

Culture and Educational Thought During the Golden Horde and Nogai Period

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Received: 12 May 2025 **Accepted:** 08 June 2025 **Published:** 10 July 2025

ABSTRACT

The article examines the importance of the pedagogical views of Karakalpak wise thinkers Soppasli Sipira Jirau and Asan Kaigi in the education of youth, and also highlights the culture of the Golden Horde and Nogai periods.

Keywords: Golden Horde, Nogai, Volga (Yedil), Ural (Jaiyq), narrator, education, parenting, sage, poet.

INTRODUCTION

The conquest of Central Asia by Genghis Khan in the 1200s and the subsequent brutal actions of the Mongols led to a considerable deterioration of living conditions for the local population. The peoples living in this territory offered heroic resistance to the Mongol invasion, but the forces of the popular resistance could not withstand the Mongol brutality and cunning. As a result, a significant part of the Uzbeks and Kazakhs moved to regions along the Volga (Yedil) and Ural (Jaiyq), and the majority of the Karakalpaks settled in the territory from the river Don to the Ural, where there was a state of Kipchaks, including peoples who spoke Kipchak languages, including Karakalpaks, Kazakhs, Bashkirs, Tatars and nomadic Uzbeks [1;152].

The Mongol invasion caused considerable destruction to Khorezm. However, after the formation of the Golden Horde in the second half of the 13th century, life in the region, including Urgench, began to gradually recover and this city became a major center for trade, handicrafts and culture. During the archaeological excavations of the Khorezm expedition on the south-eastern outskirts of the Ustyurt plateau in Karakalpakstan, the ruins of the city of Shemach, a monument of the era of the Golden Horde were discovered. There was a mosque in the city, as well as mahalli (quarters) of potters and craftsmen. Golden Horde

coins were also found, indicating the development of trade in this city. In his studies historian A. Yakubovsky noted the significant influence of Khohrasmanian culture on the culture of the Golden Horde [2;115].

The Main Findings and Results

According to sources, the culture of the Golden Horde and Nogai period occupies an important place in the history of Central Asia because it reflects the identity of the Turkic-speaking peoples and has had a significant influence on the development of civilization in the region, in particular, through the pedagogical ideas of their thinkers.

The work of poets-sages who lived in the period of the Golden Horde and Nogai, had a significant influence on the formation of public thought and pedagogical attitudes of the Karakalpak people. In particular, sages such as Asan Qaygi, Quba Jirau, Ketbuga Jirau, Soppasli Sipira Jirau and Jirenshe Shishen have created terme (white poem), tolgau (historical poem) and dastans with a meditative sense related to the education of young people. The musical world of the Karakalpak people begins with the musical instrument "qobiz". The people say that Qorqit ata is a feast (spiritual patron) of the qobiz, because he invented this musical instrument, created several musical melodies and

laid the foundation for the term “jirau”[3;19].

Soppasli Sipira Jirau was an outstanding poet whose works belong to the written literature of the Karakalpak of the Golden Horde and Nogayli periods. He is considered the founder of the school of Karakalpak jirau, famous storytellers. His name is widely known among the Kipchaks, Mangits and Nogais who inhabited the territories from the Volga to the Don, including the vicinity of the Aral and Caspian Seas, Crimea and the Caucasus.

Jirau had an exceptional mind and talent, historical sources write that he lived for about 180 years in the period from the time of Genghis Khan’s conquest of Central Asia until the fall of the Golden Horde in the vicinity of Mangishlak, on the banks of the Jaiyq River, in the capital of the Nogais, Saraichik. The exact date of his birth and death is not given, but his life spans the period from the reign of Genghis Khan to the time of Taihu Khan and his son Tokhtamish (1383) [4;234]. Detailed information about his life is presented in the *tolgau* “*arrinman*”. Also, historical sources claim that the jirau always wore *soppas* (ancient headdress), therefore he was called Soppasli Sipira. According to such sources, the jirau had thirty children and during his long life he saw ninety-six khans during the reign of the Golden Horde until the era of Tokhtamish Khan. He performed his epic tales at meetings attended by up to twenty khans. Jirau also served as an adviser to many khans. Ch.Valikhanov, a famous Kazakh scientist and ethnographer, was the first to introduce the name of Soppasli Sipira jirau into scientific circulation [5;34].

Jirau, who had a religious worldview, said that he lived a long life because he often ate “*sarqit*” from heads of state, officials and great people, and was honored to receive blessings. The people, amazed by the wisdom and longevity of the poet, include him in the category of miracle workers as a man “who saw Khazret Qidir seven times and whose *dua* (prayers) are accepted.” The historian Ibn Battuta, who visited Saraichik in the 1430s, mentions Soppasli, an outstanding storyteller of the Turkic peoples [6;74]. Throughout his life, Soppasli demonstrated his art of storytelling, visiting numerous places of the Golden Horde.

