

The Khoja of West Siberia and Central Asia

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ABSTRACT The paper examines the existence of Khoja. Khoja is a sub-ethnic group, which is not genealogically related to the people of Central Asia and Kazakhstan. Khoja was an honorary religious priest in the Muslim culture. Also, this paper establishes, that Khoja was a direct descendant of Prophet Muhammad and the propagator of Islam. The main idea and aim of this paper is to show the ethnic history of Khoja and distinguish their location on the territory of Russia and Central Asia. The objectives of this work are to characterize the origin and development of Khoja on the bases of historical evidences and ethnographical information taken from the people; to appreciate the peculiarities of Islam by the ethnographical evidences on the regions of Khoja location. Authors have tried to describe the origin of the people of Khoja, their historical formation and spread on the territories of Russia, Kazakhstan and Central Asia.

INTRODUCTION

To renew and investigate traditions and historical changes is important as it helps to evaluate national values. Nowadays one of the ways of ethnological researches is the nature of ethnic groups as a part of an appropriate ethnos. That is why; the whole ethnos picture and peculiarities as well as origin of ethnos, relationship with other people, kinship and so on, are the objectives of ethnography and anthropological sciences.

To investigate the ethno-genesis and ethnic history of sub-ethnic groups such as *Khoja*, *Tore*, *Tolengits* are very important objects in Kazakh Ethnography. The history of origin of Khoja, who never got in genealogical relations among Kazakh people, is not fully investigated. In some researches, they are observed superficially. The people of Khoja are characterized by their essence, customs, and traditions. Living among the Kazakhs for a long time assimilated them in this ethno-cultural environment, despite the peculiarities of their customs and traditions. The origin of Khoja in Kazakh history is connected with the spread of Islam in the territory of South Kazakhstan and Semirechye. This sub-ethnic group is known as Khoja among the people of Kazakhstan and Central Asia.

Khoja occurred as an element of ethnos during the long historical and natural process. It has been a part of Kazakh nation for a long time. According to Gumilyov (2015:108), this distinction of standing out in system of ethnos is known

as sub-ethnos. Sub-ethnos is the group of people who have their own social, cultural, traditional, territorial and language peculiarities. That is why the people of Khoja by saving their social and ethno-cultural features are considered as sub-ethnic group among the Kazakhs. Representatives of Khoja were the senior followers and propagators of Muslim culture as well as the direct descendants of Prophet Muhammad.

The word "*Khoja*" from Persian "*khwaja*" means "master, lord". From Arabic, it means "enlightener" (Beisenbauly 1994: 92). And this honorable title was conferred on religious persons in Islamic countries (Islam 1995:217). Considering themselves from the family of the Prophet and being grounded in religion, Khoja began to propagate Islam. They came to the Kazakh steppes too (Mukanov 1974: 15). Thus, Khoja of Central Asia spread from the families of four Prophet's companions. Khoja and *Seits* were isolated groups among the people of Central Asia—the Tajiks, Uzbeks and Turkmens. In history they are known as "*Tajik Khoja*", "*Uzbek Khoja*" and "*Turkmen Khoja*" (Karmusheva 1976:148). Some researchers mention that they played not only spiritual role but also political one (Kushenova 2015).

The appearance of Khoja as an ethnic group in Central Asia and Kazakhstan is connected to the period of the Arab invasion or "War of religion". In thirties of the VII century, the caliphate of Medina started the hostility outside Arabia. History shows us that it reached Palestine, Egypt, Byzantine Empire, Iran, North Africa, South Caucasus, as well as Central Asia and Kazakhstan.

Objectives

The main idea and aim of this paper is to show the ethnic history of Khoja and distinguish their location on the territory of Russia and Central Asia. Furthermore, it is to characterize the origin and development of Khoja on the base of historical evidences and ethnographical information taken from the people; to appropriate the peculiarities of Islam by the ethnographical evidences on the regions of Khoja location.

