

## SACRED GEOGRAPHY OF EAST KAZAKHSTAN

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The article gives the definition of “sacred geography and sacredness”. The article is presented the material on the creation of the register of sacred objects located within East Kazakhstan. By the head of state of Kazakhstan assigned a task – implementation of the project “Spiritual shrines of Kazakhstan” or “Sacred geography of Kazakhstan”. The President noted that sacred geography is a framework of national identity. The spiritual heritage of our ancestors is a priceless gift and a real treasure that has come down to us from ancient times. During the expeditions and field research, the members of the working group collected material about the sacred objects of East Kazakhstan, compiled preliminary lists of sacred places. It includes 50 objects. In this article the characteristic of some objects each of which is unique is given: the Northern branch of the great silk road, Historical and archaeological complex “Shilikti”, Mausoleum” Yrgyzbay Aulie”, memorial “Stronger than death”.

**Keywords:** sacredness, sacred geography, sacred landscape, sacral place, cultural sacred of Kazakhstan, the unique natural objects

The concept of “sacred geography” was formed relatively recently. In April 2017, the article of the head of state of Kazakhstan “Look into the future” was published: modernization of public consciousness, one of the priority issue for the society was the creation of the project “Spiritual Shrines of Kazakhstan”, or “Sacred Geography of Kazakhstan”. In the “Dictionary of Russian” of S.I.Ozhegov, the notion of “sacramental” which means: sacred, cherished [7].

Sacredness is a set of notions of quality space at ancients. Every people have sacral place, sign historical or morphological points that honor and preserve.

“Sacral place” is area of nature, cities, settlements, burial mounds, necropolises, shrines, petroglyphic drawings and historical landscapes, as well as religious, sacred places where have built iconic or religious buildings: crosses, dolmens, megaliths, etc., revered by a certain ethnic or religious community of people. Sacral objects have an ancient history and play the main role in religious and mythological views of any people, forms cultural or “sacred landscape” around themselves and it is the subject of searching of sacred geography.

According to L.S. Marsadolov “Sacred landscape” is a part of the natural environment inspired by God (the Creator), which is involved in sacred, ideological and cult human activity [6]. Issues of sacred geography of Kazakhstan, in particular of East Kazakhstan, have not yet received the necessary development and coverage in the monographic literature periodicals. The essence of the project “Sacred geography of Kazakhstan” is to create a single field of a single chain of cultural and geographical shrines of Kazakhstan.

In particular, the ancient complexes of East Kazakhstan, unique natural objects, the monuments of natural-historical landscape and many other places – all of them will be included to the general cultural geographical sacred zones of Kazakhstan. In article we are presented the material of master’s research on creation of register sacred objects, which are in borders of East Kazakhstan. It includes 50 objects, which are presented in table.

Cultic architectural monuments, as a rule, better preserved to nowadays and more revered have special popularity.

The main volume of historical and cultural heritage are archeological sites, they cover the enormous chronological period: from a deep antiquity, the Stone Age, to the late middle Ages. Another variety of spiritual heritage is the objects of nature, the sacralization of which goes back to the ancient times. Some of them declared sacred, having become the objects of pilgrimage tourism. At the same time the known sacral objects that entered to historical and archaeological science, appear new religious monuments and the sacral places.

Architectural monuments of historical, scientific and artistic significance also become objects of pilgrimage. A description of some of the objects, each one is unique below: Northern branch of the Great Silk Road, Historical archeological complex “Shilikti”, the mausoleum Yrgyzbai Aulie, The memorial “Stronger than death”.

The Great Silk road is a single transcontinental route that since the II century BC has become a bridge between Europe and Asia, connecting the West and the East. Two several of civilizations with completely special cultural traditions, religious beliefs, scientific and technical achievements have met here.