Jirau, being a descendant of the Kipchak clan, lived in an era when the peoples of the Golden Horde had not yet formed into modern nations. Therefore, he is considered a sage, thinker and poet, representing the common culture and spiritual values of these peoples. In addition, the

literary work and storytelling art of Sipira Jirau are widespread among the Karakalpak, Kazakh and Bashkir peoples. Jirau met with various khans in Desht-i-Kipchak. He was a great sage, a penetrating observer who analyzed the political decisions of the khans. He also studied how the khans governed the people, what moral demands they made, and what consequences – both positive and negative – their rule brought to the country. The poet, who actively participated in the management of state affairs and advised the khan on domestic policy, could not help but touch upon the issues of education and upbringing. His concept of forming a good society through improving the character and behavior of people implies the need for targeted work in these areas. This, in turn, entailed increased attention to the issues of education and upbringing, as well as to the problem of creative development of youth. Thus, the poet’s activity, objectively, led to the realization of the importance of these aspects for the development of society and the state. This can be seen from the way he, demonstrating his mastery in the palace of the khans and before the people, always performed *tolgau*, filled with human wisdom and instructions. Among the heritage he created, the *dastan* “*Edige*” has a special significance. His *tolgau*, such as “*Awız ayǵaq, til tayǵaq*”, “*Toreler*”, “*Qırımñı qırıq batır*”, “*Bir degende ne jaman*” and others are not only poetic works, but also great examples of didactic poetry, the content of which widely presents instructions and advice for young people related to upbringing and education [4;235].

One of the most attractive aspects of the *tolgau* of Sipira jirau is the strength of his philosophical thought and resourcefulness. The songs of the jirau, touching the hearts, were intertwined with the aspirations of the people. Therefore, in the poetry of Soppasli Sipira jirau stands out not as a creator, but as a master of words, that is, with his way of creating *tolgau*, the beauty of speech, nationality and depth of philosophical thought, which puts him in first place among other storytellers [7;5].

The poet relies on Islamic teachings in his work. He shows loyalty to the teachings and traditions of Islam, which his contemporary Berke Khan accepted. Soppasli Sipira jirau was a wise man who had seen a lot and accumulated rich life experience, was knowledgeable in all areas, thought deeply and had the ability for creative thinking. Tokhtamish Khan, noticing his ability, invites him to his palace to get to know him better. Then Sipira-jirau, turning to the khan, whose cruelty was written on his face, says: “The time has come, and you have become a khan, I know

you will kill me, but nothing will come of it for me, I should have died long ago. If you kill me, I will go to heaven as a man who died at the hands of a tyrant” [4;235].

It follows from this that the worldview of the jirau is influenced by Islamic teachings, in particular, the idea of the immortality of the soul, resurrection on the Day of Judgment and the existence of heaven and hell. During the reign of Genghis Khan and his descendants, characterized by brutal conquests and oppression, the poet nevertheless demonstrated a democratic view of the world and a commitment to humanism. He had a value-based attitude towards man. He demanded justice and truth in resolving all issues concerning humanity. Jirau persistently pursued his goals and could even openly express his thoughts about injustice to the khan and his viziers. He explained that whoever violates justice, no matter who he is, must be judged for his guilt, must have human dignity, draw conclusions based on reason, and have the ability to think. In his *tolgau* “Awız ayğa, til tayğa” the jirau analyzed good and bad days in social life with the help of symbolic images.

The collapse of the khanate during the time of Tokhtamish Khan is explained by the unjust rule of the ruler. Also in the *tolgau* created by the jirau, we can see deep disappointment with the destructive actions of the officials surrounding the khan, who did not care about the welfare of the people, but acted in mutual opposition. Upset by the fact that Tokhtamish Khan himself condoned tyrannical actions, the storyteller told him to his face the shortcomings in the management of society: “You take lives, you cannot give life” [8;118] - thus, the wise advisor and poet denounced the khan for his bloodthirstiness and lack of mercy. The poet’s *tolgau* “Toreler” is aimed at exposing the atrocities of some khans and their officials in governing society. He reminds them of the need to openly tell them to their faces about their cruel actions in governing the people and learn to refrain from oppression, evil and outrage. He hopes that some officials and rich people, realizing the wrongness of their bad deeds, will be able to direct themselves to good deeds.

