

## The Idea of Progress in Kazakh Philosophy

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### Abstract

*This article is devoted to Shoqan Walikhanov and the elaboration of the idea of development and social progress of the Kazakh scientist orientalist, historian, ethnographer, geographer, folklorist of the XIX century. Many progressive, humanistic views of the famous scientist, developed on the basis of science of that time, under the influence of the Enlightenment is the revolutionary democracy, still find a response in today's society. Educator talked about the development and progress not only in the common traditional form, and tried to justify the basic criteria of the main features of the bearer of social and historical progress. According Sh. Walikhanov, the main bearer progress in the field of social phenomena is the development of social, economic and domestic aspects of life of the people. Therefore, he emphasized that in order to properly determine the value of a given reform, it is necessary to deeply know the people, their needs, social needs, i.e., it is necessary to study the production, economic and social life, consciousness and spiritual culture. Certainly are valuable those thoughts Sh. Walikhanov in which he pointed to the desire of the Kazakhs and other peoples of Central Asia to the development, construction of civilized life on the basis of economic, social, and spiritual analysis.*

**Keywords:** progress, enlightenment, democracy, culture, education, research, philosophy

### 1. Introduction

Shoqan Walikhanov worked in the middle of the XIX century. The in-depth scientific study of the philosophical tracts and social works objectively shows the society development trends at that time. Shoqan Walikhanov acquired the philosophical knowledge mainly from the works of thinkers of the East Turkestan (western China), Russia, and Europe. The historic merit of Shoqan Walikhanov is that he was able to objectively evaluate the attitude of Russia to the colonized peoples of Central Asia. Thoroughly studying the social contradictions and difficulties of public life in the Russian Empire, the scientist was able to identify new and progressive tendencies of the national region, which emerged and strengthened along with the economic and cultural rapprochement of the Kazakh and Russian peoples. In the course of economic, social, and cultural changes, the influence of the European culture caused the development of national identity and common cultural aspirations of the Kazakh people. It is important to note that these trends determined the social development of all peoples drawn into the channel of Russian colonial political, economic, and social interests.

1. The purpose of the article is to find out certain regularities when planning ways of progress regardless of the eras and times. Any thinker in the analysis of the relevance of reforms determines the social and culturological components as the main priorities. The influence and confrontation of the western and Islamic cultures determine the inevitable choice of modification of the cultural identity.
2. The purpose of this article is to show the problem of a possible loss of cultural identity through the eyes of the first European Kazakh. A view of the representative of the steppe culture within the European worldview on the issue of further progress of the nomadic culture allows outlining the various facets of the inevitable process of transformation.
3. The author uses the technique of comparing the positions of perception, in which the object of the study is considered in associative and dissociative terms. Three positions—three views of the issue of progress: the associative—the author's, two dissociative—the European and traditional nomadic views—allow revealing the regularities and contradictions of the progress.
4. Presentation of the issues.
  1. Shoqan Walikhanov—a famous scientist.
  2. Sociopolitical and philosophical views of Shoqan Walikhanov
  3. Shoqan Walikhanov—the idea of progress
  4. The concept of the thinker regarding the way of social progress in the works "Traces of shamanism in the Kirghiz" and "About Islam in the steppe."

##### 5. Ways and means of achieving social progress by the Kazakh people.

The research for the first time approaches the impact of contradictions and philosophies of the European and Islamic cultures on the steppe identity through the example of the Kazakhs. The colonial policy of Russia and the influence of the Islamic world in the open spaces of Central Asia will clearly outline the trends and the danger of identity loss in the transition to the way of progress. The scientist was convinced in the strength of the steppe judicial and other traditional institutions. However, Shoqan Walikhanov became a hostage of the European progress and unwillingness to perceive the nomadic environment of inevitable changes and transformation.

Shoqan Walikhanov was a tireless fighter for the education of the Kazakh people, its loyal and consistent defender. Having studied and published the unknown at that time samples of folklore, he went down in history as an outstanding orientalist and folklorist. He also was an explorer and discoverer, and this activity of his is inextricably linked to the progressive development of the society. The life of Shoqan Walikhanov was full of struggle for the vital interests and aspirations of his people and their liberation from the social oppression and tyranny, darkness and ignorance, dilapidated customs, prejudices and superstitions. The historical significance of Shoqan Walikhanov primarily consists in the fact that his scientific and educational activity initiated, gave rise to the progressive democratic movement in the Kazakh steppe (Walikhanov, 1984 — 1985). Many steppe thinkers followed him in his struggle for democracy and education of the people. In fact, we can say that Shoqan Walikhanov was the first Europeanized Kazakh able to overestimate the critical traditionalist social trends of his people and specify the vector for further spiritual development.

