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Some Reflexions on the Selfunderstanding of the Kazakh People: A Way of Building Identity in the Modern World

A.M. Kanagatova, J.Mahoney, A.R. Masalimova, T.H. Gabitov and A.B. Kalysh

***Abstract*—**This article explores the self-identity of the Kazakh people by way of identifying the roots of self-understanding in Kazakh culture. Unfortunately, Western methods of ethno psychology cannot fully capture what is unique about identity in Kazakh culture. Although Kazakhstan is the ninth largest country in terms of geographical space, Kazakh cultural identity is not well-known in the West. In this article we offer an account of the national psychological features of the Kazakh people, in order to reveal the spiritual, mental, ethical dimensions of modern Kazakhs. These factors play a central role in the revival of forms of identity that are central to the Kazakh people.

***Keywords*—**self-understanding, ethno psychology, stereotypes, nomadic culture, cultural identity

I. Introduction

All peoples have some sense of their place in the world, a place defined in part by both historical time and geographical space. Any attempt to understand the identity of the Kazakh people must examine the ways in which Kazakhs search of the bases of cultural meaning. This is a part of the theoretical researches conducted by the French historians of the Annals school. On their view, self-identity is based upon an outlook defined by a system of images which are based upon representations of everyday life, reflexions about the self and a place in the world, including a sense of one's place in "world" history. Self-understanding is an important ethno psychological phenomenon. Its dimensions include an integrated conception of the person, the people and the nation. The identity generated in a particular social culture, pushes persons to understand themselves in ways that reflect local cultural factors while at the same time conforming to a set of rules and ways of thinking about the world. Self-identity becomes habitual, a norm of behaviour and thinking; it is accepted without critical judgement. Without traditions, habits, and shared norms no society could exist. Cultural identity embodies the morality that shapes political and legal institutions. In order for people to trust each other they must be able to take for granted that most of the people with whom they interact share a cultural identity. Otherwise their sense of self will be seriously disrupted. In order to achieve stability a share cultural identity must be intergenerational. If this identity is based on a respect for each person then the traditions will be sustained by existential dialogue, a mutual dialogue of the people based in part on cooperation, interaction, correlation, and mutual understanding. There is a tendency by some to think about cultural identity from an a priori rather than empirical standpoint. However, individuals aspiring to live with others on terms of cooperation, mutual interaction, and mutual understanding will invariably be affected by contingent local factors. This idea is defended by G.G.Gadamera, who claims that everyone remains for another same for everyone finds itself(himself) in other, changing itself on an image of another [1, p.86]. One result of intelligent life is the phenomenon of common cultural. The general ideals and values are displayed in rules, norms, society and state laws. The search for universal values does not entail, however, an aspiration to unification or aggressive zeal. For the successful creation of a culture it is necessary for persons to be able to be themselves and able to co-exist with others - to recognize the rights of another because this is the only way for individuality to be recognized. In other words, accepting others as they are is essential to appreciating the other as "another", as different from oneself.

Kazakh society has been developing for many centuries. From the time of the Scythians and Sakhs, Huns and Usuns, a certain set of skills and habits, concepts and motives, stereotypes and standards have evoled. These skills, etc. are not hereditary or imposed by fate. Instead, through experience of dialogue and common experience a shared sense of identity was developed. This gave rise to a cultural identity in which there were norms of behaviour that continue to affect the character, attitudes and moral identity of the Kazakh people. Wilhelm Vundt addresses this point in his "the Problem of psychology of the people» underlined: «individual life assumes the general properties of separate consciousness, and separate experiences evolve from the general properties of spirit of the people. Therefore, the psychology of the people scoops much from history in turn to give itself in the order of last, as one of its major bases» [2].

Nomadic culture is defined in part by a sense of spatial structure defined by a set of artifacts, a system of mutual relations, and a configuration of intra-cultural elements. It is

A.M. Kanagatova is with the International academy of Business, Almaty 480078, Kazakhstan as the Vice-rector, doctor of philosophy science (mob.phone: +7 701 3337409; e-mail: kanagatova@iab.kz).

Jon Mahoney is with the Kansas State University, Manhattan, USA, as the Associate Professor Dept. of Philosophy, 301A Dickens Hall (mob.phone: +785-532-0358; e-mail: mahoney@ksu.edu).

