

– ЛИТЕРАТУРОВЕДЕНИЕ. ЛИТЕРАТУРНАЯ КРИТИКА –

УДК 821.512.157 Кулаковский.09  
DOI 10.25587/2782-6635-2024-3-5-9

**The main ideas in the appeals of national classics to their peoples:  
Abai Kunanbaev and Aleksei Kulakovsky**

*S. I. Egorova*

M. K. Ammosov North-Eastern Federal University, Yakutsk, Russia

✉ sargi@mail.ru

**Abstract.** The article aims to make a comparative analysis of the works of Abai Kunanbaev "Words of edification" [1] and Aleksei Kulakovsky "To the Yakut Intelligentsia" [2]. The relevance of the article lies in the fact that no such comparative work has been undertaken before. The purpose of the work is to note in these works similar ideas in meaning, so significant in the spiritual heritage of the appeals of the poet – thinkers, directly addressed to their people. The idea that these messages have similar thoughts and problems is substantiated, and examples are given. Special attention is paid to the content of these works. This problem has been little studied and requires further research. This view will be of interest to specialists in the field of humanities.

**Keywords:** genres, tradition, national classics, history, literature, Abai Kunanbaev, Aleksei Kulakovsky, "Words of Edification", "To the Yakut Intelligentsia".

**For citation:** Egorova S. I. The main ideas in the appeals of national classics to their peoples: Abai Kunanbaev and Aleksei Kulakovsky. *Issues of national literature*. 2024. No 3 (15). Pp. 5–9. DOI 10.25587/2782-6635-2024-3-5-9

**Основные идеи в обращениях национальных классиков  
к своим народам: А.Кунанбаев и А.Кулаковский**

*С. И. Егорова*

Северо-Восточный федеральный университет имени М.К. Аммосова, г. Якутск, Россия

✉ sargi@mail.ru

**Аннотация.** В статье ставится задача сделать сравнительно-сопоставительный анализ произведений Абая Кунанбаева «Слова назидания» [1] и Алексея Кулаковского «Якутской интеллигенции» [2]. Актуальность статьи заключается в том, что ранее не были предприняты подобные сопоставительные работы. Цель работы: отмечать в данных произведениях схожие по смыслу идеи, столь значительных в духовном наследии обращений поэтов-мыслителей, непосредственно адресованных их родному народу. Обосновывается идея о том, что эти послания имеют схожие мысли, проблемы, приводятся примеры. Особое внимание уделено содержанию этих произведений. Данная проблема мало изучена и требует дальнейших исследований. Такой взгляд будет интересен специалистам в области гуманитарных наук.

**Ключевые слова:** жанры, традиции, национальная классика, история, литература, Абай Кунанбаев, Алексей Кулаковский, «Слова назидания», «Якутской интеллигенции».

**Для цитирования:** Егорова С. И. Основные идеи в обращениях национальных классиков к своим народам: А. Кунанбаев и А. Кулаковский. *Вопросы национальных литератур. Issues of national literature*. 2024, № 3 (15). С. 5–9. DOI 10.25587/2782-6635-2024-3-5-9

## Introduction

This article attempts to provide a comparative analysis of the work of the Kazakh writer Abai Kunanbayev (1845–1904) "Words of Edification" and the epistles of the classic of Yakut literature Aleksei Kulakovsky (1877–1826) "To the Yakut Intelligentsia". The Yakut people are proud of their great son, as well as the Kazakh people – Abai Kunanbayev. It is they, recognized great poets of their time, who in the message of the "To the Yakut Intelligentsia" and in the work "Words of Edification" reveal the pain for the fate of their people. The relevance of the article lies in the fact that no such comparative work has been undertaken before. The purpose of the work is to note in these works similar ideas in meaning, so significant in the spiritual heritage of the appeals of the poet – thinkers, directly addressed to their native people.

Abai Kunanbayev is one of the first figures of the Kazakh enlightenment, a fervent fighter for culture and freedom, the founder of Kazakh literature, its first classic, sage, the greatest thinker of the Kazakh people, educator and democrat, herald of friendship between the Russian and Kazakh peoples, calls his people to an irreconcilable struggle against darkness and ignorance. The legacy of the great Abai – the pinnacle of Kazakh classical poetry – is huge. An important place in it is occupied by "Kara soz" ("Words of Edification"), written in 1890–1898, contains 45 short parables.