METHODOLOGY

This study used functional method (Malinowski) because it is the primary method of ethnographic research. That approach helped to reveal the versatile Khoja Institute and its role in the traditional Kazakh society. Also, research is based on a 10 year explorations of the Khoja. The researchers used a participant observation method and an emic approach. Also, one of the authors is the daughter of the Khoja. The researchers were in a community with people from Khoja in Tashkent (Uzbekistan), Kyzyl-Orda (Kazakhstan), and Turkestan (Kazakhstan).

OBSERVATIONS AND DISCUSSION

The Arabs came to Central Asia in the beginning of the VIII century. Before the conquest campaigns of Arabia, a large territory of Central Asia and Kazakhstan was under the control of West Turkic Khanate. The coming of the Arabs to the territory of Central Asia was closely connected to the name of *Kuteiba ibn Muslim*. It is evident that “in 628 Kuteiba ibn Muslim, the sixth caliph of *Umayyah*, in the period of *Ualid ibn Abdull Malik* came to Kashgariya across the *Balkh* (Amu-Darya) taking over Kanuch next to Kashmir” (History of Kazakhstan from ancient to modern times). Other sources show that they came to Maverannahr in 705. In 706 Kuteibaibn Muslim took over the Balkh aimed at *Paikend* (near Bukhara). In 714 he took over Shash and then attacked Ispijab. But this region accepted Islam during Karakhanids (Khalidi 2012). The founder of Karakhanids *Satuk* accepted Islam in the beginning of the X century. In 960 his son *Bograkhan Kharub bin Musa* declared Islam as the state religion.

Kurbangali Khalidi thinks that he is related to Mudarris Aalamakhun; “Turkistan massively accepted Islam before *Sydyk Bograkhan* (Bograkhan- I.Z.), because “the first Turk who accept-

ed Islam was *Sydyk*”. Even if the Turks accepted Islam until *Bograkhan* Islam flourished during his time precisely” (Khalidi 1992: 35). Bartold (1963: 759) wrote that the first person who accepted Islam was one of the Karakhan rulers from *yagma* clan, *Satuk Bograkhan Abd al Kerim*. According to Klyashtorny, one of the highlights among the first Karakhanid rulers was the acceptance of Islam, but generally, Karakhanids accepted Islam not with *Satuq Bograhan* in 955, but with his son (Musa Klashtorny and Sultanov 1992: 114). It should be noted that before those religious and ideological processes in Central Asia in 776-780 years, there was a movement tagged *Muccan* against the Arabs who spread Islam.

In the first half of the XIII century *Maulana Safidad-din Oryn Koilaky* wrote in his *Shezhire-genealogy* about coming the of missionaries to Central Asia and Kazakhstan. This *Shezhire* was found in 1988 by Saruarov Kuandyk, Muhammetkhan Saiypnazarov and Muzafar Shalapov (Safi ad din Orun Koilak 1992: 42). One of the versions of this genealogy “*Nasab-nama*” was published in *Turkestanskie Vedomosti* in 1896 by Lykoshin. He got information from Issamuddin Isha, who lived in *Yalang-kari*, the Beshgash district of Tashkent. According to this “*Nasab-nama*” the propagators of the religion were called *Bab*. They are *Yskak Bab* (nickname Baba Ata), *Abdijalil Bab* (Abd al Jalil, Khorasan Ata), *Abdrakhim Bab* (Abdar Rakhim, Aulie Ata), who came to Central Asia and Kazakhstan. According to *Shezhire*, the son of Ali Murtaza was Muhammed Khanafiya. Muhammed Khanafiya had two sons, Abd al Mannan and Abd al Fattah. Abd al Mannan had a son, Battal Gazy who died during the war against Christians. Abd al Fattah had two sons, Abdar Rakhman and Abdar Rakhim (Safi ad din Orun Koilak 1992: 13).