## Preview register of sacral place of East Kazakhstan

Sacralization ranks	The objects of the register of sacral place
1. Especially honored monuments of natural heritage	1. Belukha mountain (Altai) 2. Konyr-Aulie cave
2. Archeological and architectural monuments	3. Historical-archeological complex Berel, 4. Historical-archeological complex Shilikti, 5. Fortress-monastery "Ablaykit"
3. Religious and cult objects being places of worship	6. Memorial complex "Abai-Shakarim", 7. The mausoleum Yrgyzbai Aulie, 8. The mausoleum Enlik-Kebek, 9. The mausoleum Kozy –Korpesh Bayan Sulu, 10. Spring "Sacred spring",
4. Sacral places related to historical persons	11. House museum of Abai, 12. House museum of F.M. Dostoevsky, 13. The mausoleum of Dulat Babatayuly, 14. The mausoleum of Zholabay bi, 15. The mausoleum of Shakhantay Zhaugashuly batyr, 16. The mausoleum of Tany bi Tlemisuly, 17. The mausoleum of Omar Smagululy, 18. The mausoleum of Boranbay bi Kalkamanuly, 19. The mausoleum of Aulie Bekturgan, 20. Mosque of Tynybay Kaykenov, 21. Grave of Kengirbay bi, 22. Place of grave Askarbay aulie Shokantayuly 23. Place of grave Shaki bi Tasybayuly, 24. Place of grave Zhyngozha Bazarkululy batyr
5. Sacral places related to historical and political events	25. The museum Alash arystary, 26. Medrese Akhmed Riza, 27. School of Abdikerim Erezhepov, 28. School medrese Eskitam.
6. A Unique natural objects	29. Salty mud "Aschybasy", 30. Natural boundary "Kiin-Kerish", 31. Zaysan lake, 32. Lakes of Balance, 33. Rakhmanovskoe lake, 34. Mys Shekelmes, 35. Playuschie adyry, 36. Alakol lake 37. Markakol lake
7. Natural-historical landscape monuments	38. Paleobotanical monument of nature "Ashutas", 39. Neolithic sanctuary complex "Ak-Baur", 40. Tarkhan geological section, 41. Boritastagan mountain, 42. Petroglyphs of the natural boundary of Moynak, 43. Natural boundary Okey, 44. The great Silk Road on the Altay, 45. The Mine Kokkol River, 46. The Austrian road
8. Symbols of national memory and civil heroism	47. The memorial "Stronger than death", 48. Complex of Kushikbay Kanayuly batyr, 49. Barak Batyr monument, 50. Kabanbay Batyr monument

The Great Silk Road is a unique historical monument of human civilization that for many centuries played a primary role in the development of the economy and culture of countries and peoples included in the zone of its powerful attraction as a trade caravan route. The longest section of the Silk Road is the Steppe one. It crossed the territory of Central Asia and Kazakhstan and functioned until the XIV century, reached its peak in the VIII-XII centuries by formation of a powerful Empire – the Turkic khanate. One of the branches of the Steppe way, passed from the Black Sea to the shores of the Don, then into the lands of the Sarmatians in the southern Urals to the Irtysh River and further to the Altay, the country of argipei, who inhabited the High Irtysh and Zaisan Lake [2].

Two main directions of movement of caravans passed through the territory of modern East Kazakhstan: the first from the northern provinces of China, through West Mongolia, through the Ukok Plateau and further along to the valley of Bukhtarma and middle stream of the Irtysh River and the second along to the Black Irtysh, Prizaysanskaya Basin to the shores of the Alakol Lake and Balkhash Lake. Later, these routes were intensively used for delivery of goods from China to Siberia, transportation of cattle from Mongolia, extraction and dispatch of metals, primarily gold, copper, tin and lead from Altay to Europe.

The ancient Greek historian and geographer Herodotus, who lived in the 5th century BC, knew nothing about the lands lying east of the Caspian Sea, but he mentions the tribes of Isidon, Agripei and Fissagets living there. The gold and other metals were delivered to the Greek colonists of Pontus of Ekvinsky and further to the countries of Europe exactly from there. Therefore, the Northern branch of the Silk Road has received the name “Golden”. Over time, the routes have undergone changes, as it was required by the political situation [9].

The Northern “Golden” branch of the Great Silk Road is an ancient caravan route connected the Central Asian Regions of Mongolia and China with the Irtysh, and following further to the West and South to the most significant markets of antiquity. Today this direction has remained within the Katon-Karagaysky State National Natural Park (KKSNNP). A unique complex with a rare combination of natural landscapes, diverse plant and animal life, rich history and unique culture: monuments of history, archeology, architecture, urban planning and monumental art has been preserved on its territory [4].

