

## **Kazakh batyrs: in the name of descendants**

Since childhood I have heard the historic truth of the end of the 19th up to the middle of the 20th centuries from aksakals (in Turkic languages “aksakal” literally means "white beard". The word metaphorically refers to the male elders, the old and wise of the community in parts of Central Asia and Caucasus. Traditionally an aksakal was the leader of a village or aul until the Soviet times. Acting as advisors or judges, these elders had a role in politics and the justice system in countries and tribes.), who were Shakarim Kudayberdy (Kazakh poet whose works reflected the views of nature, peace, religion and other social phenomena) contemporaries and dwellers of the Abay's homeland called Shyngistau; also I used to read ancient manuscripts. I touched on this subject intentionally, as Kazakh history knows many heroes, who deserve to be role models.

One of them is Umbetayuly Kokenay, a contemporary of Az Tauke, acknowledged batyr (warrior) and biy (steppe judge) of the Middle Zhuz (Horde) in the period of 1680-1718. According to historical sources, he was born in 1648, and died in 1728 in the battle called “Kara siyr”. Kokenay batyr was badly wounded in the battle between the Kazakhs and Dzhunghars; he was buried at the Kozha Akhmet Yassawi mausoleum, near Khazret Sultan himself. His name is on the mausoleum list of burials.

At the time of Dzhunghar invasions, he was commander-in-chief when the Kazakh state was under the rule of Tauke Khan. During the war he defeated Cheren Dordzha, who was the commander of Tsewang Raptan Khan, in a single combat and thus at the age of fifty he became a famous batyr of all three zhuzes. At a meeting organized by Tauke khan in 1710, he made an ardent speech on mobilization of forces against invasion of the Dzhunghars.

His whole life is an unparalleled feat in the name of his Motherland's independence. In 1723 together with six thousand cavalry and batyrs from different tribes, he attacked the enemy by the sides of Karatal, Talas and Karatau rivers; he was holding enemy forces in same position for a month, in order to let people move to safe localities and Kazakh batyrs gather together.

Shakarim Kudayberdiuly, famous Kazakh philosopher and thinker, scholar and poet, cordially praised Kokenay batyr's heroism in his poems. Aksakals, who had been acquainted with him, used to describe the batyr as a strong, courageous man with penetrating glance.

Our ancestors' dream has come true: we live in independent country.

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