



ACHIEVEMENTS AND SHORTCOMINGS IN TRANSLATING KAZAKH LITERATURE INTO FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Literature is a great tool that shows rich culture and spirituality of the people to the world community. However, since the independence of Kazakhstan, the issue of translation and printing of literary works in the Kazakh language has not received much attention. On the one hand, it was caused by the crisis, which had been taking place in Kazakhstan's literature since 1991 until the present. Although the government assisted the writers, it was not sufficient for them. Talented poets and writers often had to publish their works at own expense to convey them not only to local readers but also to foreign ones. Some authors translated their works either using their own resources or with the help of sponsors and relied solely on their own strength to be recognized abroad. That is why there is no specific data on how many literary works and books have been translated from Kazakh into other languages. Moreover, one of the reasons of the lag in this sector is the lack of specialists with foreign language skills among Kazakh poets and writers.

Moreover, there was no agency responsible for the promoting of Kazakh authors abroad. Two major organizations that bring together Kazakh poets and writers, the Union of Writers of Kazakhstan and the Kazakh PEN Club, have been engaged in literary translations only in the last 3-4 years and have been showing concrete results. Although the issue of literary translations remained on the agenda, there was no comprehensive financial support.

Comprehensive support from the state began after the adoption of the "Spiritual Renaissance" program of the First President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev. Two institutions established under this program, the National Commission for the Realization of the "Spiritual Renaissance" program and the National Bureau of Translations, have been contributing to the gradual solution of the abovementioned issues. While the commission has been closely monitoring the implementation of these works, the translation bureau has shown good results in the promotion of Kazakh authors abroad and the familiarization of the best world literary works to Kazakh readers.

One of the main tasks of this program is to translate contemporary Kazakh literature into the six official languages of the UN (English, Arabic, French, Spanish, Chinese, and Russian). According to Chairwoman of the National Commission Aida Balayeva, this initiative will give a great opportunity to demonstrate history and culture of our people to the world. For this purpose, 30 writers and 30 poets have been selected within the framework of the "Contemporary Kazakh Culture in the Global World" Program. As part of the project, a two-volume collection called "Anthology of Contemporary Kazakh Poetry" and "Anthology of Contemporary Kazakh Prose", which are 500 pages each and include works of these authors, was released. It will be distributed to literary and cultural institutions of 90 countries around the world. As a result, more than 2.5 billion people in the world will have the opportunity to learn about Kazakh literature.

The project currently being implemented has already begun to produce some concrete results. Thus, at the London Book Fair held in March 2019, Cambridge University Press and the National Bureau of Translations of Kazakhstan, with the support of the Embassy of Kazakhstan in the United Kingdom, presented the anthology of contemporary Kazakh literature in English.

In September 2019, the presentation of the anthology of contemporary Kazakh literature published in Spanish took place at the headquarters of the Cervantes Institute in Madrid. The translation of the two-volume collection into Spanish and translation quality assurance were carried out with the support of the Ministry of Culture of Spain, while the Cervantes Institute conducted general editing work. To print the collection, the project experts selected the Visor-Libros publishing house among several Spanish publishing houses. Being one of the six official languages of the UN, Spanish is also the mother tongue of 18 countries in Latin America, apart from Spain. The anthology, published in 10,000 copies, will spread across all Spanish-speaking countries. Thanks to this, approximately 600 million Spanish-speaking people will have an opportunity to familiarize themselves with the spiritual heritage of the Kazakh people through literature.

The presentation of the Russian version of the anthology, published by the Lomonosov Moscow State University (MSU), was held in Moscow in October 2019. The translation work was jointly done by the Union of Russian Writers and the MSU Publishing House. The Russian version of the anthology with a total circulation of 20,000 copies will be distributed to more than 3,500 libraries, universities and research centers in 14 countries. According to Aida Balayeva, Russian-speaking readers from Russia, the CIS and the Baltic countries will be able to better understand the Kazakh national image, culture and traditions through this literary anthology. The translation of Kazakh literature into Russian is very important. While the readers of the two countries know Russian, the relationship of Kazakh poets and writers with Russian colleagues is not developed. To compensate for this gap, the Kazakh-Russian literary almanac was published. So far, three almanacs have been published. Due to this almanac, literary relations with the Turkic people in Russia have also been developing.

During his speech at the presentation of the French version of the anthology held in Paris, Executive Director of the National Bureau of Translations Rauan Kenzhekhanuly stated that the translation work of the anthology into six languages of the UN had involved leading translators and writers of these countries. When selecting translators, attention was paid to their knowledge of history and culture of Kazakhstan. Moreover, some of the translators were given an opportunity to stay in Kazakhstan. It is also noteworthy that during the work the translators have established links with the authors. Even after the completion of this work, foreign publishing houses were interested in translating other works of the authors.

