The history of studies of the West region Kazakhs in the mid-XIX to early XX centuries

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Abstract: The article deals with the ethnographic studies of authentic features of the west region Kazakh districts. Namely, works on their ethnic history, economy, material culture were thoroughly scrutinized against their daily life and family values. In particular, the location of the Younger Zhuz tribes, their branches and numbers, winter and summer camp sites, size of herds, as well as housing types, family traditions and customs were considered on the ground of historical evidence. This article is also informative about changes occurred in patriarchal families. Observed were the tendencies within small families, initially taking place in the BokeiOrda, later, upon accession to the Russian Empire, occurring in the Mangystau region. Moreover, attention is paid to the west Kazakh hospitality, its practice before the 1917 revolution and afterwards.

Keywords: Kazakhs, ethnography, traditions, customs, housing, family.

Introduction
The West Kazakhstan is a region of ancient history, and it is extremely rich with natural resources. The material and spiritual heritage of the region is reflected in the architectural, historical, ethnographic and literature legacy. Information about the region’s centuries-old history, composition of settlements and ethnic composition, their numbers, household styles, traditional economy, public relations, material culture, including housing, household items, clothing, family traditions of west Kazakh people at the turn of the XIX-XX centuries were studied in the works of the researchers.

Masanov E.A. considered the west region in his individual ethnographic work, with reference to other researchers (Masanov E.), Kdyralin U. focused on records left by tsarist officials (Kdyralin U.), and M. Sdykov inquired into the economy and ethnic demography of the West Kazakh during the two centuries (Sdykov M.).

Despite the publications of a number of works about the region, there were actually no complex researches about the west region’s Kazakh ethnography of the time. The west region Kazakhs basically preserved the native culture of the XIX-XX centuries, and a special research of their culture, economy, world views and customs is very meaningful for consideration. Collecting theses original data, their study, evaluation and interpretation became a key issue today.

Sources on ethnic history, economy, material culture of the west region Kazakhs
The ethnic history, economy and material culture of native west Kazakhs in the mid-XIX - early XX centuries were reflected in many works of the period.

The report by the military officer L. Meyer, published in 1865, provided facts concerning the Younger Zhuz location and population (L. Meyer), the economic features such as size of herds, artisan workshop types, data on areas for crops and pastures and other. For example, the work treats in detail the interior and the external design of a yurt, the nature of materials used. Similar information is given in the work by Galkin M., issued in 1868 (Galkin M.), with accurate data on locations of the Younger Zhuz tribes, their branches, watchwords, their winter and summer camps. As for their population numbers, we refer to records published by Dostoyevskiy M. in 1864 in St. Petersburg (Dostoyevskiy M.). For example, he provides the following record: “Aday – 1503 yurts, Alash - 2640, Baibakty - 3205, Berish - 5085, Zhappas - 604, Esentemir - 486, Ysyk – 669, Kyzylkurt - 825, Kete - 411, Kyzyilkurt - 825, Maskar – 611, Nogai - 1095, Taz - 121, Tana - 1281, Sherkesh - 2759, Tolengit - 665 and Khodja - 178 yurts”.

Aristov N., the orientalist and traveller, also wrote on the same aspects the Younger Zhuz life, which served as a basis for further studies (Aristov N.). The Dosmukhamedov’s publication
of the akyn Murat’s poetry became a great source for tribal names (DosmukhamedovKh.). During his stay in the BokeiOrda, Kharuzin recorded 20 tribes, of which sixteen tribes belonged to the Younger Zhuz and the other four were formed while their nomadic migrations (Kharuzin A.N.). He described along their mode of life.

Very important are the notes on the history of Kazakh people left by ShokanUalikhanov. Concerning the Younger Zhuz, he writes: “It consists of three tribes: Alimuly, Baiuly and Zhetiru while Ashyn are founders of the whole of the Younger Zhuz” (Ualikhanov Sh.). He mentions the Kerei (or Kereit) tribe of the Younger Zhuz: “They separated from the Great Zhuz soon after the rise of the Kazakh nation. Basically, they returned to the Uzbek Khanship, while part of them joined the Zhetiru tribe.”

Dobrosmislov showed that the west Kazakhs’ mode of life, which excludes crop farming and, hence, the settled life, is conditioned by the actual environment and climate. In particular, he focuses on quantity of livestock in 1891-1892 (A. Dobrosmislov). According to the scientist, the first overwinter housing were built at the beginning of the XX century. He describes in detail the male and female garments.

A comprehensive study of the Kazakh economy was left by the famous German scientist and medical doctor Richard Karutz. He noted the critical importance of sheep, horses and camels in everyday life of west Kazakhs. He wrote that the west Kazakhs were able to grow crops not only on the arable soil, but also on a completely deserted dry lands too. He mentioned that in 1909, the Adai tribe wintered in wooden houses. Karutz paid big attention to description of the yurts and their manufacturing materials, as well as to ethnic attires. MukhammedkaliTyaukin published an article on 30 September 1861 in St.Petersburg, where he observed the big role of camels in the agriculture of the Inner OrdaKazakhs (Tyaukin M.). The article describes the trap technology for hunting and writes that the number of the Orynborkazakhs amounted approximately to 60,000 yurts. In 1854, Tyaukin sent samples of the Kazakh ethnic costumes to the Orynbor Commission. There were 2sets of women and men garments, one being an precious apparelset and the othera moderate one.

