

Kuryltay in Ordabasy

In late autumn of 1726, among the hills on the left bank of the river Badam – intake of the Arys, the representatives of three Kazakh zhuzes gathered at the great Kuryltay. Before the next threat of the Dzungar conquest, forgetting about tribal dissensions, khans and suktans, biys and batyrs, zhyrau, mullas and aksakals gathered together. After the Kuryltay there was a turning point in Kazakh-Dzungar relations and the Reconquista Kalmak kyrylgan began its triumphal procession on Saryarka and Zhetysu. Since then, this sacred place was named Ordabasy.

A way to Ordabasy

I and Maral Tompiyev are going from Almaty to Shymkent. Our way lies on the hills of Ordabasy located as on the map, 30 km to the west of Shymkent. In the evening we found our way to the place and there was a high stela on the hills, we recognized it from the numerous photos.

Here it is – a memorial!

It was a ridge of hills, rising above the surrounding locality. In 2001 a memorial complex was built on the place of kurultai and was called Ordabasy. The Kazakhstan's flag is flying on the top of the hill. A three-sided stele with a height of 28 meters, lined with slabs of white marble is put up on the top of the hill as a symbol of three Kazakh zhuzes' unity. Each edge of stele is seemed to be directed to one sides of Kazakhstan: towards the Aral sea in the west, Karatau mountains in the north, Kazygurt mountains in the south-west. There is a small stone pedestal with our President's words to the left of the stele: "Ordabasy is a heart of people, center of the Earth". It cannot be argued, but it is a pity that many local inhabitants do not know about it. The tables with statements of three great biys are attached on the each edge of the stele.

The evening in Ordabasy

Shymkent is shining with the light far away in the east. The majestic marble stele above the surrounding hills brightened by the setting sun and the white marble seems to be yellowish. We read the statements of biys and take the photos

of the stele from the different angles, forgetting about road difficulties and drown in the waves of history... The words of the great biys about the necessity of people's unity, stopping barney between khans and sultans, uniting zhuzes to fight against the Dzungar, about batyrs who must show the enemy a severity of their copies are affected in our hearts. We feel the pulse of the past and holy spirits in the growing darkness.

A night with holy spirits

The silence is interrupted by the sound of voices the snorting of horses and the clash of weapons. The air is filled with the smoke of fires and the smell of cooked meat. There is a white khan's yurt on the place of the yurt. All Kazakh khans and sultans, biys and aksakals, batyrs, zhyrau are gathered around it. The initiator of the kuryltai and the owner of the yurt is biy of Senior Zhuz Tole. He was sitting inside of the yurt on the honorary place and leaded the last preparations and there was young boy Sabalak near him. Aiteke bi arrived on a white camel surrounded with alshins. Rattling the sabres, Kanzhygaly Bogenbay, Karakerey Kabanbay, Dulaty Otegen and Sanyryk, shekti Tailak, Kerey Kozhabergen, Naiman Aktamberdy, Es and Balta came in.

After all sat around according to the age and position in society, biys spoke about termination of the quarrels between khans and sultans, about necessity of unity, the mobilization of resources, unity of command in troop leading. Meanwhile, Abulkhair Khan with Shakshak Zhanibek batyr arrived on the horses in the dark. They both were in the military armor covered with road dust. Kozhabergen zhyrau performed his new zhyr "Elimay". People's eyes were filled with tears. Bukhar Zhyrau began to speak and finished his speech with words: "Let the enmity pass through, we are all children of one mother".

Kazybek bi said that it was time to discuss who would lead troops and detachments and they began to argue. It was clear that Abulkhair khan would lead military actions, Kanzhygaly Bogenbay batyr was appointed as the commander of united Kazakh troop. After discussion, the young men came with trays in their hands. Mutton and horse meat, kazy, karta, zhal-zhaya, rice with raisins and dried apricots

in the silver trays were placed before the participants of kuryltay. After the prayer-bata, spoken by 80-year old Mullah, they began the feast...

The morning over Ordabasy

A short summer night was over. It quickly brightens over Ordabasy. The holy spirits vanished in the morning mist. There is a marble stele again on the place of khan's yurt, the top of which shines in the rays of dawn. There is nobody around but us and a lone guard of the memorial in his stake. It is time to go. Now we are going to Turkestan and then to Saryarka. But it will be the next story in the next issue of our magazine.

Murat Uali, traveler, poet, essayist.