

# Chinese Historian Su Beihai's Manuscript about the History of Kazakh People in Central Asia: Historical and Source Study Analysis\*

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The article analyses the research work of Chinese scientist Su Beihai on Kazakh history, one of the oldest nationalities in Eurasia. This work has been preserved as a manuscript and its main merit is the study of Kazakh history from early times to the present. Moreover, it shows Chinese scientists' attitude to Kazakh history. Su Beihai's scientific analysis was written in the late 1980s in China. At that time, Kazakhstan was not yet an independent country. Su Beihai drew on various works, on his distant expedition materials and demonstrated with facts that Kazakh people living in their modern settlements have a 2,500-year history. Although the book was written in accordance with the principles of Chinese communist historiography, Chinese censorship prevented its publication. Today, Kazakh scientists are approaching the end of their study and translation of Su Beihai's manuscript. Therefore, the article first analyses the most important and innovative aspects of this work for Kazakh history. It focuses on the stages of Kazakh history, traditions of statehood, economy, and culture. The Chinese scientist's research on Kazakh history goes back to the ancient Saka period, to modern southern Kazakhstan, the emergence of the states of Dayuezhi and Wusuns in Zhetisu, Kangli state, the West Turkic Kaganate, the Turkic steppe, unification of Kara khan and Kara kidan (Western Liao), Genghis Khan's invasion into Central Asia and the Kazakh steppes, Russian colonization, resettlement of Kazakhs in Russia and the Man Qin Empire, and others. In addition to Su Beihai's positive research on the entire Kazakh history, the article provides critical reviews in the historiographical and source-study of several Chinese-centrist points of view.

**Keywords:** Kazakh History, Su Beihai, Kazakh ethnogenesis, Kazakh khanate, Russian colonialism.

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## Introduction

The author of the manuscript, Su Beihai (苏北海 1915–1999), was born in Wuxi District, Jiangxi Province, China. He graduated in 1937 from the History Department of the Jiangxi Institute of Pedagogy. In 1940, the government of Gomindan sent him to study the social and historical situation of Kazakhs who fled to the province of Gansu-Qinghai. Since then, he engaged in the study of the history of Kazakhstan. After 1949, he worked as a researcher at the Research Center of the Xinjiang Bureau of CPC, editor of the People's Publishing House of Xinjiang, associate professor, and professor at the Faculty of History of Xinjiang University. His books on Kazakh history *History of Kazakh Culture* (哈萨克文化史. 乌鲁木齐. 新疆大学出版社, 1989) and *Xinjiang Petroglyphs* (新疆岩画. 乌鲁木齐. 新疆美术摄影出版社, 1994) were published. Su Beihai visited Kazakhstan in 1998. The book *History of Kazakh Culture* investigates the development of material and spiritual culture of the Kazakh people, its relationship with the cultures of East and West, and the above-mentioned manuscript examines the entire history of the nation from ancient times to the present day. Therefore, his work is called *A General history of Kazakhs*.

Professor Su Beihai's work *A General History of Kazakhs* is of great importance for Kazakh Historiography. This work will bring the chronological framework of the Kazakh history to 2,500 years, beginning the manuscript with Kazakh history in sixth–fifth centuries BC when the Saka state appeared on the scene. So who are the Sakas? For the first time ancient Chinese historian Ban Gu's work *The Book of Han or History of the Former Han* (汉书 'Hanshu' in Chinese) reports about the Saka in the 'Western Regions.' Herodotus also states [1] that 'the Persians were all named Scythian tribes.' In the *Book of Han: Reports of the Western Regions*, the Ambassador of China to the western countries, Zhang Qian, told Emperor Han Wudi that the Scythians were the Saka (塞人). According to some scholars [2], it was not only the name of a single ethnicity, but the one of the whole region. Professor Su Beihai states in his work that the Saka had lived in Zhetysu before Yuezhi and Huns settled, and that they also came from the Hexi and corridor and the Hetao (Ordos), having created the earliest state in the area.

Not only Su Beihai, but also Yang Jianxin highlights that the ethnic origin of the Kazakhs is so complicated, that in the fourth BC — fifth AD centuries, many ethnic groups, such as the Saka, Yuezhi, Wusuns, Huns, Kangly, western Turkic tribes lived in the region of Kazakhstan and the Ili, and in the thirteenth century Mongols made this region an area of their political, economic activities, among the Kazakhs many tribes still consider these ethnos as their ancestors. It proves that these tribes complemented the Kazakh composition [3]. Li Sheng, historian and researcher of the Kazakh history, wrote that the emergence of the Kazakhs was the result of the interaction of various ethnic groups in Central Asia, and the history of the ethnos, composing the Kazakh people can be considered from the very early times, and separately he considers the history of states Wusun, Kangju, and Alan (奄蔡), newly-established on the Kazakh land [4].

