

SUMMARY

This book by Professor Efim Rezvan, is based on the materials from his long-term archival, museum and field research devoted to the history, culture and traditions of Kazakhstan. Professor Rezvan is the Deputy Director of the Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography (Kunstkamera) of the Russian Academy of Sciences and the Editor-in-Chief of “Manuscripta Orientalia”, the International Journal for Oriental Manuscripts Research.

The opening chapter of the book is connected to the information collected during the historical and ethnographic project “In the Footsteps of the Expedition by Prince Cherkassky” which was accomplished in 2015. The field research, which took place on the territory of the Mangyshlak Peninsula (Kazakhstan) and in the Kyzylkum desert near lake Aydarkul (Uzbekistan) was the most important part of the project. The expedition was dedicated to the 300th anniversary of the foundation by Prince Alexander Cherkassky (? – 1717) of Tub-Karagan fortress named the “Fortress of St. Peter”. The building of the fortress was the first truly significant event in the implementation of an important phase of the Eastern policy of Peter the Great with the main goal of finding water routes to India. In many respects it was an attempt of the restoration at the Northern branch of the Great Silk Road and the most important part of the ancient Great Indian way. The Great Indian way started in Taxila in North-West India and terminated in Alexandria in the Mediterranean.

The main task of field work was not only the search for traces of the expedition of Prince Cherkassky, which ended tragically seeing the young Prince was treacherously beheaded, and his detachment almost completely destroyed. It also consisted of the study of the historical and archaeological monuments of Mangyshlak and Ustyurt which were located on the caravan routes, as well as the identification of the regional specificity of their role and significance in the system of international religious, cultural and economic ties of the 10th–17th centuries. Much attention was paid to religious centers, which developed at the sites close to

the caravan routes. They stretched not only from oasis to oasis, from market to market, but also connected the sacred sites to one another. Just as the nervous system connects everything in the human body, so too the ancient trade roads connected sacred sites one to another. Commerce and pilgrimage walked hand in hand. In the field work of 2015 special attention was paid to the study of contemporary pilgrimage practices associated primarily with the local tradition, now successfully practiced in opposition to the “standard” Near and Middle Eastern rituals of *ziyara*.

The second chapter consists of the materials produced from the joint Russian-Kazakhstan historical and ethnographic project “Samuel Dudin — photographer, artist, ethnographer. The materials of the expedition to Kazakhstan of 1899” which play an important role in the book. The main goal of this expedition, which was held in 2010 along the course of Astana, Karaganda, Karkaralinsk, Bayanaul and Pavlodar, was to collect material for the scientific support of the Saint-Petersburg Kunstkamera Kazakh collections publications within the frameworks of the large-scale project titled “Traditional Kazakh Culture in the Collections of the MAE RAS”. The history of the collection is closely associated with the history of both Russia and Kazakhstan of the 19th – early 20th centuries. Among its collectors were Chinghiz Valikhanov, the father of Chokan Valikhanov, the great Kazakh scholar, ethnographer, historian and important participant of the Great Game, a prominent Russian artist Vasiliĭ Vereshchagin, Grigorii Grumm-Grzhimaylo, a well-known Russian traveler and entomologist, Nikolai Katanov, a prominent Russian Turkologist, Konstantin von Kaufman, the first Russian governor-general of Turkestan, Nicholas II, the last emperor of Russia, Friedrich W. Radloff, the director of the MAE, and many others.

Saint-Petersburg Kunstkamera also keeps a unique collections of photo materials of Samuel Dudin (1863–1929), who was an artist, ethnographer, traveler and collector. He became the founder and the permanent head of the specialized photographic laboratory of the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnog-

raphy — one of the first in the world — and practically one of the founders of a scientific field, which is today referred to as visual anthropology.

The basis of the expedition's route of 2010 was comprised of the materials of Samuel Dudin's trip to Akmola, Semipalatinsk and Semirechye provinces in 1899. This expedition went down in the history of the MAE as one of the largest and most fruitful scientific endeavors of the late 19th – early 20th centuries. The goal of Dudin's expedition was the forming of a special exposition for the Paris World Fair. Then, in the process of doing the work, 500 photographs were taken that pictured the nomadic lifestyle of Kazakhs: everyday scenes and landscapes, human portraits, people's occupation, interior design and decoration, winter and summer nomad's camps, dresses, and musical instruments. Dudin also managed to sketch Kazakh ornaments and collect ethnographic items. According to the diversity of the subject matter and the number of photographs, the Kazakh photo collection by Dudin can be considered a photographic encyclopedia of the traditional Kazakh lifestyle.

The third chapter of the book is devoted to the results of the historical and ethnographic project “Konyr Awlie” and its related expedition of 2011. This expedition was held in the East Kazakhstan region of the Republic of Kazakhstan along the route of Semey (former Semipalatinsk), the cave of “Konyr Awlie” and the lake Atom-Kol. The key goal of the expedition was the holy cave associated with the name of the Holy Konyr, who, according to the local legend, was saved during the Flood in addition to Nuh (Noah). The cave is located about 200 km from the city of Semey on the slope of Aktas Mountain. This enormous cave with a deep lake and a statue covered in lime crust enjoyed a good reputation among women, who dreamed about motherhood but were deprived of this opportunity. Amongst related legends is a secret door at the bottom of the lake, leading to a certain tomb, and a channel believed to be connected to Mecca by underground ways. The cave is one of the ten most revered holy places of Kazakhstan. Now it attracts thousands of pilgrims not only from Kazakhstan but also from other Central Asian states and Russia. Today it is also obvious that the cave was for centuries the object of Buddhist worship.

On January 15, 1965, the first Soviet nuclear explosion in the interest of its national economy was done near the cave. 94 % of the energy of the explosion was equal to nine Hiroshima

explosions, and was provided by the reactions of thermonuclear fusion which did not give off radioactive products. The crater had to become a reservoir with a small area of evaporation and the glassy bottom, which ensured the safety of water. It is lake Atom-Kol now. A significant portion of the former Semipalatinsk nuclear test site has maintained the richest archaeological sites.

The last chapter of the book is devoted to the results of the historical and ethnographic project “Turkestan” and the expeditions which went along the route from Sayram to Arystan-Baba and Turkestan, and were accomplished in 2011 and 2013. Here the main aim was the study of the rituals of pilgrimage to the mausoleum of Ahmad Yasavi in the city of Turkestan, the role and importance of this monument in the history of the Great Steppe and Rus' as well as in the history of Russian culture and scholarship. It is important that according to local belief three pilgrimages to Ahmad Yasavi mausoleum are equivalent to the *hajj* to Mecca.

The author analyzes the fate of a number of iconic items that are closely connected both with the history of Kazakhstan and Russia. Among them are the first collections of the Peter the Great Kunstkamera, which were admitted from the territory of modern Kazakhstan and which perished in a fire of 1747, as well as the rich Kazakh ethnographic and illustrative collections which are carefully stored and studied in MAE RAS.

The book presents the first volume of the author's series entitled “My World of Islam”, which is the most important and final part of his project “Ijma‘= Concordia”. This project initiated by the author in 2006 comprises the expeditions as well as the documentary and exhibition projects.

The multimedia application distributed together with the book allows one to enjoy an “augmented reality” by using a smartphone or tablet based on the Android or iOS operating systems in order to see a three-dimensional model of the mausoleum of Ahmad Yasavi right above the book cover, and to hear and “see” one of the chapters. The link on the screen also leads to the electronic version of the final chapter of the book, which includes audio and video illustrations. In this regard the National Branch of the Interstate TV and Radio Company “Mir” in the Republic of Kazakhstan plays an important role in the entire project.