In the struggle for a new, fair social order, Shoqan started dreaming about the revival of the Kazakh people, a comprehensive disclosure of its potentials and talents, for the liberation of other nations and the Kazakh national borderlands of the Russian Empire from the double oppression: the local feudal lords and imperial colonists, from the socioeconomic and cultural backwardness.

It should be understood that Shoqan Walikhanov lived and worked at a crucial stage in the life of the Kazakh people. In spite of a pronounced colonial policy of czarism, this period was the time of initiation of the ethnic outskirts to the Russian and (through it) European culture, the time of the spread of democratic ideas accelerating the spiritual development of the Kazakh society. The main formation of Shoqan Walikhanov's socio-political and scientific worldview took place under the powerful influence of the Russian culture. During his study in the Siberian Cadet Corps and military service in Omsk, as well as during his stay in St. Petersburg, he deeply assimilated the most advanced ideas and trends.

## 2. Main Part

Being a patriot of his people, Shoqan Walikhanov constantly sought to protect its rights, believing in its historic future and linking it to enlightenment and education of the people. The review of the orientalist, academician W. Barthold reads that "he loved his people, there is no doubt about it ... He used to say that he loved most his Kyrgyz people, then Siberia, then Russia, then the whole humanity" (Walikhanov, 1986). In this regard, Shoqan Walikhanov angrily protested against the abuses of Russian colonial authorities, the royal administration in the national outskirts.

Among the socio-political and philosophical views of Shoqan Walikhanov leading role played the idea of progress, constantly considered them in the various fields of knowledge, whether it's research "Traditions and Legends of Great Kyrgyz-Kaisak horde" or review "About the state Altyshar, or six eastern Chinese cities province of Nan-Lu (Minor Bukhari) "(1858 - 1859 years), or "a note on judicial reform" (Walikhanov, 2007). Further progress was one of the most pressing problems of the life of the Kazakh people, expressing the aspirations and hopes of the nation that constituted one of the largest ethnic outskirts of tsarist Russia. This problematic situation was so characterized by Shoqan Walikhanov: "At present, we can say, there is a subtle but strong struggle of antiquity with the novelty: the Muslim impersonating the East, and the Russian" (Walikhanov, 1983).

The thinker argued that the progress in the first place is to improve the material well-being of people, improving the economic situation of the people. Going up to the issue, he wrote from a purely educational position: "For the normal growth and development of the people, first of all freedom and knowledge are necessary... It turns out that we must first teach (the people - author's note)" (Walikhanov, 1985).

This showed the strength and weakness of the democrat's position. For the Kazakh society of the middle of the XIX century, this approach called for education and, on the one hand, it played a great progressive role, since the backward and oppressed nationalities outskirts education meant primarily the spread of secular education, undermining the influence of Islam and especially his priests who had usurped the issue of education of common people. On the other hand, the objective weakness of enlightenment was the misunderstanding of the crucial role of economic relations and the need to develop a method of production and its radical change.

Outlining the plight of people, Shoqan Walikhanov revealed the reasons why the ordinary Kazakhs reacted with

indifference to the ongoing judicial reform: "The reasons for this incomprehensible indifference of the Kazakhs in such an important national matter were: firstly, ignorance and lack of understanding of their interests, and secondly, that the Kazakhs were not prepared in advance to understand what they were read and what they were required to quickly respond to. The Kazakhs were indifferent also due to the distrust the Russian government." (Strelkova, 1983).

This circumstance was further complemented by the fact that the vast majority of the czarist officials regarded the ethnic outskirts as the field for their own enrichment. Extortion and bribery, robbery of the dark and downtrodden population flourished. The thinker wrote: "In every action of the Russian authorities, the Kazakhs see only the evil—an infringement on their freedom and privileges, and it is very clear because the Kazakhs judged Russian superiors through the actions of Russian judges" (Abdildin, 2001).

The negative attitude of the laboring masses to the judicial reform was explained by the fact that due to the feudal stratification of the society, the "popular opinion" was basically represented by the "county rulers, elders, sultans, beys and wealthy Kazakhs, i.e. Horde officials or Horde persons who pretended to be officials," because the feudal elite was not interested in attracting the masses to the management of the society and the reconstruction of the traditional court of the beys. Clearly, in these circumstances, the judicial reform was carried out only in the interests of the Kazakh aristocracy and feudal lords. And the democrat clearly captures the fundamental conflict between the interests of the people and feudal nobility: "The opinion of the privileged classes of the society should be seen only as the negative expression of the people's true needs, because the interests of the rich and noble people, even in highly civilized societies, are, for the most part, hostile to the interests of the majority" (Mukanov, 1967).