Lykoshyn (1896: 264) wrote Abd al Fattah had a son Abd al Jalil (futher - Abdijalil), Abdijalil had a son Abdul Jappar, Abdul Jappar had a son Abdul Kahar, Abdul Kahaar in turn had two sons, Abdrakhman Bab and Abdurakhim Bab. Abdrakhman in turn had two sons, Yskak Bab and Abdijalil Bab. Abdul Kahar was a gerent of Sham (Syria). After his death Abdurakhman Bab became a ruler, then after Abdurakhman Yskak Bab became the gerent. According to “*Nasab-nama*” the gerent of Sham was Abdijalil. After the time of Abdrakhman Yskak Bab became the gerent, Abdijalil became the ruler of Yemen. In the gene-

alogy it is said: Abdurakhim Bab once invited Yskak Bab and Abdijalil Bab. When they met, Yskak Bab said to Abdurakhim Bab that he had an idea to spread Islam among the people. Also he told him about Halid's son, Abdurakhman, of how he gathered 12000-man strong army to struggle fight the *tarsas* (soldiers, military) of Fergana and Ozgent. All of them were *sheyit* on the way of Islam. Then he said that during the period of Ali, Kassym- the son of Abbas and Muhammed- the son of Abdijalil went to Fergana, Ozgent, *Jadj* (Shash), Ispidzhab with a 30000 man army. There, they fought with *tarsoyans* (*tarsas*). All of them fought for one religion- Islam and died for it. Also he said that Allah gave them (to Abdurakhim Bab's period) 18000 wonders, among which are Islam, leadership service, army, force and power. That is why it is believed that they ought to struggle with tarsoyans and spread Islam on the territory of Ozgent and Fergana. It was 150 of Hijrah (that is, 750). Abdurakhim Bab agreed with him and gathered army.

Yskak Bab asked Abdirakhim Bab how many men are in his army and Abdrakhim Bab answered that he had 60000 men in his army. Also Yskak Bab had 50000 men in his army, while Abdijalil Bab had 40000. Thus, Abdrakhim Bab, Yskak Bab and Abdijalil Bab with a 150000 man army from Sham across Tebriz went to Isfakhan, Mazadaran, Serahs, Balkh, Bukhara, Samarkand, Ozgent and Fergana (Safi ad din Orun Koilak 1992: 25-26).

These three *Babs* ("*Bab*"- "gates", "opens gates to religion") lost a lot of forces in the fight for Islam. Gradually their descendants founded many religious mosques, madrasas and interacted with the people. Local people called them "Khoja" because they spread Islam in time; introduced the people to Arabic literacy, owned mosques and madrasas. The word Khoja means "master", "host", "owner of Muslim religion", and the propagator of religion exactly. Also, the historical work of Otemis Kajy narrates that the spread of Islam in the territory of Kazakhstan was in the period of Berke Khan (1255-1266). Otemis Kajy wrote that many unbelievers of Desht accepted Islam during Berke Khan Period. Berke Khan was the founder of many mosques and madrasas. He invited a lot of theologians and scientists (Khadji 1992: 108).

According to genealogical evidences, the prevalence of Islam on the territory of Central Asia and Kazakhstan was in the sixties of the

YIII century. In 767 Abdrakhim Bab, Yskak Bab and Abdijalil Bab represented Islam when they went to military campaign. Zhandarbek (2015) thinks that Islam came to Turkistan in the middle of the YIII century, exactly in 766.

Khoja are the direct descendants of the Prophet's four followers Abubakir, Omar, *Hazret* Ali (there are no descendants of *Hazret* Ospan in the territory of Kazakhstan), who live on the territory of Kazakhstan among the people as a part of Kazakh clans. Likewise, in Central Asia Khoja and Seits are also subethnic groups. That is why it will be better to describe them.

