

Internal and external position of the Kazakh Khanate in the second half of XVI-XVII centuries

Internal discord and wars continued in the region of Tahir's brother, Birilash Khan (1533-4), so that only 20,000 Kazakhs are said to have remained after his control. The next khan, Tughum, another brother of Tahir Khan suffered a shattering defeat at the hands of Moghul khan, Abdul Rashyd (1533-60), in which Tughum himself, along with 37 sultans of Kazakhs were killed and the rumor spread even in remote areas that Kazakhs had been annihilated as people.

But revival of Kazakh power seems thereafter to have taken place under Kasim Khan's son, Haqq Nazar Khan (1538-80).

Exploiting internal strife within the Nogay Horde, Haqq Nazar won over many of Nogay muras (in Persian, sons, descendants of Amirs and rulers, hence princes and nobles) to his side and annexed the territory along the left bank of the River Yaik. In 1580, Sayfy, the author of Turkish work held Kazakhs to number 200,000 families. He described them as Hanafite Muslims. They had sheep and camels and exported coats made of fine wool to Bukhara. They were nomads and had their dwellings on carts.

Shighay Khan, a grandson of Zhanibek Khan succeeded Haqq Khan and the next khan was his son, Tevke. Tevke Khan succeeded gradually in consolidating his authority in the khanate. He sent an embassy to Tsar Fedor in 1594 seeking support against Uzbek ruler Abdullah Khan and Siberian Khan Kuchum. The Russian documents refer to him as the Kazakh and Kalmyk king, which suggests that he also had some Kalmyks as his subjects or chiefs. This might have been the result of an earlier conflict with Kalmyks in which Tevke had carried out into Kalmyk territory, which had brought upon the Kazakhs "a devastating irruption of the infidels".

In the seventeenth century, Kazakhstan presented the picture of politically fragmented country. No stable economic and political ties could be formed between Kazakh zhuzes.

The difficulties standing in the way of uniting Kazakh lands into a stable centralized state may be attributed to the economic backwardness of the Kazakh khanate and the predominance of natural economy, marked by the decline of towns in southern Kazakhstan.

Feuding increased in the first quarter of the seventeenth century, when Esim Khan succeeded his brother Tevke. Some of more powerful Kazakh sultans became virtually independent of the khan. Tursun Khan was prominent among them, who installed by Imam Kuli Khan, Uzbek ruler of Bukhara, proclaimed himself as khan in Tashkent, while Ishim ruled in Turkestan. After Ishim Khan, the situation of the Kazakh khanate deteriorated even further, the Dzungars seized part of Semirechye, subjugating Kazakh nomads in the area. Ishim's son Zhakhangir won great victory against the Dzungars in the early 1640s but ultimately lost his life with the Dzungar ruler Galdan. When the throne passed in 1680 to Tauke Khan, he took up the cudgels against the old nobility and brought in new nobles of his own, to play a major role in the khan's councils.

Used materials:

Zhanat Kundakbayeva, "History of Kazakhstan in the late medieval period of the XIII-the first third of the XVIII centuries"