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## **SACRED GEOGRAPHY OF KAZAKHSTAN: ROLE AND PROSPECTS**

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After the success of EXPO-2017, the government of Kazakhstan seriously thought about the development of the tourism sector. According to the idea of officials, tourism should contribute to the development of not only the country's image in the eyes of foreigners and bring finance to the budget of Kazakhstan, but also to stimulate internal tourism. It is important to underline that the emphasis of internal tourism is planned to be placed on the holy places on the example of Mecca and Medina, which was named "sacred geography" in the press.

On April 12, 2017, Kazakhstanis had the opportunity to get acquainted with the new article of the Head of state "View to the future: modernization of public consciousness", where one of the priorities was the creation of the project "Sacred geography of Kazakhstan" [1]. The main purpose of the project "Spiritual shrines of Kazakhstan" is to promote historical monuments and holy places, as well as to educate the younger generation love for their native land, respect for history and cultural and historical monuments. This project will promote the image of Kazakhstan at the international level and give impetus to the development of tourism. The project is one of the important components of national identity preservation.

As it is known, the territory of Kazakhstan keeps an ancient and rich history. Most of the sacred objects found on the Kazakh land, helped and help to restore the lost history and the formation of national identity in the spirit of patriotism, as regularly reported by government policy

documents. As the first President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev stressed, every nation, every civilization has holy places that are national in nature, which are known to every representative of this people.

Under the sacred objects are understood mounds, religious architectural structures, cities, settlements, shrines, places associated with historical and political events that have enduring value in the memory of the people of Kazakhstan, etc. Most of the historical and cultural heritage are archaeological sites that are distributed in all regions of Kazakhstan. These monuments are in need of detailed study, restoration and conservation. Also to the spiritual heritage can be attributed objects of nature, the sacralization of which goes back to ancient times. Some of them are declared saints, becoming objects of pilgrimage tourism – Tamgaly Tas, Korkyt Ata mausoleum, Babaj-Khatun mausoleum [2].

The most active in the study of the sacred places of Kazakhstan are researchers from the A.H. Margulan Institute of Archeology, Institute of History and Ethnology of Ch. Valikhanov, Institute of State History. On the basis of collective selection by research teams ethnographers of the institute was compiled a list of sacred objects, which includes 100 sacred objects at the level of the republic and more than 500 – at the regional level [3]. As the discovery of other objects during various archaeological expeditions, the list will be updated. Based on the materials of archival and bibliographic nature, scientific research, experts (scientists, archaeologists, historians, ethnographers) have formed a register with detailed information objects from the ancient period to the modern. According to the Director of the center of study of local lore "Sacred Kazakhstan" Berik Abdigazyuly, only for the first year of implementation of the project failed to arouse interest among the population to its roots, the history, the legends that speaks about the spiritual revival of the nation. The Head of state, who initiated the adoption of such a large-scale project, also aims at this. For example, if we talk about the most important archaeological sites of the Stone Age, we can distinguish Ulken-Zhezdy, Karaungur, Belcarai. Also, a special place in research is monuments with the domestication of horses, which are one of the markers of the steppe civilization – Kozhai, Botai, Kumkehsu. On the territory of Kazakhstan there are also interesting funeral and funeral and ritual objects of the era of early nomads: Taldy-2, Shilikty, Issyk, Berel, Taksay and others. There were such medieval cities as Ispidzhab, Sauran, Otrar, Sidak, Zhuantobe – which for many centuries were the centers of trade and craft with outstanding examples of architecture and construction skills. Experts emphasize that this is only a small part of the historical and cultural heritage of the "Country of the Great Steppe". Also under the leadership of Berik Abdigazyuly, it was proposed to introduce a special law, which contains the paragraph about the sacred places. The bill provides for the protection of historical monuments, as well as officially confirms the granting of a special status [4].