Problems of the Shoqan Walikhanov's idea of progress resided in the fact that while recognizing the need to implement the way to progressive future, that would allow breaking away from the medieval feudal backwardness to the heights of progress, it was necessary to bring to the consciousness of the masses of ordinary Kazakhs this very need—so much this environment was inert.

In the course of economic, social, and cultural changes, the national identity, common cultural aspirations of the Kazakh people were developing. It is important to note that these trends were typical of the social development of all peoples drawn into the flow of nationwide social processes.

Regarding the direct analysis of the forthcoming judicial reform, Shoqan Walikhanov compared the projected colonial government "magistrate court" and the traditional court of beys. As a result of this comparison, he found the status of the traditional court of beys conforming to the actual state of the Kazakh society: "If the 40-year-long Russian rule, which has introduced multiple new elements in the social life of the Kazakh people, has had no influence on the ancient Kazakh court of beys, and if this court has managed to resist the unfavorable conditions of the Russian legislation (for example, the law of 1854), it is clear that it quite satisfies the current development of the Kazakh people" (Beisenbaiulu, 2009).

The proof of it, according to the opinion of the thinker, was that the tested for centuries court of beys had not caused complaints of various parties of legal procedures among the Kazakhs.

As an important foundation for the preservation of the traditional court of beys, Shoqan Walikhanov saw the specificity of the social structure of the Kazakhs, which made it impossible to use "the articles of the overall project." The rationale for this approach according to the scientist was that "firstly, one cannot demand the same understanding and view of the crimes and misdemeanors from a Kazakh, as from Russian and other Europeans; and finally, the Kazakhs do not and cannot know the Russian laws," wrote the educator (Strelkova, 1973).

The indispensable accounting for the national specifics at major social and political events had a positive impact on the development of the social structure of the Kazakhs. Because of this, it was necessary at the implementation of the judicial reform to remember the public outcry, which certainly had to accompany certain innovations.

Legal opinions of Sh. Walikhanov show his broad outlook, the desire to link the nation-wide laws of the Russian Empire with the features of the social order of the Kazakhs, by virtue of which he proposed to retain the traditional court of beys along with the introduction of the Russian Criminal Court. The combination of general and particular, understanding of the specificity of application of the legal postulates in terms of the national margin and other undoubted merits "Notes on judicial reform" played an important practical role in the direct creation of legislation on the management of the two areas of the steppe of Turkestan, which have traditionally been classified as the South Kazakhstan region (Beisenbaiulu, 2009).

The concept of the thinker on the path of social progress was brightly outlined in papers "Shamanism Traces among the Kazakhs" and "On Islam in the steppe." Analyzing the reasons for the existence of shamanism among the Kazakhs, Shoqan Walikhanov believed that due to the lack of qualified and educated clergy, Islam failed to penetrate deep into the steppe, and therefore the formed "vacuum" in the religious beliefs of the people were still filled with the shamanism. This fact has not led to antagonism of Islam and paganism, but to the coexistence of Muslim and

shamanistic representations. Herewith, previous concepts were replaced by new formations, but their essence remained the same (Kystaubayev, 2009).

In his religious studies, the scholar showed in what way the religious representations of the Kazakhs evolved from naive animistic beliefs, worship of nature as a deity to the Muslim monotheism that in difficult specific conditions of the Kazakh steppe led to the symbiosis of different principles, which resulted in the assimilation of the idea of Allah that caused the disappearance of minor pagan cults - "Tengri" (sky) (Margulan, 1984).

In these circumstances, the thinker sharply criticized the Islamic dogma regarding them as a means of stupefying the masses, which was introduced to the Kazakh steppes from outside, but remained internally alien to Islam. The majority of the population who are Muslims "by name only" were exposed to oppression and moral "religious fanaticism" (Walikhanov, 1961 — 1972) In these circumstances, Shoqan Walikhanov treated Islam as a tool for social regression of the Kazakh society, which was imposed on the society by the czarist government in the renowned "Institution" by M. Speranskii for the successful implementation of colonial policy. It is hard to find more indignant words of the democrat, than those he said about the steppe Muslim clerics, those "semi-literate rogues": "... the clergy to whom the Russian government entrusted our education, our moral education," he wrote, "has been engaged until now in only our moral defilement, taking bribes, teaching bigotry, and together with Central Asian natives deceiving the credulous people" (Mukanov, 1967).

Naturally, in these conditions, the thinker considered the transfer of public education in the hands of the Muslim clergy as a special plan of colonial Russia to keep the Kazakhs in the state of ignorance and spiritual poverty. "The monstrous fiction, dead scholasticism, and not a single real thought," said Shoqan Walikhanov, "These blatant phenomena for the sake of completeness should be complemented by the fact that all this carrion, slotting the texts of the Quran in Arabic without any comments and translation. And the memorizing of various scholastic nonsense is hammered into the Kazakh children with a stick only" (Ivlev, 1983).