## Comparative analysis of texts of national classics

Aleksei Eliseevich Kulakovsky is the founder of Yakut literature, an outstanding Yakut thinker of the early 20th century, educator, humanist philosopher. Kulakovsky is a poet who lived and worked in a key era of the development of Yakut literature, when the ethnic identity of the people was formed and the main problems of its spirituality became relevant, a unique social stratum – the intelligentsia – was formed. In 1910–1917, the philosophical, socio – economic views of Kulakovsky were formed. He created the main artistic works of Yakut literature and the main socio–philosophical work – a letter to the "To the Yakut Intelligentsia", which reflect the author's life principles, conceptual views on the development and enlightenment of the people through the reasonable organization of socio–economic relations in society. As Professor Georgy Basharin noted, Aleksei Eliseevich Kulakovsky's letter is one of the important cultural monuments of pre-Soviet Yakutia. Reflecting various aspects of the economy, economy and culture, it has great scientific and educational significance. The work of the "To the Yakut Intelligentsia" was written in 1912 in the village of Kachikattsy, Yakutia. This document has great socio–philosophical significance, because it is practically the only study of the Yakut society of that time. Aleksei Kulakovsky has an enduring significance for the Yakut people.

Peter Avvakumov in the article "Dyol, olaatabakhyt", where he wrote about the monument to Abai, briefly compared Abai Kunanbayev and Aleksei Kulakovsky. Avvakumov writes that these writers are the enlighteners of their peoples [3, p. 49] Both writers are the founders of their native literatures: Kunanbayev – Kazakh, Kulakovsky – Yakut. In many ways, there are similarities in the thoughts of two great people. First of all, we should talk about the history of the creation of their outstanding works. Kunanbayev wrote his first "Word" in 1890, and his last, "Forty-fifth", in 1897, 22 years later. Kulakovsky wrote a letter to the "To the Yakut Intelligentsia ", but it was published only at the end of the twentieth century, in 1992. Both works thus have much in common in the complexity and difficulty of their story.

They correspond to two genre traditions of literature: sentimentalist and educational, written in the first person. Both Kunanbayev and Kulakovsky do not have main characters, there is no one specific event. Consider the following similarities in the thoughts of great writers:

1. They, as enlightenment writers, encourage young people to learn Russian and Turkic literacy: "... it would be enough to teach them at least Turkic literacy," "You need to learn Russian grammar. The Russian language holds spiritual riches, knowledge, art and other untold secrets. To avoid the vices of Russians, to adopt their achievements, it is necessary to study their language, to comprehend their science," wrote Abai Kunanbayev [1, p. 25]. "In existing schools,

it is necessary to introduce Yakut writing, the introduction of which will take a maximum of 1 month of time per year," Kulakovsky wrote [6, p. 86]. The writers attached great importance to cultural and educational activities: the opening of public libraries, the publication of books, magazines and newspapers, the promotion of science and technology. A special role was given to the creation of fiction.

2. They understood the inevitability of the extinction of a nation without education. This thought is conveyed in the Twenty-fifth Word as follows: "It would be good to give Kazakh children an education. Enlightenment is also useful for religion", "One must study in order to learn what other nations know" [1, p. 25]. Abai Kunanbayev gives advice to the reader – "My advice to you is, you can not marry your son, do not leave him rich treasures, but be sure to give him a Russian education, even if you have to part with all the goods you have acquired. This path is worth any sacrifice". He wrote that knowledge and science are the main conditions for the formation of a moral person, that only on their basis a person can withstand life's trials with dignity and make the right decisions. If Kazakhs want to live at the level of enlightened peoples," Kunanbayev said, "they must reconsider their way of life, choose new ideological guidelines. The same idea was expressed by Kulakovsky: "We need the general development of children in a language they understand. We need at least one school in each *ulus* with a program corresponding to the actual needs of our lives. Yakut writing should also be introduced in schools" [2, p. 91]. Kunanbayev noted: "There are more than 2 billion people living on earth. Of these, there are more than 2 million of us, Kazakhs" [1, p. 10]. Kulakovsky wrote: "You, gentlemen, may think that I am obsessed with some kind of mania or suspiciousness, expressing the idea of the possibility and even the inevitability of the extinction of the Yakuts. You may think so, but I am deeply convinced of the critical situation of the Yakuts at this time" [2, p. 43]. According to Kulakovsky, the salvation of the Yakuts from extinction depended on strengthening the state of culture and the internal health of the people. Kulakovsky supported his belief in the "critical situation of the Yakuts at this time" with very strong arguments. According to the researchers, in 1897 there were 130,777 Yakuts in the Yakutsk district; 11,347 in Verkhoyansky; 62,995 in Vilyuysky; 3,330 in Kolymsky and 13,218 in Olyokminsky, a total of 221,067 people in the Yakut region. In 1917, a population census was conducted in three districts of the region – Yakutsk, Vilyuysky and Olyokminsky, according to which 207,113 Yakuts lived in them. As can be seen from the above data, in 1897, the Yakut population of these districts made 206,390 people; therefore, in 20 years the number of Yakuts in them increased by only 723 people [6, p. 9].

