairam), and Talhir (now Talgar). Architecture began to thrive. In regions like Sairam, Turkistan, Taraz, and Otyrar, mosques, madrasas, and religious sites such as the "Aisha Bibi" mausoleum were constructed. Sculpture celebrating spiritual and religious values also developed.

From the Bronze Age onwards, stone sculptures- "*balbals*"- erected at burial sites became more refined over time, evolving into masterpieces of sculpture. These monuments, often called "*stone statues*" in history and "*balbal*" in Turkic written sources, are mentioned in the Kül Tigin inscription with phrases like "...we erected balbals for the brave and noble warriors." Stone balbals found in Kazakhstan commonly depict figures such as a "girl with forty braided strands," a "woman wearing a *kimeshek* (traditional headwear) or scarf," or a "man armed with weapons," showcasing the spiritual and artistic depth of the culture.

During the early and high Middle Ages, as Islam spread widely across the territory of present-day Kazakhstan, the interiors and exteriors of buildings and palaces began to be decorated with plasterwork, ornamental patterns, sculptures, and inscriptions. The domes and minarets of mosques and monuments were adorned with the most refined and intricate decorative motifs of the time, representing the pinnacle of architectural art. A key component of architecture was applied decorative arts. Skilled urban and rural artisans widely used this form of art in the objects they created. Ceramic items, in particular- made from fired, multicolored clay and adorned with various patterns- were in high demand among the population. Applied arts were commonly used by the semi-nomadic and semi-sedentary peoples, especially in the production of household items. These handcrafted objects were often used to decorate clothing, belts, and accessories with intricate embellishments. The ornamentation on belts and sashes is frequently encountered in ancient Turkic stone sculptures, indicating that such items were not merely functional parts of attire but also outstanding examples of the Kazakh nation's artistic culture.

Painting in the Kazakh Steppe emerged long before architecture.

During the Bronze Age, artists decorated everyday household items with various symbols and patterns. Later, as architectural art began to develop, they also began to embellish pottery and construction materials with intricate ornamentation. The walls of buildings were adorned with designs featuring plant motifs and geometric shapes.

Another widely practiced form of painting in the territory of Kazakhstan was petroglyphs- ancient Turkic carvings etched into stone. These stone markings can be divided into three main types based on their content: 1. Images of mounted hunters or scenes of one-on-one combat; 2. Depictions of wild animals; 3. Symbolic images of warriors on horseback carrying the "*Börüli Bayraq*" ("Wolf Banner").

These carvings reflect the fact that the Turkic Khaganates already had a distinct military and political identity at that time. More broadly, they reveal that the medieval period was a time of constant military struggle and heroic defense of the homeland for our ancestors. Even in those early times, ancient and medieval Kazakhstan had risen to a high level of civilization in terms of historical development, establishing itself as a major center of global artistic culture and spiritual heritage.

It is no exaggeration to say that the periods of civilizational flourishing known in European history as the "Renaissance" and the "Enlightenment" were experienced in the Eurasian steppes some seven to eight centuries earlier. Many historians who have thoroughly studied the Eurasian continent from west to east do not dispute this idea.

Nearly two centuries ago, French historian and researcher Léon Cahun wrote in his "*Introduction to the History of Asia*": "It was the descendants of Turan who brought civilization to the West." This heartfelt statement reflects an acknowledgment of a historical truth. The word "Turan" itself has been historically used since the 6th century CE as an ancient name for the region of Turkestan, the land

