



ETHNOCULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL DIMENSION OF TURKISTAN IN THE INTEGRATION OF THE TURKIC WORLD

Cultural revival in Turkistan is becoming a major platform for rapprochement with the Turkic world in the foreign policy of Kazakhstan. The current political and economic situation in the Turkic-speaking countries of the world requires mutual integration. In this regard, Turkistan, the spiritual capital of the Turkic states, has sufficient cultural potential to ensure the integration process of the Turkic countries.

At present, the integration processes of the Turkic-speaking countries can be considered in political, trade, economic and humanitarian ties. However, it is beneficial for Turkic-speaking countries to revive cultural ties and use common values as a means of mutual rapprochement. In this context, the ethno-cultural space of Turkistan can be understood as one of the environment that is the basis for the integration of the Turkic world.

The integration influence of the ethno-cultural space of Turkistan has been formed since ancient times. Historically, the Turkistan region has experienced a number of factors for the mutual identification of the Turkic people. For instance, archeological data prove that the ancient history of the medieval city was the cultural, spiritual and political center of that time. According to written sources, the cultural trends in the Turkistan region are large. There is a lot of important information about life and spirituality in Turkistan in Arab sources. One such source is the section "Turkistan" in the book "Kitab al-mesalik, ua-l-memalik" by the Arab historian Ibn Khordadbeq, who lived in the IX century. The Turkic country borders Khorasan and Sejestan in this source. Turkistan and Turks are divided into several nations and states. Furthermore, the author, describing the ethno-culture and economy of the Turkic people living in the region, stated that the Turks drank horse milk, ate horse meat and only grew millet. From this fact it can be seen that the ethnonym Turkistan has a broad concept that gives a general geographical meaning. In addition, the historian's naming of Turkistan as a Turkic country played an important role in the consolidation of the Turkic people of the region. It also tells about the ethno-culture and economy of the Turkic people living in the region. Muin al-Din Natanzi's "Anonymous Alexander", belonging to the Golden Horde period, describes Turkistan as an example of

paradise, with many mosques and madrasas in Otrar, Sauran, Zhent and Barshinkent. From this fact we can see that the name Turkistan is given as a general name of the cities along the Syr Darya. Similarly, in the XV-XVI centuries data, including "Fath-name" sources, mention Turkistan as the center of political events at that time. In Masud-ben Usman Kuhistani's "Tarih-i Abul-Khairkhani" Turkistan is given as a region and Iassy is mentioned as one of the most important fortresses in the Turkistan region.

Archeological and written sources explain the historical and cultural life of Turkistan as a common value of modern Turkic people. In addition, the spiritual life of the Turkistan region is reflected in the intangible cultural heritage of the local population. The level of preservation of the intangible cultural heritage of the population includes differences from ancient economic practices, spiritual heritage and beliefs. In general, the history, spiritual and intangible cultural heritage of Turkistan are considered as the main factors of the ethno-cultural space of the medieval city. In this case, Turkistan can be considered as a sacred place that preserves the common values of the Turkic world. It is true that its main symbol is the preservation of holy places in the city. For instance, the teachings and heritage of Hodja Ahmed Yasawi are a common value for the Turkic world. The mausoleum of Khoja Ahmed Yasawi is a cultural monument protected not only by the Turkic peoples, but also by UNESCO. Such ancient monuments and the studies and activities of scientists living in Turkistan became the basis for the formation of a common Turkic idea. This is because it is natural that the long-standing spiritual heritage is considered as the basis of the integration process of modern Turkic people. Historically, the Turkistan region was the center of the Turkic people. Now, if we look at the ethno-cultural situation in Turkistan today, there are many things that the Turkic people meet in a common culture. First of all is the sacred geography of Turkistan. This is a spiritual and cultural heritage common to all Turkic people. Second, the presence of 28 Turkic people in the ethnic composition of the Turkistan region creates a favorable integration process for the common language population. In this regard, the widespread use of the Kazakh language

among the inhabitants of the ancient city shows that there is a common interest.

Additionally to these conditions, it can be seen that the results of the activities carried out in Turkistan in recent years are based on common Turkic integration. First of all, the tourist potential of this city has developed, which, on the one hand, reflects the attributes of integration for the Turkic people. This includes the consideration of the mausoleum of Hodja Ahmed Yasawi and the surrounding monuments as a tourist area, results of the work of the museum-reserve "Hazret Sultan", use of ancient oriental styles in landscaping of the city, continuation of the architectural features of urban planning in the tradition of the medieval city and the extensive use of Turkic elements in leisure activities. It is obvious that the preservation of many such symbolic attributes is considered as the main platform for the integration process of the Turkic world in Turkistan.