The matter of social progress in the Kazakh steppe categorically opposed Islam in the steppe. Islam as a tool of people separation was quite consistent with the colonial principle "divide and rule." This situation led to the "dual faith" in the Kazakh society, where the ordinary consciousness of ordinary people combined Islam and Shamanism. That is why Shoqan Walikhanov persistently offered to withdraw the Kazakh steppe from the jurisdiction of the Russian Mufti, create their own religious administration, reduce the number of priests, forbid spiritual natives of non-Central Asian countries to join the "nomadic Kazakhs" without specific occupation and special supervision. The educator fought against the introduction of sectarian and religious communities, as well as against charlatans and self-appointed doctors who were abundant in the steppe (Svanbeg, 1999).

The Sh. Walikhanov's abstract humanistic statement of the question on the ways and means of providing social progress, of course, was relevant for his time. The lack of research on the social roots of religion, as well as other public formations did not allow isolating the real reason of ignorance and the degree of religiosity of people. However, the socio-political orientation of the views of the democrat determined the fact that in some papers he tried to justify materialistically the status of workers in the society, which was divided into the rich and the poor, to understand the origins of religious relations.

Keeping to the most advanced views of the issue of ways and means of achieving social progress by the Kazakh people, the thinker strongly opposed the ideology directed against joining the Kazakh steppe to Russia, which was reflected in the uprising of the last Khan of the Kazakhs—Kenesary Kasymov and numerous other revolts. Shoqan had a clear understanding formed that only a dialogue with the European culture would allow the Kazakh people to achieve social progress in its economic, political, and cultural aspects. The advanced European culture and science had a fruitful influence on the development of the Kazakh democratic culture. The penetration of the European progressive thought in Kazakhstan marked the beginning of a profound change in the consciousness of the Kazakh people, caused its attraction to the European culture and education. The educator's emphasis on the fact that "the assimilation of European, universal education and energetic fight against obstacles to achieving this goal, should be the ultimate goal for every nation, capable of development and culture." Proudly pointing out that "among all foreign tribes being part of the Russian Empire, the first place in the number, wealth, and, perhaps, hopes for development in the future belongs to us—the Kazakhs," Shoqan Walikhanov at the same time wrote about "the artless period of the forms of social consciousness" of the Kazakhs, "absence of reasonable self-protection, and all kinds of passivity, because of underdevelopment," whereby the Kazakh society faces the question of choosing the way of further development (Bacon, 1966).

The direct impact on the formation of opinion of the educator and democrat had the close contact and friendship with the Russian writer F. Dostoyevsky.

The two-year stay in St. Petersburg was a decisive stage in the process of formation of the scientific and socio-political views of Shoqan Walikhanov, the formation of his innovative way of thinking. This does not mean that it is in the

capital of the Russian Empire, that there was some sort of radical change in his outlook. By the time of arrival at St. Petersburg, the Kazakh educator had formed as a mature scholar and public figure with fully developed democratic and educational convictions. However, staying in St. Petersburg on the eve of the bourgeois reform of 1861, the political, spiritual, and moral situation in the Russian capital had a significant impact on Shoqan Walikhanov, on the development of his socio-political and philosophical ideas. In this progressive environment, Shokan's scientific-theoretical approaches to ideas of liberation of his people and further progress began to form. In St. Petersburg, Shoqan Walikhanov maintained friendly relations with major scientists who hatched the idea of progress and reforms of the Russian Empire, in the context of reform and liberation of the peoples of Russia from serfdom and of closer integration with Europe (Beisenbaiulu, 2009).

### 3. Conclusion

On the example of the famous scientist Shoqan Walikhanov, we can see the struggle for the Kazakh identity and the formation of the Kazakh nation. Through his works, the educator sought to awaken in young people the desire to know their roots, to love and cherish their homeland, to develop a sense of patriotism, and the desire to preserve a great cultural heritage.

He considered the western vector a cardinal way of economic and cultural development of his people. He was forceful in arguing the necessity of friendship of peoples, especially with European nations, and therefore opposed the national narrow-mindedness and conservatism, closure within narrow frame, which the ideologues of the Kazakh aristocracy called for. Largely, this was due to the perception of the ideas of revolutionaries—the democrats who were in exile in the steppes of Kazakhstan and who advocated democratic reforms, and were against ignorance and oppression of the masses.

Shoqan Walikhanov left a huge scientific heritage. Even today, we are amazed with his talent, hard work, scientific integrity, breadth of issues in the fields of history, ethnography, economics, and philosophy.

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