Semenov writes that Khoja are the descendants of Arabic conquerors, who did not give their girls in marriage to others, but their men could get married to other Muslim girls. Also the *dervishes*' orders and *Ishans* belonged to Khoja. It is described that Seits are the descendants of Khassan and Khussein (grandchildren of Muhammad). That is why they added to their name "Khusseini" and "Khassani". "*Siedat-panokh*" is Seits' conscience and honor, the descents of Arab conquerors; "*mirlar*" are the descents of the Prophet's three companions, Abubakir, Omar and Ospan. Mirlar and Khoja are "*isolate-panokh*" which means "respectable only home". The descents of Khassan are "*sharif*", which means "aksuiek, ziyaly (educated, intelligent)", The Khussain's descents are "*sayyd*", which means "leader, lord, mayor", and "*hoja*" are the descents of Muhammad ibn al-Khanafiya (Ethnographic essay of Uzbeks on the rural population 1969: 36). In Uzbekistan Khoja lived in kishlaks next to the sacred places (Karmusheva 1976: 149). They formed half of the population, and lived wholly in villages. For example, Tajik Khoja Khovaling consisted of 2880 people (in Baimun town-2445 people, in Sarikhossar- 435 people), 1505 people lived in Yavan (in North part) in Beljuman, 475 Khoja were registered (Akhmetov and Nurmukhanov 2016: 309-313). Also, in the territory of Uzbekistan in Zaravshan there were such types of Khoja: *Aksuyek Khoja* ("*aksiyak Khoja*", "white bone", a privileged part of the traditional Kazakh society, who was out of the tribal and *zhuz*'s division. To *aksuyek* belonged the *khans*, *sultans*, who were descendants of Genghiz Khan, and a particular genus (*Tore*), representatives of Khoja, considering the descendants of Arab missionaries), they call themselves descendants of Muhammad Khaliviya, who was the descendant of *Azireti* Ali, natives of Khojent.

Kazakh Aksuyek Khoja are the descendants of Aulieata (Abdrakhim Bab). But it is considered that *Aksuyek Khoja* and *Kazakh Aksuyek Khoja* came from Uzbek. *Baksayis Khoja* are the descendants of Khorassan Ata, they call themselves “smallpox doctors”.

Khoja of Turkistan, the descendants of Khoja Ahmet Yassau are sheikhs and sultans from Khairychi of Bukhara khanate. Ualikhanov said Khoja of Kokan Khanate were seits and sheikhs and distinguished them: *Miyans*. The most respectable dynasties of Omar Halif among Seits are Farukh and Sahyp-zada. They are assigned the title of *Azireti* (Holy). Seits of Central Asia and Fergana are called *miyans*. *Khoja of Turkistan*, lived in Kokan and Margulan, the descendants of Kashkarhoja. Also, the numerous *Kassan Khoja*, who lived in Namangan and Kassan. Then the *Maidan Khoja*, who lived in Andijan and treated smallpox among Alatau Kyrgyz. Thus, they were called *Chekme Khoja* (who treats the smallpox) (Ualikhanov 2005: 505-506).

The complicated groups among Tajik and Uzbek are Khoja and Seits. They did not have the same social status. Some of them were laborers without any privileges, while others were religious persons, who had a large waqf income and lands.

Four generations of Khoja lived in Soktarede of Bukhara *kishlak*. They are *Mirakon*, *Seidato*, *Gijduvan* and *Soktariyan Khoja*. *Soktariyan* ones were from Soktariy, *Mirakon* ones were from Meshkhed, as well as *Gijduvans* were from Gijduvan fortress, *Seidato Khoja* were from Seidato, the descendants of Shafur-kam. Sadrriddin Ayni said his father and grandfather originated from *Soktarian Khoja* (Sadridin 1960: 12). Khoja were respectable among Turkmens. 1200 *sheikhs*, *Seits*, *makhtum*, *hoja* and *ata*, who lived in Zakaspian region, known as “*auliyads*” (*ovlyad*) assimilated among Turkmens. They were religious persons and descendants of the Prophet. But their language, clothing and lifestyle did not differ from those of Turkmen (Russia: Completed Geographical Descriptions 1913: 349). The “*auliyads*” of this region were the descendants of 4 caliphs: Abubakir, Omar, Ospan and Ali. The origin of *ovlyads*: *pakyr-shykhy* originated from Abubakir, *ata*-from Ospan, as well as *Khoja*, *magtym* and *mejeur* originated from Novokreshchenova (2016). These mentioned *ovlyad* groups (*Khoja*, *shikh* (sheikh), *Seit*, *ata*, *makhtum* (*magzum*), *mejeur* were the interesting subjects of