Kazakh scientists and researchers presented the book "National sacred objects of Kazakhstan" and the encyclopedia "Sacred Kazakhstan". The results of expeditions in each region of the country are described in detail in historical and educational works. The publications were the first result of a huge research work of scientists and ethno-cultural expedition to the sacred places of Kazakhstan, which were held under the auspices of the Research center "Sacred Kazakhstan" and the public Association of local historians "Tugan Zher". These publications have already been called unique, because in their preparation, as well as in their writing, all the people, all the Kazakh society took part. The list compiled by experts was approved by the Ministry of culture and sports of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

One of the results of the work of historians was the publication on the website of the state program "Ruhani Zhangyru" section with a detailed description of a variety of historical and cultural objects along with the image of a multifunctional virtual map of Kazakhstan. The interactive map displays the regional sacred objects of Kazakhstan, with a detailed description and photo gallery, as well as geographical coordinates, which by geolocation, will allow you to choose the safest and shortest path to the selected sacred objects.

Thanks to the project "Spiritual shrines of Kazakhstan" will be organized research expeditions on sacred places and monuments, places of worship of Altai (Berel, Shilikty,

Shyngystau), Sary-Arka (Ulytau, Bayan-aul, Karkaraly, Kokshetau mountain), Zhetysu (Zhetysu Alatau, Ile Alatau), Western Kazakhstan (Ustyurt, Mangystau, Atyrau, Aktobe), South Kazakhstan (Taraz, Turkestan, the Korkyt Ata).

Continuing the idea of digitalization of sacred objects, Vice-Minister of culture and sports of the Republic of Kazakhstan Aktoty Raimkulova stressed that for the first time created 3D models of architectural monuments of the Republic of Kazakhstan, included in the list of sacred objects of national importance - Khoja Ahmed Yassau and Karakhan. About 30 videos for social networks about sacred objects of Kazakhstan were released in 3 languages: Kazakh, English and Russian. "These videos will serve as business cards of the regions where sacred objects are located for recognition of Kazakhstan in the world community as a country with a rich spiritual history and traditions," Raimkulova said.

Within the framework of the program of spiritual revival, various measures are also taken to promote the cultural heritage of Kazakhstan around the world. So in production is a collection of documentaries about the culture and history of Kazakhstan with duplication in 5 UN languages. The films will be presented on major well-known TV channels such as «BBC World News», «Discovery», «Viasat history» and «National Geographic».

In February 2018, in Akorda, the National Commission for the implementation of the program of modernization of public consciousness summed up the interim results of "Ruhani Zhanryu", where the Minister of culture and sports of the Republic of Kazakhstan Arystanbek Mukhamediuly told about the implementation of the project "Sacred geography of Kazakhstan" [5]. It was noted that in order to develop the cultural and tourist cluster of the northern, western regions and the city Nur-Sultan Ministry of culture and sports of Kazakhstan together with local Executive bodies is working on the creation of 3 national museum-reserves: "Bozok", "Botay" and "Saraishyk". According to the minister, the creation of such museum-reserves will allow to preserve unique cultural monuments for the future generation, will provide an opportunity to increase competitiveness in attracting tourists, will provide the necessary conditions for the implementation of research, conservation, archaeological, educational and educational programs.

The work on the modernization of consciousness should be based on cultural memory, symbolic, sacred, cultural and historical things. Sacred places or spiritual shrines are the pillars of the spiritual tradition of the people. The Republic of Kazakhstan has a huge number of such places, some of them are the treasures of the world scale (Turkestan, Altai etc.). The project "Sacred geography of Kazakhstan" will determine the national symbols, the frame of Kazakhstan's national identity.

In addition, the objects of the "sacred belt" will become points of growth for the tourism industry. In addition, the tourism sector should carry out the task of not only replenishing the physical and emotional resources of the person, but also promoting education and cultural education of the population, especially young people. The new generation must know its roots, its great ancestors and their worthy deeds. And visiting sacred places is the best way to convey this extremely important information to young people.

### **Literature**

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