

Modern Trends and Historical Background of Cultural and Humanitarian Cooperation of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the People's Republic of China

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ABSTRACT

The article examines the main historical prerequisites for the establishment of cooperation between the Republic of Kazakhstan and the People's Republic of China in the social, humanitarian and cultural spheres, and the article also highlights recent trends of bilateral relations in this area. The main regulatory documents on the sphere of cooperation directions and some results of the joint actions between Kazakhstan and China in the cultural and humanitarian sphere have been identified and summarized.

Keywords: *Kazakhstan, China, Cultural and humanitarian cooperation, Educational programs, Cultural exchange, Tourism, Languages.*

1. INTRODUCTION

In today's world which is full of interstate conflicts caused by various reasons the problem of preventing the recurrence of new conflicts and the settling of the existing ones is especially acute. It's well known in international relations the issues of politics, economics and security remain paramount. In our time, most states have complicated relationships with their neighbors and sometimes despite the declared "friendly" ties continue to follow their policies against all the odds. However, it should be noted that some countries still manage to create quite favorable conditions for the development of bilateral relations on partnerships and mutually advantageous positions. Such a level of relations presupposes not only an economic and political interaction to which the greatest attention was focused, but also the cooperation in the cultural and humanitarian sphere. China and Kazakhstan are an example of how the states, despite the grave circumstances on the international scene, could interact successfully, creating the favorable conditions not only for the development of bilateral

relationships but also for maintaining the stability in the region.

2. FORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF COOPERATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN AND THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA IN THE CULTURAL AND HUMANITARIAN SPHERE

The history of cooperation between the Republic of Kazakhstan and the People's Republic of China has its deep roots including the cultural and humanitarian field which is due to the geographical proximity of these states as well as the cultural and historical commonality of the ethnic groups of these two countries. It is commonly known that for a long historical period within a given region the concept of borders existed conventionally, which in turn contributed to the active movement of peoples as well as to the interaction between them [1]. Until the beginning

of the 20th century the contacts between the People's Republic of China and Kazakhstan in the context of cultural and humanitarian cooperation were episodic and later they became a part of Soviet-Chinese relations.

The formation of Kazakhstan as an independent state resulted in the need to build its own foreign policy course as well as to the establishment of the political, economic, social, humanitarian, cultural relations with states of both multilateral and bilateral formats. One of the priority areas in the field of international cooperation has become the establishment of the relationships with the countries of the region in particular with the People's Republic of China. It is worth noting that cooperation between the PRC and Kazakhstan is of great importance not only within the regional dimension but also at the international level. The geopolitical position of Kazakhstan in the center of Eurasia allows it to play the role of a mediator between East and West in the context of international processes. China, in its turn, being a regional power has a direct impact on the political and economic climate not only in the Eurasian region but in the world as a whole. China and Kazakhstan being one of the largest states in the world are the key actors that influence on the situation in Central Asia as well as on the distribution of spheres of influence in the international arena. This factor determines the interest of modern researchers in the issue of cooperation between the PRC and Kazakhstan [2].

The cooperation between Kazakhstan and China at the current stage includes various areas and directions including trade exchange and economic cooperation, interaction to ensure stability and security in the region, political relations, communications, etc. One of the most important areas of bilateral cooperation is social, humanitarian and cultural interaction. Interstate cultural exchange contributes to the formation of ideas about the country concerned and people whereas public opinion is the basis of diplomatic relations. In this regard, cultural exchange is being an important component in relations between the two countries, and acts as a unique opportunity to lay the foundation for mutual understanding and peace [1].

3. INFLUENCE OF INTERESTS OF KAZAKHSTAN AND CHINA ON CULTURAL AND HUMANITARIAN COOPERATION WITHIN THE SCO

As was mentioned above, Kazakhstan got the opportunity to build effective independent relationships with neighboring countries in the early 1990s after gaining independence and sovereignty. In 1991, the agreements in the field of tourism, education and cultural exchange were signed between Kazakhstan and China. The high-level meetings became more frequent, and friendly ties between regions and cities began to form and deepen. However, despite the recognition by the leaders of both countries of the importance of the development of cultural and humanitarian relationships, in the initial period of building bilateral relations, priority attention was paid to the formation of a legal and regulatory framework for economic and political cooperation, and only from the beginning of the 2000s the stage of active interaction began.