inhabited by the Turkic peoples. According to renowned Kazakh writer Mukhtar Magauin, "In the second half of the 6th century, the Turkic hegemony spread across the entire Eurasian continent." From that period onward, early forms of runic script- later known as the Orkhon-Yenisei script - came into widespread use. The art of language flourished, and the gravestone inscriptions of great figures from that era stand today as extraordinary examples of early Turkic literature, recognized globally as part of the world's cultural and spiritual heritage.[Magauin, 1992] The traces of millennia-old civilizations buried in the Turan steppes are gradually being uncovered through archaeological excavations and historical monuments, revealing their secrets to modern generations. More than fifty years ago, an archaeological excavation at the Issyk burial mound in the Zhetysu region of Kazakhstan uncovered the tomb of a Saka leader, famously dubbed the "Golden Man." The site yielded around 4,000 miniature golden sculptures and ornaments of animals and birds, each considered a unique work of art. In the years since, several more "Golden Man" dating back to the 5th century BCE have been discovered. These finds strongly support the global scholarly assertion that a distinct branch of human artistic culture first blossomed in the Great Steppe, specifically around the Turkestan region. According to researchers, even in those ancient times, the artistic expressions of the Turks' ancestors - the Saka people - were already classified into various styles and disciplines, showing signs of a professional and systematized approach to art, comparable to modern standards. Terms like "bird style," "animal style," "Sogdian style," and "zoomorphic style" serve as distinctive identifiers for the artistic movements that originated during the Saka era, showcasing the cultural and aesthetic sophistication of that ancient civilization.

The golden ornaments featuring "animal style" motifs- such as depictions of the snow leopard, elk, argali, horse, and bird- crafted on the clothing of the "Golden Man" are among the finest works of art in the world, currently holding a rightful place in the global collection of artistic cultural treasures. A replica of this unique archaeological artifact is now on display at the museum in New York City, USA.

The items discovered from the mound offer invaluable insights into the culture, art, and religious beliefs of the ancient Saka tribes who lived in the early Iron Age in what is now Kazakhstan. These findings serve as a testament to the richness of Saka civilization. Ancient scholars and historians such as Herodotus, Muhammad Haidar Dulati, Muhammad Kashgari, and Ibn-Fadlan have documented detailed accounts of the artistic achievements of the Saka people in their writings, further attesting to the significance of Saka art and culture in world history.

The ancient peoples of the Great Steppe who inhabited the territory of modern Kazakhstan carved their history and words of wisdom for future generations into stone. It is well known from history that the Latin alphabet, which is used in modern civilizations, emerged around a thousand years ago. However, the Turkic peoples had their own unique script and literary language that existed six centuries before the Latin alphabet. The inscriptions and writings that have survived from those times, carved into stones, are a clear proof of this historical fact. According to the renowned Kazakh scholar Altai Amanzholov, who studied Turkic languages in depth, "our ancestors had mastered the ancient Turkic language over one and a half thousand years ago." As an example, the scholar highlights the "Great Kül Tigin " and "Little Kül Tigin " inscriptions, which were engraved on steles around 1300-1500 years ago. The secrets of these ancient writings were first revealed in 1893 by the Danish scholar Vilhelm Thomsen. As a result, many valuable historical data and rich linguistic materials from the ancient world were added to the global scientific community's knowledge. Turkic language experts assert that about 65% of the modern Kazakh language is derived from Old Turkic words. Among the inscriptions on the "Kül Tigin" ancient Turkic monument, which dates back over a thousand and a half years, are words like: Tengri (God), buyruq (command), tug (banner), el (people), men (I), sen (you), biz (we), kan

(blood), er (man), alp (giant), qyz (girl), ağash (tree), at (horse), köz (eye), and many other words still in use in the Kazakh language today. The "Kül Tigin inscription" is one of the ancient Turkic peoples' greatest cultural treasures, unique in its own right. According to S.G. Klyashtorny, a Turkologist at the Institute of Eastern Manuscripts in St. Petersburg, the "Kül Tigin" monument is not only of immense value to the Turkic peoples but also a permanent cultural heritage of the entire world.[Klyashtorny, 1964] The historical significance of this inscription was first revealed to the world through the Orkhon-Enisey written monuments, which have survived to the present day from the 7th-8th centuries. The rich content, intellectual depth, and artistic merit of these monuments demonstrate that the ancient Turkic tribes had already reached a high level of poetic and literary expression.[Januszkevič, 1846] The "Kül Tigin Epic", inscribed on a stela, celebrates the heroism of Kül Tigin, the commander of the Eastern Turkic Khaganate army, who was known as the "blue sword" of the "sky Turks", and Tonyukuk, the distinguished statesman, in their efforts to secure the borders of the state. This epic describes their heroic deeds and includes lines like: "For the Turkish people, I did not sleep at night, I did not sit by day," "We bent the knees, we humbled the heads," "I revived the dying people. I clothed the naked, made the poor rich, and increased the small number into a great one." Made up of six episodes and 428 verses, the "Kül Tigin Epic" stands as a monumental poetic work, unparalleled in global literary history for its artistic power and linguistic richness. This epic, which reflects the crucial moments of the Second Turkic Khaganate era (683-745 AD), is a unique and timeless treasure in the history of world literature. Many of the artistic images, proverbial expressions, and clever phrases from the epic are still in use in the Kazakh language today.