A.R. Masalimova is with the faculty of philosophy and political science, Al-Farabi Kazakh National University, Almaty 480078, Kazakhstan, Dean faculty, the professor of philosophy science (mob.phone: +7 7077339310; e-mail: jameliya10@mail.ru)

T.H. Gabitov is with the faculty of philosophy and political science, Al-Farabi Kazakh National University, Almaty 480078, Kazakhstan as The teacher, the professor of philosophy science (mob. phone: +7 7019937891; e-mail: tursungabitov@mail.ru)

A.B. Kalysh is with the faculty of History, Al-Farabi Kazakh National University, Almaty 480078, Kazakhstan as Head of Department, doctor of history science (phone: +7 7777050400; e-mail: kalysh_54@mail.ru)

obvious that the nomadic political identity is based on a «connection [that] has begun
hierarchically sub ordinary (asynchronously-historical, developed in time) and the beginnings spatially-geopolitical (synchronously existing) [3].

The dominant ideas in ethno psychology have been defined by American anthropologists. In the last 30 years of the 20th century there was an emphasis «Culture and the person», associated with the work of Ruth Benedict who has metaphorically defined culture as individual psychology which is reflected in the big screen. According to Benedict «one culture hardly comprehends the value of money, for another - they are a basis of everyday behaviour. In one society the technology is improbably weak even in the vital spheres, in other, so« primitive », technological achievements is difficult and thin are calculated on concrete situations» [4].

In the collective psychology of any people there is a mental landscape of 'the person' that defines behavioural norms for members of a society, that «collective unconscious», developing foundations, system of values, original behaviour. Following the theory of C. Jung it is possible to notice that basic elements of the unconscious represent so-called archetypes. According to C. Jung these archetypes embody components of experience which shape experience a priori, so to speak; they also express primitive forms of knowledge of an external world, the internal "curves" that influence how people see the world. According to C. Jung, the self-understanding of the person has in itself diverse archetypes, and all these archetypes possess an archaic character which can be analyzed as a deep, primary image, which the person recreates only in the intuitive way. This is the result of unconscious activity appears on a surface of human consciousness in the form of diverse images and representations [5].

In this respect «the direct affinity of Protokazakhs to life realities, sensual affinity to the observable and perceived world, quick in this life were expressed in understanding of time, space, private world of the person, other worlds of existence, sense of life, moral principles» [6, p.111].

From time immemorial, the Kazakh understanding of spirituality has been shaped by many factors. Some of these include: memory through archetypes and the values of that define an ethnic consciousness, ethnic history, oral and written national creativity, traditions and rituals. This is true of other cultures too. Perpetual mobility, fluidity, and constant metamorphoses have generated a unique Kazakh identity. A variety of communications with the nature and people in steppe open spaces, including a transmission of a large volume of oral knowledge, and an openness to the new and unusual have defined review and historicity of perception of the world.

The well known theorist of Kazakh culture K.S. Nurlanova states, «Sense the vital underlines the maintenance of the relation of Kazakhs to the person, the nature, Installed is expressed conceptually: Ishtesu (Kazakh word). Ishtesu is an experience of interrelation communication of the person with the world which is not written down and it is not fixed constantly, but it« carries », the certain person in the live life» personifies [7, p.5]. We will now illustrate the main idea of this paper by examining some Kazakh words that are central to the Kazakh identity.

Bata, Kut, Namys, Paryz (Kazakh words) are base concepts for the Kazakh, mentality of the people and wisdom. It is known that the way of life of the nomad rejects pragmatism, luxury, and idleness. The reason for this is that the identity of the people is based upon an everyday experience that dominates all aspects of self identity.

«Kut» - the universal category penetrating all material and spiritual culture, is central to the psychology of the Kazakh people. The etymology of this word differs a polysemy, but, its main component, Kut, connotes happiness, riches, prosperity.

Therefore, the most widespread wish at Kazakhs is: «Kut-bereke tileimiz». In this wish the simple formula of «happiness through preservation is expressed.

«Bata» - the blessing. Since ancient times this concept has expressed "safety" function" for Kazakhs. Bata » could only be performed by Aksakal. Aksakal is the most respectable member of a family. According to tradition a blessing can only be performed by the most dear and honourable persons. Therefore, according to tradition, this privilege was not given to young members of a family nor to women.

Moreover, Kazakhs consider: «Atadan bota kalmasin, bata kalsyn», which expresses a priority of a non-material over a material value. The more The blessing of wishes is said in a family the more happiness and prosperity» will reign.

«Namys» - the given world outlook category especially is esteemed by the Kazakh people. For the Kazakh people 'honor' is of central importance. The people possessing «Namys», can succeed and prosper in human relations and in all other areas of life.

Everything that is considered highly moral and worthy in a person is contained in «Namys». Likewise, this notion of honor also applies to norms and rules for social interaction. The truly honorable person does not offend anyone, even the most dishonorable; he treats his associates respectfully and benevolently. All of these notions are expressed by- «Namys».