In his *tolgau*, Sipira jirau paid great attention to the role of parents in the upbringing and development of children. He also described in his works how parents influence the formation of a child’s worldview, his attitude to the world around him, as well as his behavior and actions. He believed that parents should be an example for their children, teach them honesty, hard work, respect for elders

and care for others.

The poet believed that fathers should teach their children wisdom and crafts, since the younger generation is the future of humanity. He was also sure that the knowledge and education passed on to children would serve the father in old age, providing him with care and support.

In his *tolgau*, which begins with the words “Bir degende ne jaman,” Sipira jirau, taking into account the living conditions in society, drew attention to two issues in education: raising boys as smart and educated, and girls in the spirit of good behavior and modesty.

Jirau talks about the importance of family traditions in the formation of youth, emphasizing that children learn from their parents, adopting their behavior patterns. He believes that sons should follow their fathers’ example, and daughters should follow their mothers’, which is the key point in upbringing. Girls, in his opinion, should be well-mannered and have good manners, and young men should demonstrate intelligence and prudence. Jirau guides the right way, advising young people to live in mutual respect, to show respect to elders, to observe the rules of decency, claiming that this is a virtue inherent in modest and well-mannered youth. He also teaches that disrespect for elders is a bad habit, and advises to avoid such behavior.

On the issue of spiritual and moral education of youth, Soppasli Sipira jirau first of all explained the need to cultivate love for the homeland, honest service to the people, respect for elders, life in friendship and involvement in work. He emphasized that social relations improve only when people have such character traits. In general, when we analyze the *tolgau* created by Sipira jirau from a scientific point of view, we can see that the main ideas of educational views include patriotism, service to the people, justice, mutual friendship, hard work and possession of positive qualities.

One of the great thinkers of this period is considered to be the sage and poet Asan Sabit uly. According to sources, Asan was a descendant of Mayqi biy, a famous military leader, one of the twelve biys who proclaimed Genghis Khan as khan [4;240]. And in the “Shejire” (“Genealogy”) of the poet Berdakh it is indicated that Mayqi biy is the founder of the Karakalpak clan “Qonirat”. There are different versions of the birth and death of Asan Qaigy. According to one version, Asan Qaigy, an outstanding jirau of the 15th century, was born around 1370. He was

orphaned early, having lost his father, the hunter Sabit, and was raised by his mother Salikha. Despite early orphanhood and hardships, he grew up to be a wise man, known for his life experience, eloquence and prudence. Asan Qaigy's wife Guljazira paid special attention to raising her son Abat to be brave and courageous. Abat, being a batir (hero), rendered great service to the Nogai people [4;241]. Asan Qaigy lived in the area of the Volga and Ural rivers. Information about his death varies, but most often the approximate year of death is indicated - 1490. According to Kazakh scientists, Asan Qaigy died in the land of Jideli Baysin in the territory of Uzbekistan, and Shokhan Ualikhanov mentions in his works that Asan-ata spent the last years of his life in Semirechye and died on the shore of Lake Issyk-Kul [9;66]. In the life of the sage there were several khans fighting for power, and one of them was Ulug Muhammad Khan of the Golden Horde. Karakalpaks and Kazakhs called Ulug Muhammad Ormambet biy. Asan, according to some historical data, was his adviser. When the "Great Khan" Ormambet biy (1420) died, Asan, grieving, composed a *tolgau* (reflection). The *tolgau* "Ormambet biy" is widely spread among the Karakalpak people. The poet's subsequent life is closely connected with his activities as an adviser on public affairs at the court of Khan Janibek (1456-1478). Asan was a contemporary of Jirenshe-sheshen, a sage of the Nogai era.

CONCLUSION

Asan Qaigy was an outstanding poet whose works influenced the Kazakh, Karakalpak and Nogai cultures. Therefore, information about his work has been widely studied by scholars of these peoples. The works of the poet and thinker Asan Qaigy reflect the hard life of the people in his time, with oppression and injustice from the khans and nobility. Asan Qaigy, being an adviser to the khan, was not afraid to express his opinion, including criticism. In most of the *tolgau* we see that the poet speaks out against the policy of Janibek Khan's rule. The nickname "Qaigy" ("Sorrow") was given to Asan because he deeply empathized with the difficulties in the lives of living beings, especially the difficult situation of people in society, showing strong human feelings and compassion. Thus, he is considered a historical figure, a man who was worried not only about himself, but also had a heart for his people.

In general, a deep study of the historical heritage of past centuries, careful preservation of our national values and

their transmission to future generations are some of the main tasks in matters of education and upbringing of our youth.

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