In the First Turkic Khaganate, the Turkic-speaking tribes communicated in Sogdian. However, in the Second Khaganate, the primary means of communication was the Runic script. Over 200 stone monuments, dating back to the 7th and 8th centuries, have been found in regions including Mongolia, Altai, Khakassia, Tuva, Eastern Turkestan, and the Jeti-su region, each featuring inscriptions and symbols carved in the ancient Turkic alphabet.

In the 5th century BC, inscriptions found at the Issyk Kurgan in Kazakhstan revealed 17 letters, 13 of which were marked with the ancient Turkic Runic alphabet.

Starting from the 6th century AD, the Turkic literary language began to form, and over the next two centuries, oral-poetic traditions rooted in ancient times flourished among the Turkic-speaking peoples of ancient Kazakhstan. Oral literature manifested in both poetry and prose. In the 14th-15th centuries, the oral literary works of the tribes and clans inhabiting the territory of Kazakhstan laid the foundation for the development of folklore. The main genres of early folk literature included songs, legends, parables, and proverbs, often centered on ritualistic and everyday themes. The early works were predominantly mythological in nature. Among the widely spread forms of oral literature, one can mention the fairy tales dedicated to moral and heroic themes. One of the significant literary genres was the epic poem. These began to take the form of epic narratives about the warriors who defended the land, appearing in the 6th-8th centuries.

Written literature mainly developed in the cities. During the 11th-12th centuries, a broader range of literary works emerged. Among the earliest and most significant of these is the famous didactic work by the Turkic philosopher, poet, scholar, and statesman Jusuf Balasaghuni titled "Kutadgu Bilig" (1069). This work, which addresses matters of governance, served as the "Constitution" of the Karakhanid dynasty in the 11th century.

The Turkic Dictionary written by Mahmud Kashgari, "Divan-i Lughat al-Turk" (1074), and the Kipchak (Cumans) Dictionary, "Codex Cumanicus" (1303), are valuable written heritage works that provide significant information about the verbal art of the ancient Turkic peoples, including the early

history of the Kazakh people.

Starting with the "Kül Tigin inscriptions" and "Korqut Ata" (7th century) works, and continuing through the scientific and literary works of Al-Farabi (9th century) and Ahmad Yasawi (11th century), the "Enlightenment period" elevated the Great Steppe into a unique intellectual and cultural center of the world.

Among the influential works in the public and cultural life of city dwellers, particularly those promoting the mystical Sufi path of Islam, the writings of poets advocating for the Sufi way were in high demand. One such poet was Khoja Ahmad Yasawi, a prominent philosopher, poet, and thinker from Turkestan. His work, the "Divan-i Hikmet" (The Book of Wisdom), written in the Kipchak dialect, provides extensive valuable information on Turkic peoples, including the Kazakh people, their early culture, literature, history, ethnography, and economy. Yasawi, who laid the foundations for the spread of Islam among the Turkic people, became known as "Azret Sultan" and was buried in Turkestan. In the late 14th century, under the orders of the famous Emir Timur, a mausoleum was constructed over his tomb. In 2003, the Yasawi Mausoleum was included in the UNESCO World Heritage List as a historical monument of global significance. One of Yasawi's contemporaries and spiritual disciples, Suleyman Bakhyrgani, who further developed his ideas, was renowned as "Hakim Ata". His works, including the "Bakhyrgani Kitabi" and "Akyrzaman Kitabi" (The Book of the End of Times), were inspired by Yasawi's "Divan-i Hikmet" and addressed issues of aesthetics, ethics, the purity of the human soul, and its harmony with the Creator and the natural world. Through his poetic works based on religious legends, Suleyman Bakhyrgani introduced early examples of the "nazira" style in Turkic literature in the 12th-14th centuries, which involved rewriting known stories in a new and innovative manner.