study in Turkmen Ethnography. There are many opinions of *ovlyad*'s origin in Turkmenistan. Most of them referred to caliph's origin (Novokreshchenova 2016: 7-8). That is why it will be better to show the Davydov's investigations.

Zenni Khoja are the South Turkmen Khoja. They are descendants of the fourth caliph Aziret Ali and Fatima (from Turkmen- Patyma, daughter of the Prophet). “The term Khoja is close to the word “*kojain*” (host) and means “master, lord or owner”. They were brave and active in warfare” writes Davydov. In the XVII- XVIII centuries they lived in 3 regions, Balkhan-Mangyshlak-Khorezm.

Balkan Khoja was divided into *dagly*, *ysravatly*, *depbamganly*, *khorsanly*. Balkan Khoja originated from Balkans and had two divisions: *dagly* (from the old mountainous part) and *ysravatly* (who came from Iran to Balkans (according to some informers). The second one had three divisions: *ysravatly* (*ysyrvatly*), *depbamganly* (*depbamaly*) and *khorsanly* (Demidov 1976: 68-69). There are many opinions about the name of *dagly*. Some sources connected them with *Dag molda*, who was a healer and cured a Padishah. And some others think that Balkans Khoja cured the descent of Kalmyk and Khiva Khans and got the name “*dagly*”- “*tauly*” (mountainous) after the unknown mountain near the village Kara Yaily.

Ysravatly Khoja are collectively known as *depbamganly*, *khorsanly* and *balkanly*, were from Astrabad. According to informers, they came from one of the towns of Iran (presumably, Astrabad) to Balkans. It is believed that they were numerous in Iran than in Balkans.

Khorsanly ones were from Khorasan of Iran. Turkmens did not connect them with South Turkmenistan. This group divided into *depbamganly* and *depbamaly*. *Depbamganly* is from the word “*deppe*”, which means “the main sign of ceramic jug”, and “*ganly*”- “*kandy*” (bloody). The history shows us that was a bloody struggle for one jug. This is an example of folk etymology. The second type “*depbamaly*” is from “*depbam*” (the town or region of North Iran), “*aly*” (the name of Ali). Also, the geographical variant of this word means “*depbam*”- the serpentine Dangan, and “*aly*” is the Turkic affix “*ly*” (denoting affiliation to something).

Berdily and Myatyli Khoja: These terms originated from the names of genera heads (literally, “*berdyndyk*” and “*myatyndyk*”). Berdily

Khoja was divided into eight (8) parts: *gechiyak* (*gechililer*), *jemkhur*, *arabachi*, *akja* (*akcha*) *baldyr*, *alanlar*, *toplar*, *shagla*, *gyzyllyar*. Myatuli Khoja was divided into three (3): *tatlar*, *baitally*, *lava*. For example, “*akchabaldyr*” literally means “white caviar”. Also it is known as “*ap-pakayak*”- “white leg”. “*Shagla*”- “noise” is the equivalent of word “sly, cunning”. “*Lava*” is explained as “type of outerwear”.