According to A. Alektorov, the livestock breeding and agriculture were the main types of occupation for the west Kazakhs (A. Alektorov). Babazhanov S. reported on the hunting and its techniques. He deals with the hunting types: hunting with eagle, hunting with Tazy dog, hunting on a horse, trapping hunts and other (Babazhanov S.).

Among other researchers of west Kazakhs we should mention V. Vostrov and M. Mukhanov. Bemakhanova N. in her "MnogonazionalnoenaselenieKazakhstanaiKirgizii v epohukapitalisma" ("The multi-ethnic population of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan under capitalism") reflects on the subject of demographic shrinkage as the result of the forceful settling policy (Bemakhanova N.). In the work by A.Nurumbayev about the Younger Zhuz tribes we find description of their composition, location and customs (Nurumbaev A.)

Family and its structure

A family and the marriage were always considered as one of the most important life events. In the XX century, a typical west Kazakh family consisted of parents and unmarried children. A well-known russian ethnographer A. Kharuzinwrote that Kazakhs of the Younger Zhuz used to have big families before moving to theBokeiOrda. After they became a part of the BokeiOrda, a tendency to smaller families was strongly pressing. Such a change was an effect of social polarization. According to R. Karutz, big patriarchal families appeared first in the BokeiOrda and then spread to the Mangystau region with the accession to the Russian Empire. Despite the family pattern change, the primary importance of father and his role in all family decisions was preserved at the turn of the XIX to XX century (R. Karutz).

A typical patriarchal family consisted of parents, children and grandchildren. Sometimes, it also included siblings of father with their partners and children, and the children of dead relatives. Total number of a family could vary around 25-30 people and more. Several generations lived and worked together. Karutz defined such a mode as a survival pattern generally spread among poor people.

Mikhailov F. A. wrote in his article that those children who could not set up own family, even living separately, continued obeying their kin signor people. He mentions that the family members despite their strive to peaceful live cannot avoid disagreements. A prosperous householder with few wives could keep each one with her kids in a separate house, providing her with inheritance which further was to be divided among her children. The youngest son received twice as much in comparison to other children’s part, which was influenced by the fact that he would stay in the parent’s house. As already said, an inherited share was not the same to each child. It was aslo defined by the status of their mothers. According to the custom, the children of the senior wife had privileges, and her youngest son would get the biggest share. The West Kazakhstan is known for following strictly this custom (Mikhailov F.).
It was highly important to provide grown-up children with wives and means for separate living. According to Levanevsky M.A., a newly formed family received from each kin household, depending upon their capacity, material presents in shape of things and/or domestic animals and which was called with words like these: “warmth”, “kindler”, “nemeu-irin”. Parents of the groom would organize a great feast for all relatives and neighbours, receiving blessings from the revered senior persons.

R. Karutz in his work wrote about women – mothers of 10 to 20 children. The author notes that these women were especially kind and generous towards children. The author describes how little girls play together with their older sisters, sew their dolls’ clothes and were kept indoors, near their mothers. Boys, literally from the start of their walking, were kept outside where they played all sorts of boyish games like “asyk”, “aksyuk”, “bestas”, “zyryldaerk”. Boys of 5-6 year old start riding horses and learning by heart riddles, fairy-tales and long epopes, poetry stories. Girls of this age were involved in cooking, sewing, weaving and knitting all domestic stuff, including ornamental patterns (Karutz R.).

In his work, Ivinin I. wrote on how Kazakh children were educated to be polite, kind and obedient. It was considered to be “a duty to venerate parents”. A traveller B. Zalessky noted that Kazakh women “are courageous, in comparison to other Central Asian women” (B. Zalessky). At the same time, opinions that the lot of Kazakh women is a gloomy life full of sufferings to all. In XIX century, independent families, despite their gradual maturity, from time to time kept receiving advices from the father or his older brother. Economically independent children, nevertheless, consulted their fathers and, as a rule, followed their words. A parent’s or grandparent’s house usually was called “a big nest” and was venerated as a sacred place. Upon the death of father and adoption of the house by the youngest son or the succeeding generations, for all of them it will remain as a venerable hearth and home. This custom is preserved by contemporary Kazakhs. It is connected with praying their ancestors and their spirits, which, although might be a type of antic customs, still is a sign of some efforts by small independent families to keep the pattern of patriarchal relations, which seem ceased to exist.

Conclusion
The paper reported on the ethno-graphic studies carried out on the west Kazakhs at the turn of the XIX-XX centuries. The reference sources establish a link between the modern time and the past, showing that the tribal-patriarchal relationship system is preserved among the west region Kazakhs, that it is crucial for all aspects of Kazakh life, including the economic one. Concerning the researchers themselves, who wrote about the West Kazakhstan region in the period of mid-XIX to the 1st half of XX century, they are remarkable by their sincerity. Thanks to these sources, we can reconstruct the culture, traditions and customs of Kazakhs living in the west region at the turn of the XIX-XX centuries. It is necessary to widen further our knowledge through deep studies of the well-known researchers and their works.

Bibliography