In addition to literature and oral creativity, the pursuit of scientific knowledge spread widely in medieval Kazakhstan cities. Linguistics and history sciences developed significantly. The knowledge of the nomadic peoples in astronomy, geography, and other natural sciences began to be written and published in the form of scientific treatises or works during the medieval period. Even at that time, the famous scholar from Otrar, Abu Nasir al-Farabi, who made a significant contribution to the global development of scientific thought, became well known throughout the world. He deeply studied and mastered the philosophical works of great thinkers such as Pythagoras, Archimedes, Aristotle, Euclid, and Ptolemy. Al-Farabi wrote pioneering treatises in almost all areas of science: philosophy, mathematics, physics, astronomy, botany, linguistics, logic, music theory, and other sciences, and his name is immortalized in the history of civilization as an encyclopedic scholar who contributed immensely to the development of universal human intellectual thought. Al-Farabi, recognized as the "Second Teacher" who continued the teachings of the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle- known as the "First Teacher"- was also famous for his mathematical works. In the 12th century, his scientific writings were translated into many European languages and published. Since that era, the tradition of dividing all sciences into theory and practice began with Al-Farabi. In addition, scholars from that time, such as the astronomer and mathematician Abbas Jauhari, the philologist Isaac al-Farabi, and the geographer Janak al-Qimaqi, all demonstrated the advanced level of domestic knowledge and culture.[«The Song of Five Centuries» Volume 1] Thus, the great poets, philosophers, and scholars who descended from Turkic roots laid the foundation for the "Eastern Renaissance" of the medieval era, raising the global levels of sculpture and architecture, poetry, and sciences to new heights.

It is known that every nation rises to the heights of global civilization through its spiritual and intellectual work and artistic creations. Beginning in the mid-15th century, a distinct artistic culture directly associated with the Kazakh people began to form. Kazakh literature was enriched and matured

through the rich spiritual heritage created by the peoples who inhabited the current territory of Kazakhstan. In this regard, figures such as Al-Farabi, Ahmad Yasawi, Suleiman Bakhrygani, Jusup Balasaghuni, Kadirgali Zhalayiri, Muhammad Dulati, and other great figures who left an indelible mark in the fields of Kazakh-Turkic culture and science, established the intellectual and spiritual renaissance of the Great Steppe. This period continued through the intellectual and reformist thinkers from the end of the medieval era to the rise of prominent Kazakh philosophers such as Sypry, Zhirenshe, Asan Kaygy, Kaztugan, Dosmambet, Shalkyiz, Jiembet, Margasqa, Aktamberdi, and Bukhara Zhyrau. In medieval Kazakh poetry, the zhiroas (philosophers and poets) played a leading role. "In the spiritual life of the people, poetry, which emerged as the leading genre, was not only the leader of Kazakh literature for several centuries but also the most important genre. The poets of this era, the zhiroas, bore the heavy burden of Kazakh poetry, and their works made a significant contribution to world literature." [Gumilev, 2002] Kazakh poetry placed great value on the art of the zhiroas. The zhiroas' lofty songs called for the protection of the motherland and the people, fostering unity and brotherhood, and advocating for goodness, wisdom, and knowledge with their maxims and teachings. The historical events and the fate of famous figures that formed the basis of the Kazakh epic and lyrical-epic poems also emerged from the works of the zhiroas. The epic poems like Oraq Mamai, Kobylandy, Alpamys, Er Targin, Kor-ugli, Kamar Batyr, and social epics like Kyz Zhibek and Tolegen, Kozy Korpesh-Bayan Sulu, Kalkaman-Mamyr, have artistic value and poetic strength that place them among the world's literary treasures, comparable to the epic poems of Ancient Greek, Indian, and Persian cultures. The task of presenting these works to the world and ensuring they are included in the global cultural heritage is an urgent mission that cannot be delayed.

The great steppe country, located along the main artery of the Silk Road, memorized and recited dozens of epic stories and legends originating from Arab, Indian, Persian, and Central Asian peoples, spreading them far and wide. Among them, "One Thousand and One Nights," "Layla and Majnun," "Seyid-Battal," "Tutinama," "The Desert of Karbala," and other works are unique spiritual treasures in human history.