Currently, it is the Northern branches of the Silk Road are included to the priority goal

of the state program of the Republic of Kazakhstan on the revival of the historical centers of the Great Silk Road. According to the specified priorities areas and the basic centers of priority exploitation, among them the Upper Bukhtarminskiy area including the Katon-Karagay village, the Berel village, and the resort Rakhmanovskiye springs, the area of the Markakol Lake is defined [6].

Historical analysis and deciphering of the Northern Branch of the Great Silk Road is of great cultural, historical, natural and aesthetic value of universal importance.

There are a number of magnificent natural and historic sites in the park. Some of them may have international status: Belukha Mountain, Kokkol waterfall, thermal springs Rakhmanovskiye Klyuchi, Kokkol high mountain mine, Berel excavations, Austrian road, the Northern branch of the Great Silk Road and others. All these objects are identified as a separate perspective units for recreational development of Katon-Karagay SNNP (State National Natural Park). Some of them are successfully developed for cultural tourism, some objects, having equal opportunities with other recreational objects, used as amateur tourism. There are very picturesque landscapes within Ukok plateau, where the glittering mass of the plexus of mountain Kuitun (Tabyn Bogdo Olo) rises in the South. There are a large number of ancient graves of different age and origin along the road. The Northern branch of the Great Silk Road has all chances to stimulate the involvement of objects of research in national and regional tourism [2].

Evidence of this was forum “One belt, one road” past in Beijing (May 2017), which has formed a new geo-economic paradigm and will give a new stimulus to the development of mutually beneficial contacts on the new Silk road. Even those countries are of interest to the project whose territories were not in the way of the famous trade route. The universality and obvious benefit of the idea made it global [5]. Today the Great Silk Road is of great interest to the world community, first of all, it is preserved rich monuments of history and culture, which have an important international significance. The consequence of this is the deep integration and international cooperation of the countries located along the traffic artery.

The Great Silk Road began to function in the II century before Our Era. As for the term ‘The Great Silk Road’, it was originally introduced into scientific usage by German researcher F. Richthofen in his major work “China” in the 1870s [8].

### Shilikty mound

Shilikty burial ground is located in the valley of Zaysan district of East Kazakhstan region. The valley, stretching 80 km long and 30 km wide, is surrounded by mountains from three sides: in the South and West – Tarbagatay, in the East – Sauyr, in the North – Manyrak.

The valley is characterized by its favorable climatic conditions: summer is cool, winter-warm and snowless. Therefore, since the Bronze Age these lands were densely populated by early agricultural and pastoral tribes.

There are 100 mounds in the valley. Mazar Zeinuly – built by Bayazit Saipayev is not far away. Multi-colored hill Ashutas is located in the valley of Black Irtysh, near Zaysan.

In the 40 – 60-ies of the last century Leningrad scientist Sergey Sergeevich Chernikov, who worked on the excavation of one of the large mounds Shilikty valley, made the assumption that it was one of the Sako-Scythian structures.

He even published a book “The Mystery of the Golden mound”. Most of the items found then are kept in the Hermitage; some gold items are in the vaults of the Central state Museum of Kazakhstan [1].

Kazakh scientists consider that in many ways this monument can be attributed to the VIII – IX century before Our Era, that the dumping is created by more than two thousand seven hundred years ago. Radiocarbon analysis of the wood saw cut of the tomb made by Kiev scientists V. Skripkin and N. Kovalyuk confirms this dating. The bones found in the burial could belong to an aristocratic person.

The findings of the scientist confirm many facts. For example, the special status of the burial emphasizes the fact that a single person was buried in such a huge mound. His high position is also indicated by the fact that the man was buried in a Golden vestment.

Moreover, shilikty governor was not dressed in a specially prepared for funerals ritual clothing – usually these things are sewn in a hurry and are fragile, represent a kind of property.

Shilikty ruler's gold jewelry was designed for everyday life. The main underground corridor of the tomb was littered with stones, but had a secret double, which the robbers did not suspect; the ruler wore this entirely embroidered with gold plaques clothes during his lifetime. In addition, among the gold items a five-pointed star was found, symbolizing power. But most of all scientists were struck by miniatures, barely visible through a magnifying glass.