Arabachi Khoja was a part of Middle Turkmens in Balkans. “*Tatlar*” is from the term “*tat*” (sign). This word was used by the people of Khorezm and Amu-Dariya, and some informers said they (*arabachi*) came from Khorezm (Demidov 1976: 68-69). The work of Kashgari “Collection of Turkic words” shows that the word “*tat* (dat)” means “foreigner”, “stranger” who speaks Persian (Divani Lugat-at-Turk Collection of Turkic Dialects 1985: 126). Among Turkmens it could also mean that who spoke Persian was Khoja. It should be noted that “*shagla*” and “*toplar*” occurred among “*esralar*”.

“*Shaglagyzylkonly*” (literally, *kyzylkoily* (having red sheep)) is a part of *gyunesh* (descents of *chakyr*), “*toplar*” is a part of *karajaulugdepe* (*rakhimberly part*) (Demidov 1976: 71-74).

Khoja of Nokhur-“nokhurlar” are the Turkmens Khoja living in Nokhur. They are divided into 3 parts: *Dainaly*, *Khorasanly*, *Balkanly*. According to some sources, one of them came from Khiva, the other two came from Iran (Demidov 1976: 76).

Khoja of Mangyshlak: The origin of these Khoja is connected to Mangyshlak. According to legends, two brothers came to Mangyshlak and took roots. They are Sap hoja (older one, true name is Ish or Ovezhoja) and Nazarhoja (the younger one) came from *Vas* (Khorezm). They came to Abdal who was a rich man in Mangyshlak, but very sick, and they cured him. In appreciation, he gave his daughter in marriage to one of them (supposedly, to Nazarhoja). That was why there is the relationship between Khoja of Mangyshlak and Abdal. One of the two sons of Nazarhoja took the name of Abdalhoja and it is spread among his descents.

Saplar are the descents of Sap hoja. They adhered to the “pure” religion and followed all the rules. “*Saf*”, “*sap*” means “*taza*” (pure), “*takua*” (devout), who follow the rules of religion. Galkin wrote that 80 families moved in port of Alexander

(coast of the Caspian Sea, Shevchenko- modern Aktau city). The legend about them says that one of the brothers from Mecca came to Khiva in search of undeniable wealth. He did not find wealth, but he married to young beautiful Kyrgyz lady (Kazakh). Their descents are Khoja of Mangyshlak (Demidov 1976: 77). The descents of Fatima (daughter of the Prophet) and Ali are Seits (leaders of local religious officials), who live in Kazan or Kazan Khanate (in time of Fatima and Ali) (Iskhakov 2016: 42).

In some accounts, they were called “the religious leaders of Tatars” (Artykbaev 2016: 176) and were part of the special religious group (Iskhakov 2016: 42). Akhmetova (2016: 12-14) writes about Khoja of Russia that the descendants of Khoja from Isilkulsky District of the Omsk region came from the Iranian and Arab missionaries - the followers of the Prophet Muhammad. According to a local resident Ibrayev, Kaskat Khoja refer to two groups- the Shiites, who were called Shih Khoja; the Sunnis, Khoja (Akhmetova 2016:12-14). The ancestors of the Shiites are from Iran and Sunni from the Arab countries. According to old-timers, they were a part of the Arab troops in Turkestan in the VIII century (Bartold 1963: 759). Perhaps, they were the soldiers, who fulfilled the missionary activities. The authors agree with the previous researchers that the representatives of the Khoja had an important role in the spiritual and political life of Central Asia (Kushenova et al. 2015).

CONCLUSION

This scientific paper is based on the ethnological and ethnographical researches. Khoja of the investigated areas have been considered as a sub ethnic group from historical and ethnographical point of view. We have tried to describe the origin of Khoja, their historical formation and spread on the territories of Russia, Kazakhstan and Central Asia.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Currently, the group, Khoja, live in many countries of Eurasia: Russia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan. In this regard, the need for the study of Khoja exists in the organization and conduct of international collaborative research groups. The main objective of this research is to identify the general and specific fea-

tures in development of ethno-cultural and sub-ethnic groups of Khoja.

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