During the era of the Kazakh Khanate, the establishment of the "Biy (Judge) Institution", a manifestation of the steppe democracy, paved the way for the formation of new elements in the Kazakh cultural system. As a result, the "biler sözi" (words of the judges), and "sheshendik sozder" (oratory words) began to emerge as new genres. The famous Kazakh biys (judges) were masters of improvised speeches. While performing judicial duties or serving as members of the royal council, they combined elements of both prose and poetry, contributing to the birth of a new literary genre. Among them, Töle Bi, Kazbek Bi, and AYTEKE Bi, whose poetic talent greatly contributed to the establishment of democratic values in the Kazakh steppe, delivered powerful words advocating for justice and unity. These words, calling for the creation of a just society, continue to remain relevant even today. Their calls made centuries ago resonate with the modern Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev's goals of creating a "Just Kazakhstan. A united nation. A prosperous society." It is not hard to realize the resonance between their messages and the current national ideals.

The past development of Kazakh culture and its place in global civilization has been captured in the scholarly works of internationally recognized figures. Among them, Adolf Yanushkevich, a Polish ethnographer who became famous for his historical and ethnographic writings about the Kazakh people, expressed his admiration for their spirituality and culture in his book "Diaries and Letters on a Journey to the Kyrgyz Steppe". Yanushkevich was amazed by the improvisational art and the performing talent of the Kazakh sal-seris, steppe heralds, and great poets, recognizing it as a testament to the intellectual capacity of the Kazakh people. He also expressed his amazement that these talents were found in a

people whom many around the world regarded as "wild". He said, *"I witnessed disputes between two tribes and was amazed by orators who had never heard of Demosthenes or Cicero. Could such a people be destined to only live as shepherds? Oh, no! Truly! A people with such gifts cannot be excluded from civilization: civilization will always come to the Kazakh steppe, and it will ignite the torch of knowledge. When the time comes, the present-day nomadic Kazakh will be on equal terms with those who look down on them, sitting alongside them."* [Kashgari, 1993] Indeed, the author's prediction was not without reason. As the Age of Enlightenment brought global transformations, the ideas of justice, goodness, science, knowledge, and culture spread into the Kazakh steppe, awakening national consciousness and driving efforts to improve society's values, politics, customs, and way of life according to the demands of civilization. Even during that era, the urge to correct societal shortcomings and to meet the intellectual needs of the people began to take shape.

In the transformative era that led to the "new age" of the Great Steppe's spiritual-intellectual rise, Abai Kunanbayev, the great philosopher-poet of the Kazakh people, stood at the forefront of the process of Kazakh cultural development. Abai laid the foundation for Kazakh national written literature. *"Abai, who accumulated the spiritual culture created by the West and the Kazakh people over the centuries, absorbed the positive traits of ancient Tajik-Persian, Chagatai-Turkic poetry, while also learning from Russian and Western European literature and progressive thinking, became a great poet, a wise thinker, and the grand reformer of Kazakh literature."* [Mets, 1996] As one of the finest examples of Eastern wisdom, Abai's name is honored alongside global spiritual figures like Shakespeare, Goethe, and Pushkin. His philosophical worldview, built on moral teachings, and his artistic and ethical perspectives are most notably reflected in his "Words of the Edification" (Qara sözderi), a collection of 45 separate works written in the style of classical treatises. These works, now considered global philosophical masterpieces, are shared heritage not only for the Kazakh people and the East but for all humanity.

The global interest in the Kazakh people's cultural heritage and their ethical-spiritual foundations has always been high. In 1967, the scholars from Columbia University in the United States published a book titled "Central Asia in the Age of the Russian Tsars" through the New York-London United Press. The book provides a comprehensive analysis of the enlightenment, philosophical, and intellectual works of Kazakh figures such as Abai Kunanbayev, Shokan Ualikhanov, and Ibrahim Altynsarin, praising their progressive views, which belong to all of humanity. Moreover, the book also includes valuable information about the national figures of the Alash movement such as Alihan Bokeikhanov, Ahmet Baitursynov, and Mirzhakyp Dulatov and their contributions to the political and public service. Additionally, the "World Literature Library", which includes the best works of world literature, featured "The Path of Abai", the epic novel by Mukhtar Auezov, translated into 116 languages. This two-volume masterpiece (Volumes 134 and 135) became part of the global literary heritage.