«Paryz» -the sense of this word does not simply refer to "debt" in the modern sense. Rather, this word conveys a deeper notion, somewhat like the English word for 'indebtedness' which implies that one stands under an obligation of some sort.

Some values expressed by this term include: the necessity facing the person for achievement of specific goals, a duty of the person to be guided by certain moral principles and norms in the actions, to observe certain rules of behaviour in mutual relations with other people, in the relation to the people, the native land, a family, friends. Value is given to that «Paryz» - a duty and a debt of the person in relation to moral traditions of the people. «Owing to it its national images of the world of the Kazakhs, transferred through the oral nomadic culture which has left the most appreciable trace in national mentality and psychology, speech, figurative, behavioural stereotypes do not correspond in many respects to a pragmatism of present life» [8, p.35].

All elements of Kazakh identity including history, society, intellectual, political, and ethical values are based in Tengrism. Every faced of Kazakh self-understanding is registered in this

system. In a variety of works on Tengrism, the established Kazakh culturologists Auezhan Kodar, Nurlan Amrekulov, O.Zhanajdarov, and historian Murat Adzhi, etc. have clearly identified a spiritual and philosophical direction to Tengrism. It is also necessary to note the scientific research of the Turkologist Ahmet Tashagil who has discussed the considerable problems of ethnic identity that are rooted in the sociopolitical system of Ancient Turkic statehood [9].

Kazakhs since ancient times have attached great value to epithets. Attending to this fact allow us to more precisely to display what is distinctive about the Kazakh outlook and group psychology. For example, consider the pervasive use of concepts such as: «and Ak tilek"-"a light wish","Jurekten shikkan bata"-"the blessing proceeding in all sincerity». Accordingly, there are opposing concepts which express negative values, such as: «Kara oi "-" dark thought "," Kara zher "-" the black earth ». This combination oi words creates special emotional dimensions in how people understand the world. Each people has its favorites errors, including logical errors, national sophistries. Thus, we are obliged to acknowledge that people are defined not only by ideas that are present in everyday life but also concepts and intellectual frameworks that function like presuppositions; the concepts and frameworks influence how people view the world even if they are not aware of this. The national language crystalizes ideas and patterns of thought; it imposes these forms on each individual and does not allow those in the language to leave the general framework.

Rules of etiquette represent a capacious and deep concentration the world outlook of the nomadic spirit. For example, there are taboos to which the young generation must strictly adhere: «do not spit in a well from which you drink; do not put something on bread and do not kick it; do not come to salt; do not run home; do not cross the road before the senior; do not take a place before the senior and do not interrupt them; be not rude to parents; do not laugh at the poor; do not stare at the person and do not turn to it a back; do not beat cattle on a head; do not swing an empty cradle; do not whistle in the house; do not throw a cap under your feet; having visited the house where the person has died, do not go to other house; do not ruin ant hills and the bird's nests.These and many other interdictions in aggregate the kept as an eye pupil a national originality of national character culture, the literature belief, and language, » [10. p.144].

II. Conclusion

It is necessary to emphasize that in a modern Kazakhstan society the role of former traditions weakens and these traditions are not fully regenerated by younger generations. In the modern world of Kazakhstan, as elsewhere, individuals search for the new bases of a civilisation and culture. Often the person appears caught up in a reflective process: «the modern human that seduce with ideas of Eurasian remember roots Panturkic try to return in a bosom of archaic Kazakh culture» the modern person is potentially seduced by the idea of a Eurasian collective memory rooted in a Panturkic identity which calls for a return to the bosom of archaic Kazakh culture [11. p.50].

The modern culture of the people presents itself with rudiments of a set of cultural forms representing a range of possibilities for self-identification. Moreover, this inaugurates a search for new models, such as a call to return to Kazakh values such as orderliness, integrity, special spatial structure where life of Kazakhs is focused on fixing of cyclic time. When it comes to self understanding the subjects of society are at their own discretion, compelled to solve problems as they arise. Some people shift responsibility for their destiny on others, on external circumstances and the momentary requirements caused by them. Others, actively occupied with sense search for meaning, without losing individuality, go beyond its limits in extra-private spheres, by pursuing the extra-personal life. They expand the borders of individual limitation, thereby, enriching it, realising an individual life in the world. These individuals perceive that life is centered around the world and cultural action and thus they incur responsibility for the world and mankind.To conclude we want to not the optimist forecast of the philosopher V.U. Tulesheva «the responsible relation of each person for common cause, for the country it is possible to explain that Kazakhstan is today extremely interesting state with the big future personifying heavenly qualities of its world outlook bases (Tengri), such as an antiquity of an origin of its people, as the highest, limiting, absolute quality of its spirit, its central, a sticky situation in Eurasia (a civilization crossroads)» [12, p.168].

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