Particular attention was drawn to a tiny Golden Cup-shaped pendant with a size of just 1 millimeter. Ear was soldered to it diameter of 0.5 millimeter. It is difficult to imagine that they are made by steppe nomads many centuries ago!

Almost all the jewelry plots from the mound, except for a five-pointed star and corrugated tubes describe the animals of the local fauna and are made in the early sakoscythian animal style. For example, Golden argali or a plaque, notionally named “Mask leopard”. It is made up of the heads of two mountain goats and, if you look at it from the side, resembles a Golden eagle soaring in the sky. Fragments of wooden boards with images of deer became more amazing finding- if not sensational.

### The Mausoleum Yrgyzbai auliye

The mausoleum of Yrgyzbay-ata in Tarbagatai district of East Kazakhstan region is located on the North side of the Tarbagatai ridge, on the road from the village of Aksuat in Kaldikty. It is adorned with decorative stone trim. The underside is made of green granite. This palette gives a magnificent view to the monument. There is a bedroom for four people, as well as Lenzat's tomb, Tarpanbai's son, and ten other people on the Eastern side of the mausoleum.

Yrgyzbay was well known holy man in the East of Kazakhstan, his clan –Nayman-karakerey-kyrzhy. He was famous for having cured Abay Kunanbay's father. He was a Mullah, but had medicinal skills, was able to work and treat by medicinal herbs, without having a medical education. He did not take money for a treatment, and when people offered as a sign of gratitude, replied: “Give to orphan or a widow, I have my own duties”.

In 1920-ies an old man Shynybai had a vision in which Yrgyzbay said, “Hey, Shynybai, cattle is grazing on my grave, raise my cemetery, and Allah will reward you”. Hearing this, the old man did his best to put the grave in order. Perhaps because of this, Shinabai's off spring became more successful.

There is a good expression in the Kazakh language: “Ask God, pray from saints”. There are many examples of how people who prayed at night at St. Kyrghyzbai, could have their dreams come true, life became better.

According to the stories, before his death Yrgyzbay Doskanuly stated: “The soil here is given to me. Do not move my remains to Kindikti, but bury me on a light yellow ridge”. And pointed out to his ridge in which he was buried. And he left this admonition: “Put the

remains in the chest. Don't build a cemetery. The construction of the cemetery is the duty of the future generation".

The mausoleum of Yrgyzbay-ata is located in the South-Western part of the complex, consisting of burial structures and outbuildings. The kitchen and the room for ritual sleep, which functioned in the 90s of the twentieth century, is located to the North-East of the mausoleum.

Due to the sharply increased number of pilgrims, the complex continues to expand to this day.

### Monument "Stronger Than Death"

The monument, erected in memory of the victims of the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site and called "Stronger than death", was opened in August 2001 in Semipalatinsk. It is located a few kilometers from the city center, in the Polkovnichi Island [3].

The monument is a 25m wall, cast from precast-monolithic reinforced concrete, lined with polished granite blocks and slabs of black Semipalatinsk granite "gabbro".

The shape of an atomic cloud is cut on a monument. At the base of this is a white marble sculpture of a woman, who hides her baby with her body. It is a symbol of maternal love, able to protect the child from all troubles. Professor R. Yergalieva said at the opening of the monument: "Mother giving life, saving her child in a desperate rush, is embodied as a symbol of life, a symbol of the continuation of the human race, in spite of all the hardships and disasters, in this monument".

The author of the monument is Shota Valikhanov, famous Kazakh architect, writer, playwright, artist, and author of the coat of arms of the Republic of Kazakhstan, many

monuments and buildings, winner of the National Award of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

The monument "Stronger than Death" is very important for the people of Kazakhstan, as it symbolizes all the victims and losses as a consequence of nuclear tests in the period from 1949 to 1963.

V. Katsev wrote: "The Republic of Kazakhstan is the second power in the world after Japan, which suffered from nuclear weapons. The reflection of this theme in the monumental art of Kazakhstan is a matter of honor for architects and artists". This monument carries a history through which people can believe that stronger than death – only is life [3].

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