Moreover, many cultural events held in Turkistan include activities to promote the culture of the Turkic world. In particular, scientific conferences and seminars are devoted to the organization of integration processes. Its main result was the announcement of Turkistan as the spiritual capital of the Turkic world on March 31st 2021 at the informal summit of the Organization of Turkic States in Turkistan. The spiritual significance of Turkistan in the unification of the people of the Turkic world was recognized there. In general, the spiritual and cultural unity of the Turkic states continued at the VIII Summit of the Organization of Turkic States in Istanbul. The issues of not only the cultural integration of the Turkic world, but also the development of economic relations were considered there.

In conclusion, the historical ethno-cultural space of Turkistan is the main center for the promotion of modern Turkic culture. This, in turn, allowed Turkistan to be recognized as the spiritual capital of the Turkic states. In the future, the spiritual and cultural potential of Turkistan will allow the city to become a political and economic center of the Turkic-speaking countries. In addition, the integration activities of Turkistan will be strengthened in the framework of the strategic document of the Organization of Turkic States "Prospects of the Turkic world – 2040".

Politics, Foreign Affairs, and Security

- Following the results of the 17th International Meeting on Syria, Iran, Russia and Turkey have reaffirmed their intention to convene the 18th International Meeting on Syria in the Astana format in Nur-Sultan in the first half of 2022. The parties to the Astana format confirmed the need for cooperation in order to eradicate all terrorist groups in the country. The member countries agreed to make further efforts to improve the humanitarian situation in Syria (TASS, 22.12.2021).
- New Delhi hosted the India-Central Asia Dialogue with the participation of foreign ministers of Central Asian countries and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Prime Minister Modi stressed the importance and urgency of speedy implementation of projects under the \$1 billion credit line allocated by India to Central Asian states in areas such as IT technology, medicine, education, tourism, transport, logistics, and energy. He also called to strengthen cooperation between Central Asia and South Asia (Kabar, 21.12.2021).
- NATO General-Secretary Jens Stoltenberg rejected a compromise with Russia concerning Ukraine's membership prospects. He reiterated the alliance's position regarding the escalation of a Russian military build-up around its border with Ukraine. Previously, the President of Russia Vladimir Putin had urged NATO to start talks to provide Russia with reliable, legally binding, and long-term security guarantees. For the second time this year, Moscow concentrated significant military troops in and around Ukraine (Anadolu Agency, 23.12.2021).
- The President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev announced an initiative to raise relations between Uzbekistan and South Korea to the level of an alliance. This was done after the President's three-day state visit to the Republic of Korea, where he held talks with the President of South Korea Moon Jae-in as well as other high-ranking officials. During the visit, a joint statement on deepening the special strategic partnership between the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Republic of Korea was adopted and a number of agreements were signed (Kun.uz, 20.12.2021).
- Turkish medium-altitude long-endurance unmanned combat aerial vehicles Bayraktar TB2 have entered to the service of Kyrgyzstan's border troops. The drones were purchased with funds from the republican budget and would be used to ensure the country's border security. The Bayraktar drones are capable of remotely controlled or autonomous flight operations. It is manufactured by the Turkish company Baykar Defense, primarily for the Turkish Armed Forces (ASIA-Plus, 20.12.2021).
- The Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kyrgyzstan Aibek Artykbaev held a meeting with Minister of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan Shah Mahmood Qureshi on the sidelines of the 17th extraordinary session of Foreign Ministers of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) on Afghanistan. The sides discussed a wide range of issues of bilateral cooperation in numerous areas. The parties stressed the importance of organizing high-level and top-level visits and noted the need for closer regional cooperation as well as for joint efforts to resolve the Afghan crisis as soon as possible (Kabar, 20.12.2021).