This fact is primarily linked with the formation of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in 2001. In the same year the first documents of the new organization were adopted, namely, the Declaration on the Establishment of the SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organization), the Shanghai Convention on Combating Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism. In addition to the above mentioned documents, the activities of the SCO are currently regulated by the following documents: Charter of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, adopted in 2002, Bishkek Declaration, 2007; Treaty on Long-Term Good Neighborliness, Friendship and Cooperation of the SCO Member States, 2007; Regulations on the Business Council of the SCO Member States, approved by the decision of the Session of the Business Council of the SCO Member States on June 14, 2006; Dushanbe Declaration, 2008; Action plan for the implementation of the Program of Multilateral Trade and Economic Cooperation of the SCO Member States; Agreement on the establishment of the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, 2002; Ufa Declaration of the Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, 2015; Astana Declaration of the Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, 2017; Moscow Declaration of the Council of Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, 2020, etc. [3].

The Charter of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization emphasizes that cooperation in the humanitarian field is one of the priority areas of interaction within the organization. Moreover, in accordance with the SCO Charter, it is the deepening and development of integration educational ties that aims to promote comprehensive and balanced economic growth, social and cultural development, and consequently the security in the region [4].

The leaders of the SCO member states also emphasized the importance of cultural and humanitarian cooperation as a connecting link in bilateral and multilateral relations during their participation in the summits of the organization. During the meeting of the heads of the SCO member states in 2001, it was decided to hold systematically meetings of ministers of culture and to develop a program of cultural events. In 2002, first time such a meeting has been held which has resulted in the discussion and the development of a legal framework for cultural cooperation within the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. During the meeting, the conclusions were made about the need for interaction both on a bilateral and on a multilateral basis, which were enshrined in the Joint Communiqué following the meeting of the Council of Heads of Government of the Organization's member states.

The next stage was the meeting of the ministers of culture of the SCO member states in Astana in 2005 and the formation of the Expert Working Group on Cultural Interaction. The purpose of creating of this Group was the desire to preserve cultural traditions, cultural diversity and cultural exchange. In addition, a Plan of Multilateral Cultural Cooperation was developed, one of the points of which was the annual holding of the Festivals of Culture.

As a result, it may be said that by 2005, a sufficient basis was formed for the further development of cultural and humanitarian cooperation within the framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

The SCO summit in Bishkek in 2007 was marked by the signing of an intergovernmental agreement on cooperation in the field of culture. As a result of this agreement, an impetus was given to the beginning of the functioning of cultural exchanges on a unilateral and multilateral basis.

In 2008, another plan of cultural events was adopted, as well as the Regulations on the Arts

Festival of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization member countries. It is worth noting that it was the SCO Secretariat, or rather the Expert Group in its composition, that was assigned the role of "engine" in defining the main directions of interaction in the cultural sphere. These expert groups, in accordance with the idea, should meet at least once a year. 2008 was a key year in terms of development of mechanisms in the field of cultural cooperation. The main directions of cooperation were also identified, in particular the interaction in the field of musical, theatrical, visual arts, cinema, archival, library, museum affairs, protection of cultural objects, etc.

In 2020, the member states stand for the development of an intercivilizational dialogue, the strengthening relationships in the educational, scientific and technical, cultural, humanitarian and tourism fields, contributing to the further strengthening of good-neighborliness, friendship and cooperation, and also they consider that it's important to declare the Year of Culture of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization as part of the celebration of the 20th anniversary of the SCO in 2021.

The development of interaction in the field of education and science was enshrined, in particular, in the Agreement between the governments of the member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in Education dated June 15, 2006, as well as in the Declaration of the Ministers of Education dated October 24, 2008.

The result of the formation of the foundations of cultural and humanitarian cooperation was the interaction of the SCO member states on a bilateral basis. During the existence of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization many bilateral documents have been signed in this area which set the pace for cultural and humanitarian cooperation within the organization.

It is particularly significant that both for the Republic of Kazakhstan and for the People's Republic of China the most attractive seems the option of the bilateral cooperation with the rest of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. This is explained by the simplicity of achieving consensus and legal registration, as well as the transparency of the implementation monitoring,

In a result the Kazakh-Chinese cooperation in the educational sphere acquired a permanent character. An important step in building such interaction was the Agreement between the

Ministries of Education of the People's Republic of China and the Republic of Kazakhstan on cooperation in the field of education, signed in 2003 in Astana. Later, in 2009, as the outcome of the mutual agreement, some changes and additions were made to this agreement. The goal was to improve the level and effectiveness of scientific research in the future, as well as the extension of the exchange in the field of education. The objectives were stated as follows: information exchange, student exchange on various programs of higher education, assistance in the study of languages of both states. Later, the agreement between the governments of the PRC and Kazakhstan on scientific and technical cooperation was also signed, as well as an agreement on the mutual recognition of documents on higher education [5].