3. With deep interest, they raised an environmental problem: agriculture, human connection with nature, handicrafts, agriculture. Kunanbayev wrote in the Thirty-third Word: "If you want to be rich, learn a craft. Wealth runs out over time, but skill does not," "You need to work tirelessly. And they should buy two or three livestock..." [1, p. 33]. Kulakovsky in his work put forward the idea of an interconnected system of environmental management, including land use, animal husbandry, fishing and covering the entire agriculture of Yakutia. He drew attention to the irrational use of land resources: "our inept attitude to the land is more to blame than the lack of land: it was possible to live comfortably on owned land."

4. In their messages, the authors are sure that the goal of the people is to raise culture. Kunanbayev in "Words of Edification" put forward the problems of history, pedagogy, morality and law of ethnic Kazakhs. "He is a man of turning point, he had to live at a time when the thousand-year-old order of steppe culture was collapsing and new relationships and a new way of life were being established. This catastrophe, terrible and beneficent at the same time, was imprinted in his spiritual appearance, in his poetry and thought, imprinted in his spiritual appearance, in his poetry and thought, defining the organic tragedy of creativity"[4, p. 348]. Kunanbayev warns his people against judgments and actions that will spread notoriety about him around the world. He had a great influence on the nascent Kazakh national intelligentsia of the late 19th century. The poet-educator did not accept such qualities as ignorance, braggadocio, laziness,

slander, envy in his compatriots, associating them with a large number of people who think the old-fashioned way and do not want to change anything in life. In general, Kazakh culture, thanks to Kunanbayev i, was enriched with new ideas and, approaching the beginning of a new era, retained the original universalist concepts, concepts, ideas. The work "Words of Edification" represents philosophical–moralistic, socio–political and accusatory – satirical statements of the poet. This is the fruit of many years of thoughts, worries and noble spiritual impulses of Kunanbayev. Careful stylistic decoration, imaginative, precise language, the sincerity of the poet, his humanity, high aspiration, mighty wisdom, place the "Words of Edification" among the brilliant literary monuments of mankind.

5. The message of Kulakovsky testifies to the need for a democratic awakening of the national consciousness of the Sakha people. It should be noted that the author of the letter's judgments are surprisingly accurate and correct that the cultural rise of the population is almost impossible to achieve unless a decisive, consistent struggle is waged against acquired social vices: "drunkenness, gambling and tobacco smoking." The idea runs through the whole letter like a red thread that if the Yakuts do not reach the modern level of culture, do not join the achievements of universal civilization, then they are doomed to extinction. [5, p. 36]. Kulakovsky, according to patience and tolerance, is looking for the right way for his people and points out to them: "The only rational means is our cultivation and merging with the Russians, it is good that a cross with the latter gives good fruits. Cultivation would be necessary in addition to these formidable signs".

In conclusion, I would like to note that these outstanding works have great socio–philosophical significance and thus arouse great interest in society. Kulakovsky and Kunanbayev read our thoughts today from afar, wrote invaluable advice and precepts. These works are monuments of the socio-political thought of that time, the fundamental provisions of which have not lost their significance at the present time.

The similarities and structuring of the texts should be noted. For example, Kunanbayev divided his message into 45 parables, and Kulakovsky – into 7 chapters: I – "Land use", II – "Agriculture", III – "About fish", IV – "Cattle breeding", V – "School and public life", VI – "Economic conditions and enterprises", VII – "Sources of income".