In St. Petersburg, Russia, in the Hermitage Museum, one of the world's top 10 museums, applied crafts from the Kazakh people were found, including items from the Karghaly burial site dating from the 2nd century BC to the 2nd century AD, and golden artifacts from the Saka tribes from the 1st millennium BC discovered in the Shilikti region. In Sweden, at international exhibitions, an ornate model of a Kazakh yurt, decorated with gold and bone carvings, is showcased as a remarkable piece of applied art. Similarly, at the Metropolitan Museum in New York, the East Department holds various unique works of Kazakh artisans, including woven carpets, felt items, and yurt furnishings, each a distinctive example of national applied art. According to Kazakh writer and publicist Kamal Smailorov, "These are all silent archives that represent the land and people of Kazakhstan, showcasing their talent

to the world.”

One underrepresented yet valuable part of the promotion of our cultural heritage is Kazakh folk songs and dances. The works of the great composers of the steppe, such as Korqyt, Kurmanghazy, Dauletkeri, Tattimbet, Dina, Ikhlas, Kazanap and Sugir, as well as the folk songs of Birjan, Akan, and Madi, are spiritual treasures worthy of being added to the world music encyclopedia as part of global cultural heritage. In general, the development of Kazakh culture is an essential guarantee of preserving national identity in the era of globalization, where various peoples' cultures intertwine. And maintaining national identity, in turn, will aid in distinguishing and elevating Kazakhstan through developed culture, advanced education, scientific research, and modern technology. The foundation for this progress lies in our national cultural heritage, arts, language, traditions, and spiritual-ethical principles.

Conclusion

In the era of globalization, the historical research and intellectual pursuits of each nation, as well as the effectiveness of their achievements, are primarily measured by their significant contributions to global cultural heritage, scientific knowledge, and civilization. Today, the Great Steppe Civilization and its cultural heritage, which have left a distinct mark in the process of human development and have a history spanning over twenty centuries, have been extensively researched and analyzed. This study forms the foundation for many scientific conclusions. However, a comprehensive and conclusive perspective that incorporates what has been lost and gained along the way has not yet been fully established in contemporary scientific discourse. While the available data and information provide general knowledge about the creations and phenomena of past eras, they do not offer the opportunity for in-depth understanding. Moreover, it is concerning that the rich cultural and spiritual heritage of past eras does not seem to spark the interest of the younger generation in today's world. The spiritual treasures that have developed over thousands of years and are worthy of a prominent place in global civilization must be passed on to the rising generations. This is crucial for shaping their individual qualities.

The spiritual and ethical foundations of the Kazakh people's cultural heritage, which date back to ancient times, are like a guiding star in the modern age of globalization, preventing the nation from losing its path and ensuring continuous creative and progressive development. Therefore, the revival of national spirituality begins with the search for hidden treasures of the past—preserved in archives, deep in the mystical lands stretching from the Altai to the Danube, and ensuring that these are found, understood, developed, and shared with the world. Ultimately, showing the Great Steppe as the cradle of civilization on the global stage should be the sacred duty of scholars, cultural figures, and anyone who cares about the reputation and future of the Kazakh nation.

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Художественная культура казахского народа и ее духовно-нравственные истоки

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Аннотация

В статье исследуется история возникновения, становления и развития художественной культуры казахского народа, ее духовно-нравственных истоках. Приводятся многочисленные исторические сведения и информации о богатом наследии художественной культуры древних народов населявших евразийские просторы, анализируется роль великих личностей создавших бессмертные творения искусства на казахской земле, в эпоху раннего и развитого средневековья, начиная с палеолита и продолжавшаяся в бронзовом веке, вошедшие в историю, как процесс создания своеобразного образа жизни и уникального искусства Ориньякская, Мадленская и Андроновская цивилизации, а также Киммерийскую культуру, процветавшую на восточноевропейской земле 1 тысячи лет до нашей эры; культуры и духовные ценности племен и народов тюркского происхождения в сакскую эпоху.

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Ключевые слова

Цивилизации, история казахского народа, культурное наследие, художественная культура, духовные ценности.

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