

Bakyt Ezhenhanuly on the misrepresentation of Abylay khan's letters and Kabanbay batyr's seal

Bakyt Ezhenhanuly, doctor of historical sciences, senior scientific associate of the International Turkic Academy, head of the Center of history and ethnology. He masters ancient Manchu and Chinese languages, nowadays, opens the screen over one more page of the formation of the Kazakh khanate.

– Bakyt Ezhenhanuly, by your discoveries you made confess yourself the scientist of Podnebesye (the Skies). What can you say about fulfilled scientific projects upon return to the Motherland?

– As a Kazakh, Turks' descendant, in China I started my scientific-research activities from the history of Central Asia, including the history of the Turkic ethnos. Initial searches were conducted beginning with the social-political history of the people of Uigurs and Kazakhs, inhabiting the countries of Dzhungaria and Kashgaria in XIX century. Over the time, I understood that for getting the answer to many questions worrying us, it is necessary to research deeper the Turkic history and the history of the Turk-Mongol tribes during the ruling epoch of Genghis khan on the territory of Eurasia. As a result, in 1990 I defended the doctoral dissertation “Turkic-language tribes on the territory of the Altai mountains in the epoch of Mongol-Yuans”.

– What became the reason of the choice of such theme?

– For the Turkic history it was the important epoch: the basis of the formation of the Turkic ethnic groups such as Kazakhs, Tatars, Bashkirs, Nogai, Kyrgyzes and Uzbeks, in addition, the history of the Turkic people of that time is underinvestigated. By systematic study of the sources written in Chinese, Persian

and other languages of XI-XIV cc., it is possible to find the new approach to this important problem in the history of ancestors.

– **What was awaiting you upon the return to the Motherland?**

– In times of independence, I, as everyone else being outside the Motherland, considered to connect my fate with the land of ancestors. After moving to Almaty in 1993 I worked in the Institute of history and ethnology of the National Academy of Science, Institute of Oriental Studies and universities of the country. It was a hard period of the formation of independence. And with all the people in the republic I had to withstand the onslaught of that time. As a professional historian I could proceed the research activities only after 11 years, after the start of the program “Cultural heritage”.

– **Particularly, Abylai khan and Qing tsar’s letter being studied and delivered by you from the Chinese archives...**

– It is true that from the historical documents of the First historical archive in China the most important part is the letters of the Kazakh khans and sultans. Researching them, one can reveal white spots of the Kazakh history and distorted facts.

Abylai khan’s first letter to the tsar Qing in 1757 is the most significant document in the matter of Kazakh-Qing relations. It was regarded as the “Kazakhs of the Middle and Senior zhuzes under the yoke of China”. Recently, two variants of Abylai khan’s letter were found. Having compared them with widely spread variant in Chinese, I came to the conclusion: scribes of the tsar Qing at their own discretion changed the diplomatic letter of Abylai khan!

In the first letter, written in 1760, the territory of the Kazakh land was touched upon. In the documents the following words can be found:

settlements of the country: from the east reach the Chorgo lands, from the south – Sharabel, and from the middle – Lepsi;

great Ezhen would send the letter with red mark, which will be kept by my children and my future descendants.

We assume: the Chorgo land is the modern China, the district Shuaa Durbilzhin is the eastern spur of the Tarbagatay mountains, and Sharabel (Sarybel) – the pass Kastek and neighbouring mountain areas. Hence, the boundary of the Kazakh land according to Abylai khan corresponds with present Kazakh-Chinese, Kazakh-Kyrgyz boundary. Abylai khan's request to the tsar Qing "letter with red sign" means his intention to obtain the consent on the borders of Manchuria and China!

In the second letter of 1771 the issue is not about the acceptance of the Kalmyks who came from Edil, to the Kazakh land. There are such words in it:

– ...In the lands of Noyan-dat Alak-ul, Kulzha and Haynuk, heading Uleuts, reunited with Buryts...

– ...When Torgauts went from Alak-ul, they killed your 500 people, and now, having returned, they intend to attck me. Subdue them...

– ...If Torgauts attack Alak-ul, then people being in distress, will be overtaken by tragedy ...

Abylai khan said that he will not allow Kalmyks in charge, expelled from the lands of Tarbagatay and Zhetysu wishing to return and rejoin with the Buryats (Kyrgyzes), confronting with Kazakhs, to create the joint alliance against Kazakhs. Along with that, recalling to Manchu-Chinese that the Kalmyks destroyed the Qing army, he wanted to use the power of the tsar Qing and break down the Kalmyks' threat, or drive them far away from the territory of Kazakhs.

– We know that in China Kabanbay batyr's seal was found. From what documents and what archive did you come to that understanding?

– Kabanbay batyr's seal was found in October 2012 in the First Chinese archive in Beijing. Chinese archivists did not write any interpretation about this document, there is only one photo of this document (in microfilm two pages are shown, on the first one – the text of the letter, on the second one – two seals of the addresser), and its translation was given in the language of Manchu. Shagatay written language differs from the languages of Kazakh, Uigur and Kokand Uzbeks which before we managed to view. On the left side of the document next to two seals there is the translation of the text of the seal in the Manchu language.

– Nowadays, you work in the international Turkic Academy. Could you share with your projects, plans...

– I was invited to the international Turkic Academy to work for the benefit of the country history. It is the honour. I am glad to participate in the great work of strengthening of independence of which the citizens of the Kazakh country and Turkic-language world dreamt. Now, I am writing the monograph on the appearance of the first Chinese notions about Kazakhs where the archive documents of the tsar Qing are given, the history of the process of return by Kazakhs the eastern territory is traced, the problems of relations of Kazakhs and Qings, their territorial and economic problems, new conclusions are suggested. The

work would be given as a gift in the autumn this year in honour of the 550th anniversary of the Kazakh khanate.

Erkin BAYGABYLOV, “MgE”