Economy, Finance, and Energy

- According to Uzbekistan's State Statistics Committee, Kazakhstan is among the top three trade partners of Uzbekistan with bilateral trade reaching \$3.5 billion between January and November 2021. Uzbekistan's exports to Kazakhstan exceeded \$1 billion, while imports amounted to \$2.48 billion. In 2020 the trade turnover between the two countries equaled \$2.6 billion. China and Russia are the top two trading partners of Uzbekistan, with \$6.7 billion and \$6.6 billion in trade, respectively (Atameken Business, 24.12.2021).
- Energy cooperation between Uzbekistan and Turkey is deepening. In particular, Turkish company Aksa Enerji is constructing a combined cycle power plant with a capacity of 240 MW and a gas piston power plant with a capacity of 230 MW in the Tashkent region. Within a week, the power plant will be connected to the only power grid of Uzbekistan. It will produce 3.9 billion kilowatt-hours of electricity and save 550 million cubic meters of natural gas annually (Kun.uz, 24.12.2021).
- According to the Acting Minister of Investment of Kyrgyzstan Nuradiil Bayasov, during the 9 months of 2021, the inflow of foreign investment in the country exceeded \$503 million. Bayasov added that in the first half of the current year the budget revenue figures have reached the results for the first 9 months of 2020. He also mentioned positive dynamics in the country's macroeconomic indicators. According to Bayasov, global investment fell by 42% due to the impact of the pandemic (Kabar, 24.12.2021).
- According to data from the General Customs Administration of China, in January - November 2021, Turkmen pipeline gas supplies to China amounted to 21.91 million tons worth \$6.1 billion. Turkmenistan ranks first in the list of natural gas suppliers to China. Russia ranks second and its gas supplies amounted to 6.6 million tons, while Kazakhstan delivered 4.02 million tons. Export earnings of Russia and Kazakhstan correspondingly equaled \$1.27 billion and \$946.1 million (Orient, 23.12.2021).
- According to the Transport Minister of Tajikistan Azim Ibrohim, delivery of imported goods from Japan, South Korea, Singapore, and other Asian countries through Pakistan to Tajikistan will become more affordable due to the recently approved transport agreement between Tajikistan and Pakistan. In particular, access to Karachi and Gwadar ports in Pakistan will facilitate multimodal transportation and connection to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. The route will become the most important alternative way for transporting goods from Tajikistan to Southeast Asia countries (Asia-Plus, 22.12.2021).
- The Minister of Agriculture of Azerbaijan Inam Karimov reported that the country's agricultural products exports increased by 13% in January-November 2021. In particular, the total volume of agricultural products increased by 3.8% compared to the same period last year. Azerbaijan will hold an "organic food" forum in May 2022. The purpose of the two-day forum is to bring together stakeholders in agribusiness development in the country to discuss international and local experiences, the current situation, and opportunities (AzerNews, 22.12.2021).

Society and Culture

- The Moldovan autonomous region of Gagauzia celebrated its 27th anniversary. The solemn official meeting was held at the Comrat House of Culture in Comrat and was attended by the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Turkey to the Republic of Moldova, Gurok Sokmensuer among others. Diplomat reported that Turkey wants to see Gagauzia as a strong autonomy within a strong Moldova (Infotag.md, 24.12.2021).
- Uzbekistan's state news agency "UzA" joined the Turkic World media platform. News reports on the platform will now be published in the Uzbek language along with Azerbaijani, English, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Russian, Turkish and Turkmen. The Turkic World is a unique media platform connecting all leading media outlets of Turkic-speaking which was created with the initiative of Trend News Agency and the Turkish Albayrak Media Group. It amalgamates the latest news concerning Turkic-speaking states (Yenisafak.com, 20.12.2021).
- Head of the Turkey's Radio and Television Supreme Council, Ebubekir Şahin, announced that Turkic-speaking countries were planning to establish a joint media association at the workshop organized by the Turkic Council and Turkey's cultural foundation Yunus Emre Institute in Budapest. The aim of the international platform to be founded among Turkic-speaking countries will further strengthen Turkic states' nations unity by popularizing Turkish and other Turkic languages (Anadolu Agency, 20.12.2021).
- The Uzbek "Art of Bakhshi" was included in the UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. The decision was taken within the framework of the XVI-session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of UNESCO. The "Art of Bakhshi" is a unique historical and cultural heritage of the Uzbek and Karakalpak peoples. This art is based on epics, folk stories, legends, and myths full of patriotism, love, and calls for friendship and solidarity (Central-asia.news, 21.12.2021).
- The International Turkic Academy organized an event called "Dogunun Yıldızları" (Stars of the East) in Kazakhstan commemorating the names of important Turkish literature poets and writers Yunus Emre, Nizami Ganjavi, Ali Sir Nevai, and Kazakh poet Jambıl Jabayev. The event was attended by scientists and representatives of international organizations. With the initiative of the Academy, the poems of Yunus Emre, Nizami, Nevai, and Jabayev were translated into other Turkic languages this year (Trthaber.com, 25.12.2021).
- Kazakhstan continues to provide humanitarian aid to Afghanistan. Recently, a cargo with food and medicines with a weight of 155 tons, as well as warm clothes and drugs was sent to Kabul. Moreover, a delegation from Kazakhstan visited Afghanistan and had a meeting with representatives of the current administration. Representatives of Kazakhstan expressed hope that the active phase of the conflict was over. The parties also discussed ways to increase bilateral trade volumes (Qazaq TV, 27.12.2021).