Thus, *A General History of the Kazakhs* by Prof. Su Beihai is dedicated primarily to the history of the ancient and semi-nomadic states of ancient and medieval nomadic states who founded the Kazakh statehood. Later, the Kazakh Khanate and its subsequent Kazakh history are considered in the context of relations between Russia and the Empire of the Manchu Qin (Qing). The ethnic territory of the Kazakh people in the

concept of the author occupies the enormous space between the north Caucasus, Volga and Don, in the east to the Mongolian plateau and the Yellow River basin. As a scientist studying the historical geography of Central Asia and East Turkestan [5], his opinion to consider Kazakh history in this vast space is of a great scientific significance. This methodology is also reflected in his works *Petroglyphs in Xinjiang* [6] and *The History of Kazakh Culture* [7].

## **The Importance of the Topic**

*A General History of the Kazakhs* allows considering the history of Kazakh people on the basis of information from China and other nations and works of scientists of those times. It also serves to strengthen the view that ethnogenesis and state traditions of the Kazakh people originate from ancient times, and to clarify the concept of Chinese historiography on the history of Kazakhstan.

## **Interest in the Topic**

The given article might be interesting to the historians and the politicians interested in studying the history of Central Asia since ancient times till now, in development, formation and transformations in existing nations and the states of various ethnoses and the states, and also to the experts studying traditions of regional interaction.

## **Materials and Methods**

In the manuscript, which is the subject of the article, the author draws attention to the history of Xinjiang and the history of the ancient states and ethnicities of Central Asia and Kazakhstan and their connection with China. The author's views on the new and modern Kazakh history are often based on the policy of the expansion of the Qin (Qing) Empire. Nevertheless, the article notes that these four different factors, such as the data presented by the author and the time, place, event and historical person, will help to enrich the Kazakh history from source-study and historiographical point of view. The manuscript *A General History of the Kazakhs* published in 1994 and 1–3 volumes of its translation into Kazakh language [8, p. 32–33] were chosen as the object of research in the article.

Since this manuscript of the Chinese author is written in accordance with the historiographical principle of modern communist China, there are China-centered views and opinions. Therefore, in the article, based on common historiographical and source-study principles, such views and opinions were scientifically criticized and evaluated.

Su Beihai mainly used the results of research of scientists of China, Russia and Kazakhstan, Chinese data of different epochs, legends and pedigrees of Kazakh people, archaeological, folklore heritage and petroglyphs. In order to achieve his goals, he studied them in relation to each other. Thus studying of the Kazakh history is not limited to the territory of Kazakhstan. Historically it covers all ethnocultural space inhabited by Kazakhs and their ancestors, and is focused on Kazakhstan and areas of China inhabited by Kazakhs. Since the object of the study are the events, economic and cultural developments that took place during each period of Kazakh history, this study is one of the largest

in terms of both chronology and content. Nevertheless, in each chapter and section the author substantiates his point of view on historical data. However, in some respects, he cannot go beyond the Chinese historiographic principle.

## Results

Having considered in the article Su Beihai's work about Kazakh history from the historiography and source studies point of view, we have achieved the following results:

- 1) the author's opinion on the chronology of Kazakh history should be widely included in the regional and Kazakhstan historiography;
- 2) opinions on the breadth of Kazakh history refute the established methodology, which limits the Kazakh history only to the borders of Kazakhstan;
- 3) the author's thoughts that the distant ancestors of Kazakhs created material and spiritual culture, founded various states on the ethno-historical spaces in which they lived encourage historians to look at the problem from another side;
- 4) moments when the author tends to consider the history of Central Asia and Kazakhstan mainly through the prism of "Chinese influence," without going beyond the principles of Chinese historiography, need careful consideration and denial.