4. BILATERAL EDUCATIONAL COOPERATION OF CHINA AND KAZAKHSTAN

A special form of integration in the field of education, science, culture and technology between states, which stimulated the development of innovative ways of cooperation was the SCO University. It operates on the basis of 15 leading universities grouped into innovative research universities in various areas. The idea of creating this university was proposed in 2007 by the President of the Russian Federation, and launched in 2010 in a pilot mode [6]. In 2021, it includes 78 higher educational institutions in China, Kazakhstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. From the Russian Federation, the SCO included RUDN University, MGIMO, Moscow State University, etc.

In the field of culture, in the 2000s, a number of agreements were also signed between China and Kazakhstan. As a result, in 2004 the official Days of Almaty Culture were held in Shanghai and in June the House of Culture of the PRC was opened. The most important step towards strengthening cooperation was the creation in 2005 of a Chinese-Kazakh subcommittee on cultural and humanitarian cooperation. In 2006 the Days of Chinese Culture were held in Kazakhstan and in 2007 - the Days of the Culture of Kazakhstan in Beijing. 2006 was also marked by the signing of an agreement on cooperation in the field of archiving [1].

The various cultural and educational centers opened on the territory of both countries for the purpose of teaching language, history, traditions,

and so on. The main direction of popularization and promotion of Chinese culture on the territory of Kazakhstan was the institutions of Confucius. The first of them was opened in 2007 in Astana, the second in 2009 in Almaty, and the third in 2011 in Acrob and the fourth in 2012 in Karaganda. The main activity of this network is to increase interest in the Chinese language, culture, student assignment and various internships in the PRC in order to improve the level of language proficiency. It should be noted that despite the fact that these centers are very popular among the population of Kazakhstan, it is expected that the number of students wishing to learn Chinese will increase [7].

However, for a long time Kazakhstan did not have organizations similar to the Confucius Institute on the territory of the PRC which significantly limited the possibilities and complicated the cultural initiation process. This fact is explained by the relative youth of Kazakhstan as a sovereign state, as well as the small popularity of the Kazakh language even among representatives of Kazakhstan. However, during 2015-2017, with the assistance of the Kazakh Embassy in China, the so-called Centers of Kazakhstan were opened at the universities of foreign languages in the cities of Beijing, Shanghai, Dalian and Xi'an [8].

Another important stage in the development of cultural and humanitarian cooperation between the countries was the conclusion of an agreement on cultural and humanitarian cooperation between the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Government of the People's Republic of China, in the framework of the state visit of the President of Kazakhstan N.A. Nazarbayev in 2015 [9]. In total, in 2015, more than 150 different documents were signed between Kazakhstan and China, 129 of which had been of an economic nature. This is an indicator of the intensity of interaction and cooperation between the two states.

In 2017, the flow of direct Chinese investments to the Republic of Kazakhstan increased by 7 times compared to the previous year, which impacted on the cultural and humanitarian cooperation between the countries. The meeting of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the First Deputy Prime Minister of the State Council of the PRC, which took place on April 18, 2017 demonstrated the great interest of countries in cooperation. During the meeting they discussed not only trade, economic, financial and energy cooperation questions, but also the questions related to the cooperation in the cultural and humanitarian sphere

up to the planning of large joint projects and long-term programs. A landmark was the holding of a two-day Forum "One Belt - One Road" in Beijing, within the framework of which, was raised the question of the key role of Kazakhstan as a portal to Europe for China.

5. CONCLUSION

We can conclude that since 1991, both relations between China and Kazakhstan in general, and the cultural and humanitarian interaction between the countries have been developing progressively. Each stage was characterized by its own tasks and goals. The creation of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization gave a powerful impetus not only for multilateral regional cooperation but also for bilateral cooperation between China and Kazakhstan. The indicator is the fact that in 2018 China is the largest investor in Kazakhstan: investments reach \$ 20 billion, of which \$ 5 billion are direct [10]. Kazakhstan, on the other hand, has become China's largest trading partner in the Central Asian region.

At this time it can be safely assumed that both states have succeeded not only in the development of the economic relations but also in the field of cultural and humanitarian cooperation which is at a high level and is actively developing in all areas, with some preponderance from the side of China. It stands to mention that according to some national surveys the high level of interaction between China and Kazakhstan may in some way pose a threat to relations between Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation in the context of a change in the balance of power in the face of the PRC's convergence with the United States [11].

Nevertheless, with a view to maintain stability and security in the region, there is a need of further deepening and intensifying cooperation between China and Kazakhstan, both in the field of political and economic cooperation, as well as in the humanitarian and cultural spheres.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

L. Ponomarenko and A. Osipova conceived and designed the model, the main conceptual ideas, analysed the data. L. Ponomarenko was in charge of overall direction. A. Osipova performed the analysis, processed sources and literature in Chinese, translated it. L. Ponomarenko and A. Osipova wrote the article with input from all authors.

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