In November 2019, at the headquarters of the Egyptian Supreme Council for Cultural Affairs in Cairo, an Arabic language version of this anthology was presented. The Council and the MediaHub publishing house worked on the publication and edition of the Kazakh literature collection. The anthology from this publishing house will be distributed to about 4,000 libraries, universities and research centers in 22 countries, members of the Arab League. In other words, some 500 million Arab readers will get acquainted with Kazakh literature.

As for the Chinese version of the anthology, the translation was completed. It is expected that the collection will be printed after the ideological examination by the Chinese government.

Kazakhstan's creative alliances with other countries in the literature industry are rare, but this is true for other countries too. Although the countries have developed political and economic relationships, literary and cultural collaboration is lagging. In that regard, the presentation of Kazakh literature within the framework of the "Spiritual Renaissance" program abroad has been a great example for many countries.

Among the Turkic-speaking nations, Kazakh poets and writers have a good relationship with their Turkish counterparts. The well-grounded organizations such as TURKSOY and the Union of Writers of Eurasia develop literary friendship among the nations. Although the exact number is unknown, the works of 3-4 Kazakh poets and writers are translated into Turkish every year. The Kardes Kalemler Magazine, published under the Union of Writers of Eurasia, has been helping Kazakh poets and writers to be recognized in other countries. Azerbaijan is the second country after Turkey with a high level of literary ties with Kazakhstan. Although there are few translators between the Kazakh and Azerbaijani languages, the unions of writers of the two countries are working at a high level.

Presenting to the world the collection of works of 30 poets and 30 writers written during the years of independence is a great breakthrough for Kazakh culture. Although there was little effort to raise Kazakh literature to a high level after the collapse of the Soviet Union, in recent years, the state has provided support and taken some positive steps in that regard. However, there are still problems to be resolved. For example, translation of Kazakh literature into foreign languages and foreign literature into the Kazakh language is not unified. As a result, critical comments were made about the anthology that began to be published in foreign languages within the framework of the "Spiritual Renaissance" program. Therefore, it is necessary to form a unified literary translation school. However, the National Bureau of Translations, which has been doing a lot of positive work since its establishment, is confident that with due regard to critical views these issues will be solved in the near future. From a strategic point of view, literature is a long-term ideology, so the recognition of Kazakh literature in the world contributes to the prosperity of Kazakhstan.

Politics, Foreign Affairs, and Security

- Starting January 1, 2020, Uzbekistan assumed the 2020 CIS presidency, during which it plans to submit for adoption more than 10 conceptual documents aimed at further developing multilateral cooperation within the CIS. Uzbekistan will focus on strengthening security, expanding trade and economic ties, promoting joint projects in various fields, developing transport, logistics and transit potential, and enhancing cultural and humanitarian exchanges (UzDaily, 30.12.2019).
- During their phone conversation, presidents of Ukraine and Russia Volodymyr Zelensky and Vladimir Putin agreed to immediately approve the lists for a new mutual prisoner exchange. In addition, the parties welcomed the recent signing of a contract for Russian gas transit through the territory of Ukraine (Ukrinform, 31.12.2019).
- During his official visit to Turkey, President of Moldova Igor Dodon met with President of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan to discuss prospects of the Moldovan-Turkish partnership and participate in the first meeting of the bilateral High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council. Dodon thanked the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency for financial and technical assistance, including the implementation of several projects in Gagauzia (Moldpres, 31.12.2019).
- Turkey's parliament approved a bill that allows deploying troops to Libya in support of the UN-recognized government of national accord based in Tripoli, despite strong criticism from the opposition parties. 325 legislators voted in favor of the bill, with 184 votes against. The Turkish government will decide on the scope, amount and timing of the deployment mission (Al Jazeera, 02.01.2020).
- The U.S. State Department announced that Secretary Mike Pompeo's trip to Ukraine, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Cyprus, originally scheduled for January 3-7, would be postponed due to rising tensions in the Middle East. The announcement came after the events in Baghdad, where a crowd led by pro-Iran militias stormed the U.S. embassy compound (RFE/RL, 01.01.2020).
- President of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon signed the law "On Countering Extremism", which was drafted by the Tajik Prosecutor General's Office following the president's instruction. The purpose of the legal act is to prevent the involvement of citizens in terrorist and extremist organizations, as well as to facilitate the return of people who had previously joined foreign radical groups (Asia-Plus, 02.01.2020).
- The Permanent Mission of Kazakhstan to the UN organized an official ceremony of raising the flags of Estonia, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Tunisia, and Vietnam, the new non-permanent members of the UN Security Council (UNSC) for 2020-2021. The tradition of holding a solemn ceremony marking the beginning of work of newly elected members was established by Kazakhstan in January 2018 during its UNSC presidency (MFA of Kazakhstan, 02.01.2020).