## Main Part

The author, beginning the Kazakh history from the ancient times the ones of the Saka in sixth-fourth centuries BC, considers the period on a wide geographical space. The reason is that there have been three rounds of large migrations in the Eurasian continent since then. The first one took place in the eighth–seventh centuries, the second in the second–fifth century BC, and the last one dates back to the third–fourth centuries of our era. The first started with moving of Issedones by Armaspeys from the Black Sea, which ended with their reaching the Altai Mountains. 'The griffins worshiping gold behind the arimaspi' in Herodotus' *History* is the name of a tribe on the Altai Mountains, which inhabited the shores of Lake Zaisan in the neighborhood with one-eyed arimaspi, according to the Chinese scientist Wang Zhilai. The Greeks called them so in the association with the griffins in their own legends with a lion's body and eagle headed [9]. Thus, there is no coincidence that ancient heritage in the image of lion-griffins characteristic for the Saka is found in Altai. While the first wave of the Great Migration was directed westward, the other two were from east to west. China's famous turkologist Cen Zhongmian has always been expressing different ideas about historical facts in different scientific editions, like: 'in the history the Xia (夏) community comes from the Rongs ethnos (戎); 'Qins' (秦) origins are also Rongs; 'Zhou (周) dynasty and western Rongs (西戎) are of one and the same origin; 'Rongs have the genetic relations with Turkic and Turan; 'the Chu (楚) people do not belong to the Oriental nation; 'the ideas about Chinese which preceded the Qin kingdom' (汉族) belong to Turan factor was described vary in publication differently' [10, p. 76]. In brief, Mr. Cen says that two great kingdoms of China Xia and Zhou originate from the Turkic-speaking ethnicities that came from Turan (Central Asia). Hence, the early migrants crossed Great Tian Shan and moving along the Lop Nor oasis, the Kunlun and Qi Lianshan mountains, to the eastern slopes of the Himalayas, had lived there for several hundred years, after which one part stayed there and

the rest returned back to Ordos and Hexi corridors. Thus, it is no coincidence that Su Beihai started the beginning of the Kazakh history from ancient ethnos, which inhabited the shores of the Yellow River and Hexi corridors.

According to Su Beihai's research, from Hexi corridors first the Saka, then Yuezhi, Wusuns and finally Huns moved to the west, to Central Asia, to the Kazakh steppes. But it does not mean that all the ancient ethnos in the Kazakh steppes came from the east. The native land of the Turans, the Kazakh steppes were not empty at that time. Previously, a large part of the Saka tribes lived in the Kazakh-populated areas of today, especially the Saka in sharp caps inhabiting Tashkent, the shores of Shu-Talas, Ili rivers, the Balkhash Lake, the Tian-Shan and the Altai region had close links with the tribes of Kazakh origins. That is why Kazakhs called themselves as 'Sharp Cap Kazakhs' until modern times.

The author does not just point out that the Saka lived as a state, but also writes about their social status, household and culture, their relationship with the environment, and their enthusiasm and respect for gold. In short, the Saka era is regarded as the beginning of society and the beginning of awakening and development. From then on, steppe customary laws and state hierarchy gradually developed and matured. In spite of numerous records and archeological data, the five-volume *History of Kazakhstan* cannot say for sure that it was a state of Saka and confines itself only to: 'On the top of the hierarchical stage — the king and the queen, warriors and aristocracy, royal warriors, subordinates, slaves and servants' [10, p. 94–95].

Hence, while the first state in the land of China was the Kingdom of Xia, the first state in the Kazakh land was the Saka Kingdom. There is a special chapter devoted to the Saka era, which was fully reflected in Professor Su Beihai's work.

**In the Kazakh land, it was the State of the Great Da Yuezhi which was built after the Saka. This is, of course, a topic that has not been mentioned in today's domestic (Kazakh) historiography.** The History of the Yuezhi is closely related to the Hun history. Su Beihai wrote: 'When the kingdom of Qin conquered six other kingdoms, on the eastern hills 'Eastern Hus' (东胡) became stronger and the Yuezhi prospered'. The Huns were under the pressure of the Yuezhi and eastern Hu protesters, during Tumen's ruling, he pledged his son Mode to the Yuezhi and then attacked the Yuezhi and attempted to kill Mode by means of the Yuezhi. But Mode stole Yuezhi's horse and returned to his homeland ... This attack did not defeat the Yuezhi, but the Yuezhi moved far away' [11, p. 602].

