

## **The Karakhanid Khanate**

On the eve of the 500th anniversary of the Kazakh khanate, it is appropriate to turn attention to old state structures, which had been formed a long time ago.

To some extent, all of them influenced the process Kazakh khanate's establishment. Tribal confederation is considered as one those structures. Confederation was a founder of civilized Karakhanid dynasty, which had created several khanates as a consequence of its dissolution before Genghis khan's conquest, thus having made a major contribution to the formation of Kazakh nation.

A scientist M. Akynzhanov writes, "A union of Karluks and Turgeshes was a primary founder of Kazakh nation".

Islam Kabyshtuly, a Kazakh scholar from Mongolia, highly assessed the role of Karluk khaganate in a process of Kazakh nation's formation, "...in the period of the Karluks union, Kazakh people used to be called Kazakhs just like today. In IX-X centuries, Kazakh nation had been forming as a separate nation. It possessed economic identity, culture, and common territory. It is doubtless that in case there is a culture, there will be a character as well. They are indicators of nationality".

Having destroyed dominions of the Eastern Turkic khaganate in 742, together with Uyghurs Karluks moved to Zhetysay and further to Farab (Otrar) in 746. At the time, geopolitical situation in the region was very complicated. The caliphate posed a threat from the south, and from the east this region was threatened by the Tang dynasty. Thus, interests of two empires clashed in these lands. Having conquered Suyab, Tang forces reached Tashkent, which contradicted the Arabs' interests, who were progressing to the West. In 751, two Empires' forces confronted each other on the bank of Talas river near Atlakh city. For five days, both armies had not dared to attack each other, until Karluks stroke the Tang army from the rear. The Arabs attacked them simultaneously from the other side, and Chinese army was defeated. According to the accounts of the Arabian historian al'-Asir, about 5 thousand people were killed and 20 thousand Chinese warriors were captured in that battle. Unfortunately, the battle of Atlakh was not included in 4-volume academic history of Kazakhstan, published in 1996, although this story has been known for a long time.

We hope that it will take its deserved place in subsequent multivolume sets because in the medieval epoch the battle of Atlakh played a very significant role in history of political and cultural life of the Middle Asian countries and nations. After aforementioned defeat, the Chinese Empire was compelled to give up its geopolitical interests in Middle Asia for a period of several centuries. A process of the Arab-Muslim civilization's revival was initiated; later this civilization left an unfading trace in the region's fate.

Special researchers mention that Karakhanids originated from the Karluk state's tribes. In a process of creation of the Karakhanid state, the role of such tribes as Shigil, Yagma and Tukhsi from Karluk confederation was especially distinguished.

The process of Karluks' ethnic development up until transformation into the Karakhanid dynasty had undergone three stages:

1. In the 7th-8th centuries, confederation from three Karluk tribes was one of the strugglers against dominance of the Turkic khaganate. At the time confederation included Bulak, Shigil and Tashly tribes;

2. From the middle of the VIIIth century Karluks had been migrating westward; having united with Argu and Tokhsi clans from Turgeshes, they established a confederation. Thus, at the time nine clans were a part of the Karluk confederation;

3. In the 9th-11th centuries neighboring tribes Shigil, Oghyz, Yagma, Tokhsi and Sogdy had been closely related both in economic and ethnopolitical spheres.

Ruling khan and ethnoses with its heritage were to be present in any official confederation. In the given case, such ethnoses had been represented by Karluks.

The Karakhanids history originates from 942, the year when Satuk Bogra khan threw Balasagun down and declared himself the Khagan. In reality, in 840 Bilge Kul Kadyr Kara khan, the Yabgu ruler, and the head of Isfijab, was entitled Khagan.

After Bilge Kul Kadyr khan's death the power was switched to his sons, i.e. Bazyr Arslan khan started ruling in Balasagun, and Ogulshak Kadyr started ruling in Taraz. After the seizure of Taraz by the Samanid Ismail ibn Akhmad in 893, Ogulshak was compelled to move to Kashgar. In 904, he attacked the Samanids.

Ogushlak's grand-brother Satuk Bogra khan (915-955) is believed to be a founder of the Muslim Karakhanid dynasty. The following is noteworthy: Satuk Bogra khan was not the founder of Karakhanid dynasty, but founder of the Muslim stem of the Karakhanid dynasty.

For the first time in Turkic khanate the title "Kara khan" was assumed by the third son of Bumyn (Momyn) khagan named Tobo (Tobyk) khan (572-581). He was a brave leader, a master of diplomacy who made Chinese pay taxes and extended Turkic state's territories from the East and West. He had been ruling his khanate on a par with the Sasanian Empire and the Byzantine Empire.

L.N. Gumilev translated name of that khan from Turkic language (on the basis of Chinese transcription of the word "tabak" in animal script "Arsila" (arystan). In Kazakh language "tobyk" is spelled "tabak" (in Russian "tabak" means the cup ("chasha"). At the time, Tobo khan converted to Buddhism; by religious tradition a thick stick and a cup in hands had some sacral meaning. A Byzantine historian Menandr spelled Tobo khan's name as "Arsila" (i.e. "Arystan") in animal script

From the middle of the IXth until the Xth century instead of a name the term "kara" had been in use. This tradition's origin matched with the period when Bilge Kul Kadyrkhan declared himself khagan. The place of rulers' residence in Balasagun was called "Kara Orda" or "Kuz Orda", Karluks had been praying to a mountain where the horde was located.

A medieval historian Zhamal Karshi wrote, "A founder of the Muslim dynasty of the Karakhanids is Satuk Abd al'- Kerim khaganate karlyk".

Researches into history from the middle of IX, starting from Karluks' emergence up to Mongolian battle, and their political dominance in Middle Asia are of great importance to the Turkic-speaking world. The tribal union of Karluks played a major role in founding Karakhanid state and its development after the Mongolian battle, as well as in the process of Kazakh, Uzbek, Kyrgyz and other Middle Asian ethnoses' formation.

Karluks nomads separated from settled areas and began living in isolation in the epoch of Karakhanid dynasty, which let us consider their activities as accelerated formation of Kazakh, Uzbek and Kyrgyz khanates. Nevertheless, the historical period of Kazakhs' emergence and their ethnogenetic relations with Karakhanid dynasty and with Karluks has not been thoroughly studied yet.

State structure of the Karakhanid dynasty included nomadic Karluks and tribal Oghuzes, fighting for the preservation of freedom and independence. Due to the division of the dynasty into two camps and continual intestine wars, the state was subjected to external threats. Rulers of the dominions, which had been established by Karakhanids, and later Seljuks, raised armies of the tribal confederation. For their service and taxes, they had been allotted lands and pastures, but Karakhanid and Seljuk dynasties had been fighting with each other, which strongly damaged their economic and cultural development. Researches paid attention only to a struggle between those dynasties; they have not analyzed casual aspects of those events yet.

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