Economy, Finance, and Energy

- Summing up the results of its activities in 2019, the Astana International Financial Center announced that it became a hub for more than 350 companies from 35 countries of the world. The participating companies invested more than \$130 million in various projects in Kazakhstan, and the center secured the 51st position among 104 participants in the ranking of global financial centers (Kazinform, 30.12.2019).
- According to the Ministry of Energy of Kazakhstan, the Saryarka gas pipeline, the construction of which started in December 2018, has been completed and commissioned. The pipeline will provide natural gas to Nur-Sultan and the country's central and northern regions, and is expected to give impetus to the development of small and medium-sized businesses, the creation of new jobs, and the reduction of emissions (Kazinform, 30.12.2019).
- Starting January 1, 2020, the government of Kazakhstan increased excise rates on gasoline (excluding avgas) and diesel fuel. In particular, the excise tax on wholesale sales of gasoline by manufacturers increased from 10,500 tenge per ton to 24,435 tenge per ton (Kapital.kz, 01.01.2020).
- According to Uzbekistan's State Statistics Committee, inflation in the country in 2019 amounted to 15.2%, confirming the forecast of the Central Bank made in the fall of 2018. Then, annual inflation was expected to be at the level of 13.5-15.5%. In 2018, inflation was 14.3%, while in 2020 inflation is forecasted to reach 12-13.5% (Sputnik, 02.01.2020).
- The Russian government approved the development plan for the infrastructure of the Northern Sea Route until 2035, which envisages the implementation of largescale investment projects in Russia's Arctic zone aimed at promoting freight traffic along this route. The plan also provides for the modernization and expansion of the related infrastructure, as well as the development of the raw material base (RIA Novosti, 30.12.2019).
- Georgian Prime Minister George Gakharia stated that the priority of his government is the creation of new jobs, therefore the main tasks for 2020 are the development of the private sector and the establishment of new, competitive business structures. Stating that land is one of the key economic assets, Gakharia emphasized the importance of the land registration program, which will start in 2020 and last for three years (Trend, 30.12.2019).
- Investments in the China-Belarus industrial park Great Stone reached \$526.4 million, including \$24.5 million of government expenses. The construction of main infrastructure facilities of the park's first stage was completed, and the second stage is expected to start in 2020. Currently, there are 60 residents from 15 countries at the park, and budget revenues from their activities exceeded \$40 million (BelTA, 03.01.2020).

Society and Culture

- President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev signed a law introducing stricter penalties for those who commit serious crimes. In particular, criminals will receive sentences of 20 years or life imprisonment for committing acts of sexual violence against children. In addition, the law provides life sentences for those selling drugs to minors (Informburo, 30.12.2019).
- The Institute for Eurasian Turkic Studies at the Seoul-based Dongduk Women's University will study works of Kazakh poet and thinker Abai and translate them into Korean, which will help South Koreans to learn more about culture and history of Kazakhstan. The institute also plans to hold a literary symposium dedicated to Abai in 2020 (Khabar 24, 31.12.2019).
- As stated by Moldovan Prime Minister Ion Chicu, Moldova will submit a package of documents regarding the justice sector reform to the Council of Europe, including the strategy for ensuring the sector's independence and integrity and the draft law on judges' evaluation. Subsequently, a team of the council's experts will come to Moldova to assist with the reform's implementation (Moldpres, 03.01.2020).
- According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kyrgyzstan, there are 1,631 Kyrgyz citizens in overseas detention facilities. The majority of them (1,400) are serving sentences in correctional facilities of Russia. Kazakhstan ranks second with 104 Kyrgyz citizens confined in its prisons, followed by Uzbekistan (33), Tajikistan (24), China (13) and Turkey (8) (Kabar, 30.12.2019).
- The Ministry of Innovative Development of Uzbekistan and the academic publishing company Springer Nature signed an agreement providing Uzbek higher education institutions and scientific organizations with a one-year free access to the company's electronic resources. This measure is expected to improve the quality of articles by Uzbek researchers and increase their quantity in indexed journals (UzDaily, 03.01.2020).
- According to the Uzbek government's decree, the Bostanlyk, Akhangaran, Parkent, Buka, Chinaz and Zangyata districts and the city of Akhangaran in the Tashkent region will be developed on the basis of the Golden Ring tourism concept. One of the main tasks of the concept is to increase incomes of the local population and entrepreneurs by creating favorable conditions for the accelerated development of tourism (UzDaily, 03.01.2020).
- As reported by the Georgian National Tourism Administration, more than 9.3 million foreigners visited Georgia in 2019, which is 7.1% more than in 2018, including 5 million tourists. The largest number of tourists came from Azerbaijan (1.51 million), followed by Russia (1.46 million) and Armenia (1.35 million). The top ten countries in terms of visitors to Georgia also include Turkey, Ukraine, Israel, Iran, Kazakhstan, Germany and Poland (Interfax, 04.01.2020).