

**KAZAKH NATIONAL UNIVERSITY AFTER AL-FARABI**

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**CENTRAL ASIAN KAZAKHS  
(Historical-ethnographic research)**



Almaty  
2014

UDK 391/395  
BBK 63.5 (5)  
K17

*Recommended for publishing by the Board of Academics  
of the History, Archeology and Ethnology Faculty,  
Kazakh National University after al-Farabi*

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**K17** Central Asian Kazakhs (Historical-ethnographic research). – Almaty:  
Arys, 2014. – 216 P. + 8 P. colour insert.

ISBN 978-601-291-254-8

This book is devoted to one of the most acute problems of Kazakh history and ethnography concerning Central Asian kinsmen. The author focused on research of Kazakh «diaspora» and «irredentism» issues in context of historical development on the territory of Central Asia namely cultural and ethnic features differing Kazakhs from their kinsmen in the researched region.

This book can be interesting to the scholars, PhD students and all specialists in ethnology..

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ISBN 978-601-2910254-8

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## INTRODUCTION

There is no doubt that national integrity is the sole prerequisite for the development of our country. Therefore, in forming the national idea, the main task for the Republic of Kazakhstan is to carry out considerable research into the ethnic history of our compatriots who live abroad. This research will cover their ethnic and ethno-cultural approaches in a foreign environment, and to what extent they've preserved or changed national traditions and customs. During the World Kurultai II of the Kazakhs, President of the Republic of Kazakhstan N.A. Nazarbayev focused on this problem and said: «There is only one Kazakh nation in the world, therefore, its national existence, mentality and traditions are common to all Kazakhs of the globe, and its spiritual wealth is also inseparable. That's why there is no border between our literature, culture and art. We must make every effort to retain the spiritual wealth that was gained by the people who had to flee the motherland due to different fateful historic events» [*Nursultan Nazarbayev Report by the World Congress...*, 2005, P. 8]. In fact, only after the independence of the country Kazakh people had an opportunity to identify themselves and to obtain what they'd lost many years ago.

It is obvious that the Kazakhs make a bigger part of the world diaspora. Moreover, it is the Kazakhs who prevail in residing in foreign countries, far away from the Republic. In fact, 5.5 million of our fellow citizens live abroad many of whom have got settled in the countries of Central Asia. For instance, according to the statistics made on the eve of a new century (2000), an approximate number of Kazakh people who lived in neighboring countries of Central Asia was as follows: 990 022 – in Uzbekistan, 98000 – in Turkmenistan, 42657 – in Kyrgyzstan and 2000 – in Tajikistan [*Results of the All-Union population...*, 1991; *Demographic Yearbook of Uzbekistan...*, 2006; *Statistical composition of population of Kyrgyzstan, 2000, The population of the Republic of Tajikistan.*, 2000]. We are well aware of the historic events which forced our compatriots became alienated from the motherland. It happened due to the hardship of the XVII-XVIIIth century: Zhongar inva-

sion and enduring Russian imperialism (imperial and administrative influence over the traditional Kazakh settlements, occupation of fertile Kazakh lands and the Tsar's Decree in 1916) in the XIX-XXth centuries. Moreover, those people were confronted with the political and economic crises in 1917-1918, succeeding social-political situations, forced collectivization, famine and other adversities in the country. Describing those hard times of the Kazakhs in one of his speeches, President N.A. Nazarbayev has mentioned: «Social trials of the XXth century had forced the Kazakhs flee the homeland. Unfortunately, no one can detail the cause of ruthless decade of the XXth century that was full of grief and tragedy; they know nothing about the fate of the deceased between Iran and China or refugees who desperately escaped the revolution and civil war heading for safer places through the deserts, iced peaks of the Ala-Tau and Pamir mountains. No one can describe under what conditions the ancestors of those 5.5 million Kazakhs had lived, how they had survived and what they had witnessed» [*Nazarbayev N., 1999, P. 140*]. Thus, the Kazakh diaspora and irredentists sprang into existence due to the short-sighted policy conducted by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and local high rank officials of that time. Focusing on their difficult life, President N.A. Nazarbayev said: «We had been persecuted in the land of our ancestors. Thousands of our fellow citizens had perished; the survivors had to flee the country. The fact that we had lost 2.2 million of 6 million people including those courageous and loved ones, who were victims of the repressive regime, is grief-stricken and a serious blemish on bolshevism» [*Nazarbayev N., 1996. P. 8*].

Many of those Kazakhs who live in neighboring countries of Kazakhstan are the descendents of the indigenous people or of those who had fled the homeland during the Zhongar invasions, political unrest, collectivization, famine, while some of them had gone there seeking for a better life.

Though the diaspora live in a foreign environment, their motherland is on their homeland, and it is considered the ethnic space of their development. That's why our government tries to do all its best in supporting our compatriots who live abroad. Taking into account quite diverse political and economic development of the countries they live in, of course, it is difficult to say that all of them are contented with their lives. One should keep in mind that it is Kazakhstan where the Kazakhs will live, grow, flourish and develop. Thus, the government of the Republic of Kazakhstan has adopted a state program

aimed at supporting our fellow citizens living abroad and according to which they may return home or stay there being entirely satisfied with their life. Founded in 1992, the World Kurultai of the Kazakhs is giving considerable serious results in cooperating with the Kazakhs abroad. Also, there are some special centers which directly deal with the migration issues, i.e. providing conditions for those who would like to return to motherland and consulting them on necessary issues and etc. Moreover, it should be a challenge for our ethnographic historians to do some research into the social, economic and cultural life of our compatriots who live abroad.

Such kind of study will strengthen the unity of the nation, as well as it will define the ratio of other countries to a small nation and facilitate the research. That's why all ethnic and social problems or difficulties of our compatriots living abroad are counted as the main challenges of today's Kazakhstan. If we really intend to focus on the issue of national integrity, we should deeply look into the traditional cultures and current ethno-cultural practices of our compatriots living abroad as well as the preservation level of cultural heritage, because all of them are regarded as the main factors in creating the national idea of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Moreover, at present time, it is necessary to conduct thorough historical and ethnographic study of all these issues.

As we hope, such in-depth historical and ethnographic study into the life of our compatriots living abroad not only satisfies their basic cultural needs, but also helps us to preserve and revive our cultural heritage and propagandize some of them. Self-development problem of our compatriots living abroad is the concern of the country's foreign policy as well as of the domestic policy.

**Degree of the research** Apart from the abovementioned reasons, some of our compatriots reside in Central Asian countries making the Kazakh diaspora there; they as well as their problems are being overlooked by both the government and local scholars. Under the severe communist ideology, no one could dare say that they had relatives living abroad as it was equal to a crime. Moreover, those, who had left the country, were labeled «Traitors to their country» or «Ran away for the sake of wealth». So, it was really difficult to talk upon this topic under the ruthless Communist totalitarian regime. Not only talking about the research of the topic «the Kazakh diaspora», this word hadn't been uttered until the 90s of the XXth century. Otherwise, it could