Abai Kunanbayev was the spiritual eye of his people, thought and felt with them, believed in their bright future. It is gratifying that nowadays society values and respects the works of great writers. In order to perpetuate the names of Abai Kunanbayev and Aleksei Kulakovsky, the great sons of their peoples, their works are published, translated, scientific conferences, exhibitions, etc. are held. For example, we know that there is a section of world and Kazakh literary studies "Abai Studies", which studies the life and work of Abai Kunanbayev, his philosophical, aesthetic and social views. Alikhan Bokeikhanov, Akhmet Baitursynov and Mirzha Kipdulatov stood at the origins of Abai studies. The scientific Research Center "Abai Studies" was established in order to study the popularization of the life and work of the Great Kazakh poet Abai Kunanbayev and the promotion of his spiritual heritage among young people through introduction to the educational process. The initial period of the development of Abai studies consists of the first publications of Abai's works with comments and brief biographical information (1909–1917). The second period of the development of Abai studies (1918–1940) is associated with the research of M.O.Auzov, who began work on the systematization and periodization of Abai's artistic heritage. The third period of the development of Abai studies (1940–1970s) is characterized by the intensification of the study of Abai's work and translations of his works into many languages of the world. Since the 1980s, a new period of development of Abai studies has begun. Dozens of fundamental scientific papers testify to a new scientific and theoretical level of Abai studies.

The Institute of A. E. Kulakovsky, which is a structural subdivision of the M. K. Ammosov North-Eastern Federal University, is working fruitfully in Yakutsk. The NEFU research unit was established in 2010 on the basis of the scientific research laboratory "Studying the artistic and scholarly heritage of A.E. Kulakovsky". The goals and objectives of the Institute: To carry out scientific research and experimental developments on the genesis and formation of genres,

artistic features of the national style, transcultural model of author's identity based on the materials of analyses of original texts in Yakut and Russian; preparation of an academic edition of the complete works of Kulakovsky in 9 volumes: comparative historical study of literary texts, their editions, variants and dubia in aspects of textual analysis (II vol.); preparation of author's texts from the scientific archive, real-historical, textual scientific comments on them, compilation of personalities (III–V th.). Organization and holding of regular scientific conferences, round tables, seminars on the problems of Kulakovsky's legacy in the context of the spiritual culture of Russia. In May of this year, the letter of the "To the Yakut Intelligentsia " celebrated its 100th anniversary.

### Conclusion

The first president of the Sakha Republic of (Yakutia) Mikhail Nikolaev in the preface of the book "The life of wonderful people. Aleksei Kulakovsky" wrote: "It is a great honor for me, being the president of the Sakha Republic (Yakutia), to do everything possible to return to the people the honest name of its great son—poet, thinker and prophet Aleksei Eliseevich Kulakovsky. Now I'm sure it's forever."

The names of these poets are immortal, creatures do not die if their path merges with the path of their native people, if their creations call the people forward and forward.

### References

1. Abai (1970) *Words of Edification*. Translated from the Kazakh by S.Sanbaev. Alma-Ata. (In Russian)
2. Kulakovsky, A.E. (2012) *To the Yakut Intelligentsia*. Novosibirsk: Nauka. (In Russian)
3. Avvakumov, P.D. (1981) *Unforgettable Meetings. Jol, ol aata bahut*. Yakutsk. (In Russian)
4. Anastasiev, N.A. (2008) *Abai. The Life of Remarkable People*. Moscow. (In Russian)
5. Basharin, G.P. (1964) *The Writings of A.E.Kulakovsky*. Yakutsk. (In Russian)
6. Kulakovsky, A.E. (1992) *To the Yakut Intelligentsia*. Yakutsk: Publishing House. (In Russian)

### Л и т е р а т у р а

1. Абай. Слова назидания. Перевод с казахского С. Санбаева. — Алма-Ата, 1970.
2. Кулаковский, А. Е. Якутской интеллигенции. — Новосибирск : Наука, 2012. — 189.
3. Аввакумов, П. Д. Незабываемые встречи // Дьол, ол аата бахут. Якутск, 1981. — 192 с.
4. Анастасьев, Н. А. Абай. Тяжесть полета / Николай Анастасьев. — Москва ; Астана : Молодая гвардия ; Фолиант, 2008. — 379 с.
5. Башарин, Г. П. Сочинения А. Е. Кулаковского. — Якутск, 1964.
6. Кулаковский А. Е. Якутской интеллигенции. — Якутск : Кн. изд-во, 1992. — 80 с.

---

ЕГОРОВА Саргылана Ивановна — к. филол. н., доц. каф. якутской литературы ИЯКН СВ РФ, ФГАОУ ВО «Северо-Восточный федеральный университет им. М.К. Аммосова».

E-mail: sargi@mail.ru

EGOROVA Sargylana Ivanovna — Cand. Sci. (Philology), Associate Professor, Department of Sakha Literature, Institute of Languages and Cultures of the Peoples of the Northeast, M.K. Ammosov North-Eastern Federal University.