



PHILOSOPHICAL CONCEPTIONS OF EDUCATION AND ETHICAL UPBRINGING IN THE LITERARY HERITAGE OF KARAKALPAK CLASSICAL POETS: A COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS OF BERDAKH, AJINIYAZ, AND KUN- KHOJA

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Abstract

The literary landscape of the nineteenth-century Central Asian region represents a profound intersection of nomadic oral traditions and the sophisticated written cultures of the Islamic world. This era was characterized by a specific educational paradigm where poets functioned as the primary architects of the national moral consciousness. In the absence of a pervasive secular institutional framework for education, the Karakalpak classical poets — namely Berdakh (Berdimurat Gargabay uli), Ajiniyaz (Ajiniyaz Qosibay uli), and Kun-khoja—assumed the roles of philosophers, historians, and educators. Their works, which synthesized Sufi mysticism with the practical ethics of agrarian and nomadic life, established a "national curriculum" focused on the cultivation of the "Perfect Human" (*Komil Inson*). This study explores how these literary figures utilized poetic form to advocate for justice, enlightenment, and historical continuity as the foundational pillars of societal development [1].

Introduction

The historical and philosophical development of Karakalpak literature in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries highlights a unique pedagogical system rooted in poetic discourse. This report investigates the didactic and philosophical views on education found in the works of Kun-khoja, Ajiniyaz, and Berdakh. By analyzing their poetic corpora through the lens of the "Perfect Human" (*Komil*



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Inson) concept and the influence of Sufi ethics, the research demonstrates how these poets responded to the socio-political challenges of their time—including colonial expansion and internal feudal oppression. The analysis reveals that Kun-khoja prioritized social justice and labor as educational values, Ajiniyaz focused on humanistic enlightenment and intellectual mastery, and Berdakh emphasized historical consciousness and patriotic integrity. This research utilizes a comparative-historical approach to synthesize second-order insights regarding the transition from oral folkloric pedagogy to a normalized literary language, concluding that their collective heritage remains a cornerstone of Karakalpak cultural and educational identity [4].

The nineteenth century serves as the "Golden Age" of Karakalpak classical literature, a period when the collective intellectual potential of the nation was synthesized into high poetic forms. During this era, the socio-political situation of the Karakalpak people was marked by profound instability, including the pressures of the Khiva Khanate, the Bozataw tragedies, and the broader imperial movements within Central Asia [4]. Within this context, education was not merely a matter of literacy but a survival mechanism for national identity. The classical poets emerged as the guardians of this identity, utilizing the "Adab" tradition—a multifaceted Islamic concept encompassing ethics, etiquette, and education—to instruct the youth [3].

The philosophical foundations of Karakalpak pedagogy were significantly influenced by the spiritual legacy of Ahmed Yassawi, Alisher Navoi, and Magtymguly Pyragy [1]. These mentors provided the structural backbone for a system of upbringing that prioritized spiritual perfection and the pursuit of "Truth" (*Haqiqat*) over material gain. The poets taught that the link between a nation's past and its future is the intellectual potential of its young people, a theme that resonates through the centuries [2]. This study posits that the educational views of these poets were not isolated didactic efforts but a coherent philosophical movement aimed at the holistic development of the individual within a community-centric framework.



Methods and Theoretical Framework

This research utilizes a multifaceted analytical approach to deconstruct the philosophical views on education within Karakalpak classical poetry. The primary procedure involves a **comparative-historical analysis**, which situates the works of Berdakh, Ajiniyaz, and Kun-khoja within the specific socio-political and economic conditions of the 19th-century Khorezm oasis and the Aral Sea region.⁷ By examining the historical events, such as the Kungrad rebellion and the Bozataw tragedy, the research identifies how these external stimuli shaped the didactic priorities of each poet [2].

Furthermore, a **hermeneutic approach** is applied to the poetic texts to decode symbolic imagery and metaphorical structures. Symbols such as the "Black Willow" (*Qara tal*), the "Mother's White Shawl," and the "Path of Truth" are analyzed as pedagogical tools used to communicate complex ethical concepts to an audience with varying levels of formal literacy [7]. This allows for the identification of the "Perfect Human" (*Komil Inson*) archetype as it evolved from Sufi mysticism into a more secularized, nationalistic ideal [6].

The study also employs **literary-theoretical classification** to distinguish between different didactic genres used by the poets, such as the *ghazal*, *mukhammas*, *nama*, and *shejire* [3]. This classification helps in understanding the mechanism by which moral instructions were delivered—ranging from the intimate lyrical emotionalism of Ajiniyaz to the broad historical chronicles of Berdakh [5]. Finally, a **synthesis of folkloric and written traditions** is examined to track the normalization of the Karakalpak literary language as a pedagogical instrument [5].

