

Afghan Kazakhs. Tragic fates of immigrants

Studying history of Kazakh diaspora we can make a conclusion that as a result of colonial policy of authorities, many people had to migrate and some of them were banished from the country.

This is proved by a three-step process of Kazakhs' immigration to Afghanistan. Salamat Aday, a respectable aksakal told a story about the first stage of immigration; in the past he was wealthy, that is why people used to call him Salambatay. Salamat Aday returned to Kazakhstan after declaration of independence and settled in Chimkent. According to the aksakal stories, first Kazakhs migrated to Afghanistan in 1865 via Tajikistan, their caravan was led by Arkadan Kenzhebek. About 1000 families settled in Apkol, Baglan, Polkumyr, Dochy settlements. It was an epoch of tsar Sherkhan. Migrants were received with honours, they were given cattle and lands, but a government official Sultan Gelikhan started to oppress them, so they were compelled to move to Amu Darya shore. Soon Sultan Gelikhan attacked our compatriots with his army. Having been on the defensive, Kazakhs managed to ferry a caravan across Amudarya, while themselves set an ambush and attacked Gelikhan's army. Revenge was cruel: they buried Sultan Gelikhan alive.

After return from Afghanistan, Kazakhs settled in Tajikistan, in a fruitful territory Gulapstan. In 1917, out of fear of the Red Army, Kazakhs migrated to Afghanistan once again, but cattle perished because of climate changes and people had to face famine. Having lost hope, Kazakhs returned to the Soviet Union and joined basmachi, earning a livelihood by plunder. Kazakhs supported national liberation war of Turks and waged war with communists, frequently crossing border. Many Kazakhs migrated from Afghanistan to Turkestan in order to wage war against communists. The head of state Nadyr Shakh supported Kazakhs and granted them with lands. In two months many Kazakhs were exterminated, while the rest of them were mortally offended by Afghans' indifference and non-interference, started to fight with them.

Those who survived in that war again returned to the Soviet Union. The country showed them hospitality and advised to invite the rest of Kazakhs to the Union. Exhausted compatriot had been returning to the country during three years. During a supposed celebration in oralmans' honor, chasteners arrested all the participants of the event, many of them were shot and the rest were deported one more time. Thereafter about 2000 families decided to return to Afghanistan via Amu Darya. According to the stories of Mullah Knagat, the second wave of migration took place after Russian tsar Nicholas made an appeal to send all children to schools. That time Afghanistan government granted lands and pastures to them, and also lent money for three years.

The third wave of Kazakhs' migration can be divided into two groups. The first group was from Akmeshit, in 1928 it reached Afghanistan via Kyzylkum, Karakalpakstan, Turkmenistan and Amu Darya. Many migrants perished, exhausted by a prolonged journey. The second group of migrants in 1931 reached Karshy and Shpauyz via Uzbekistan, having spent there one year, they migrated to Tajikistan. There Kazakhs were overtaken by famine and illness. About ten thousand survivors entered Afghanistan lands again. By government's decision, they were settled in an area in the vicinity of Andkhvoy and were granted cattle and lands. In 1942, malaria and typhus epidemic claimed lives of about 80% of Kazakhs. The rest of compatriots remained in Afghanistan and got occupied with crop farming and crafts.

Having endured all hardships of nomadic life, Afghani Kazakhs have been living in a strange land for more than one century. When Kazakh land gained independence, all the compatriots who had been living abroad, felt sincere joy. In September 1999 in Istanbul, the first President of the Republic of Kazakhstan N.A.Nazarbayev received representatives of Kazakh diaspora, resides in Afghanistan, Turkey, Iran, and Saudi Arabia and made an appeal to return to their native land, the Republic of Kazakhstan. At present, oralmans live in towns Zhetissay, Chimkent, Kyzylorda, and Kaskelen. Kazakhs from Afghanistan turned out to be skillful curing masters and masters of leather fabrication. Today we can be sure, that wanderings full of hardships and constant fight for survival are finally over. Kazakhstan is our Promised Land.

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