Results: Divergent and Convergent Educational Paradigms

The investigation reveals that while the Karakalpak poets shared a common cultural and spiritual reservoir, their philosophical approaches to upbringing were tailored to different aspects of the human experience and social structure.

Kun-khoja: The Pedagogy of Social Justice and Labor

Kun-khoja's educational philosophy is grounded in the reality of the "working man" and the struggles of the peasantry against both internal feudalism and



external colonial pressures [2]. His views suggest that the primary goal of upbringing is the cultivation of social consciousness and communal solidarity. Kun-khoja posited that education begins with an awareness of the material conditions of existence. His poetry often depicts the "oppression of the colonists" and the "unjust actions of officials," serving as a critical lesson in socio-political reality for the youth. In his view, a moral education is impossible if it ignores the suffering of the common people. He utilized mythological plots and religious narratives—such as the creation of Adam—to provide a cosmic justification for human equality, teaching that all humans share a common origin and therefore a common right to justice. Kun-khoja's didacticism was also deeply rooted in the ethics of labor. He saw work not merely as a means of survival but as a form of spiritual and social discipline. By celebrating the "hardworking people," he taught the younger generation that the development of the country is intrinsically linked to the diligence and patriotism of its citizens [7].

Ajiniyaz Qosibay uli: Intellectual Enlightenment and Humanism

Ajiniyaz represents the intellectual pinnacle of the Karakalpak classical tradition, characterized by a deep engagement with the Arab-Persian and Turkic literary worlds. His educational philosophy is centered on the concept of **enlightenment** (*ma'rifat*) and the aesthetic refinement of the soul. For Ajiniyaz, knowledge was a sacred pursuit. Having studied at the most prestigious madrasas of his time—including Shergazy Khan—he viewed education as the acquisition of "jet knowledge" (comprehensive mastery). His poetry teaches that the intellect is a "light" that illuminates the path to both worldly success and divine proximity. He integrated the humanistic traditions of Alisher Navoi, focusing on the "Perfect Human" as an individual who balances intellectual prowess with deep empathy.

Berdakh: Historical Consciousness and National Integrity

Berdakh is frequently hailed as the "voice of the Karakalpak people," and his philosophical views on education are perhaps the most influential in terms of national identity [1]. He viewed education as a holistic process that encompasses science, history, and moral self-purification. A central tenet of Berdakh's pedagogy is the importance of **historical memory**. In works like *Avlodlar*



(Generations), he provided a detailed chronicle of his people's history and tribal origins. He believed that a person without knowledge of their history (*shejire*) is essentially uneducated and vulnerable to external manipulation. Berdakh also focused heavily on the search for a just ruler and the ethical qualities of leadership, teaching that historical knowledge is the root of resilience.

Discussion:

The Synthesis of Philosophical and Educational Values

The collective heritage of these poets suggests a unified philosophical system that transcends their individual stylistic differences.

The Concept of the "Perfect Human" as an Educational Goal

The archetype of the "Perfect Human" (*Komil Inson*) serves as the ultimate objective of the Karakalpak educational paradigm.⁶ In Karakalpak classical poetry, the "Perfect Human" is not just a mystic seeker of the divine but a socially engaged individual who possesses a balance of traits.

Perfect Human = Spiritual Purity + Intellectual Potential + Social Justice + Laborious Dignity

This formula suggests that upbringing was seen as a multi-dimensional process. The poets used their verse to illustrate the dialectic between the "internal" and "external" aspects of a person. For instance, Berdakh's focus on "inner dialogue between God and humanity" highlights the internal spiritual requirement, while his and Kun-khoja's focus on "serving the people" emphasizes the external social obligation [7].

The Transition from Orality to Literacy in Pedagogy

A critical insight gained from the research is the role of these poets in the normalization of the Karakalpak literary language as an educational tool.³ Poets like Berdakh and Kun-khoja effectively "transferred" these oral plots into written literature, a move that had profound educational implications. This transformation allowed for a more analytical and permanent form of pedagogy. While oral tales (*naqıl*) expressed clear meanings through recitation at festivals,



the written poetry (maqal and ghazal) could utilize metaphorical meanings to engage the student in deeper reflection.

Conclusion

The philosophical views on education in the works of Berdakh, Ajiniyaz, and Kun-khoja constitute a sophisticated system designed to foster national identity and spiritual enlightenment. Their poetry was the primary pedagogical instrument that filled the void left by a lack of formal schooling. The legacy of these poets remains a "moral archive" for the Karakalpak people, ensuring that the philosophical insights of the 19th century continue to light the "Path of Truth" for future generations.

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