Although the Yuezhi moved to the Ili region, in the chapter 'The great Yuezhi' of the book named *The History of the Han Dynasty (Hou Han shu): Reports of the Western Regions* it is described that the state was destroyed by Huns and went to Bactria [12]. If so, says the scientist, a misunderstanding appears in the minds of people about the fact that the owners went straight to Bactria on the Hexi corridor, and did not overtake the Ili river. In fact, when the great Yuezhi moved to the west, they first came to the Ili valley, and then they were defeated and went to the Bactria. It is mentioned in the book *Hou Han Shu: Reports of Western Qiang*: 'the King of the Yuezhi was murdered by Mode ... they themselves went west crossing the Kokart (Pamir) mountains' [11, p. 627]. Here also, their history of going to the Ili has not been mentioned, but on the contrary, their latest settlement is told at once. That is, both of these sources have left out the fact of the Yuezhi going to the Ili. Probably, this is the reason why the Kazakh historians do not pay much attention to the history of the Yuezhi. However, in the chapter 'Liao s' from

the book *Han Shu: Reports of Western Regions* referring to the Ili valley it is written that 'Wusun ruler (Kunmo) beat great Yuezhi. Great Yuezhi set out for the country of Bactria in the west and defeated the Bacteria khan. So the Yusun ruler occupied those lands. That is the reason why the Saka and the great Yuezhi are intertwined in Wusuns' [10, p. 97]. Here we see how great Yuezhi after leaving the Hexi corridor come to the Ili region, which had been inhabited originally by the Saka, and therefore, 'the Saka and the great Yuezhi live among Wusuns.' Professor Su Beihai, according to the historical data, accurately clarifies this issue and explores how the great Yuezhi moved to the Ili and Zhetysu. He analyzes the views of scientists like M. A. Stein, H. Toiokhashi and other historic facts prove that the great Yuezhi (Da Yuezhi) reached the Ili moving along the south of the Tian Shan.

**According to Chinese data, the third and most influential political authority in the Zhetysu and Ili valleys after the Saka and the great Yuezhi was the State of Wusuns.**

It is written in the Chinese sources in detail how they came from the Hexi corridor. However, the Kazakh historiography denies the arrival of Wusuns from the east. In the five-volume book named *The History of Kazakhstan* shows that 'According to Zhang Qian, the place where Wusuns had lived was somewhere far away in the east, this is not true' [10, p. 94–95]. But it does not provide any evidence. In our opinion, saying that they came from the east and does not mean that they came from China and that they were Chinese. The arrival of Wusuns to the Ili valley takes place in the first phase of the re-migration of the native people of Eurasia (Turan tribes) to the west (the Saka, the great Yuezhi, Wusun Era, second-first century BC). Historical sources show that Wusuns were not a pure race, but rather a medieval ethnos that formed in close contact with other ethnos, such as the Saka, the Yuezhi, Huns, Kangju.

Based on various sources, the scientist studies the state character of the Wusun society. Promoting many views, the writer supports the idea of the Wusun society being 'slave-based society on the basis of nomadic cattle breeding, which had a strong patriarchal character' [13].

At the Chinese border with Kazakhstan in Mongolkure, Tekes, Kunes, Shapshal, U-Su, Zheng, some Wusun's big or small graves are visible immediately. According to the expedition materials of the Institute of Ethnology of the Chinese Academy of Sciences in Xinjiang, some of these graves located not far from Kazakhstan are like small ridges; the perimeter of the largest tomb in the Shaty area is over 260 meters, the roof diameter and the horizontal height are about 20 meters, the depth perimeter is 100–150 meters, and the depth perimeter of the smallest ones is 50 meters, the height about 1 meter [14]. These graves of all sizes were grabbed, but still remains of buried things are found such as 'some ceramics, bone products, small bronze and iron products, gold jewelry, fragments of molds'. Whereas 'in some graveyards, which are small and leveled to the earth, there are very few things or nothing at all' [15]. The graves here are the tombs of the Wusun rulers, high aristocracy and the graves of the army chiefs. It is evident that Wusuns were at a high level of social development. Scientists in Kazakhstan have not given so much attention to the cultural monuments in the upper part of the Ili — in the places, such as Kas, Kunes, Tekes, Khorgas and Mongolkure. As a result, the research of Wusuns did not develop so well in Kazakhstan. It is evidenced by the fact that in the five-volume book named *The History of Kazakhstan* the history of Wusun was given only 1.5 pages space [16, p. 248–249].

Professor Su Beihai proves that Wusun society by nature is a slavery society and seeks to define its political, military structures, power hierarchy and the system of ranks. According to him, the Wusun military system is in fact a nationwide military system. There were one hundred eighty-eight thousand eight hundred troops in the Wusun society with one hundred twenty thousand families. On average, it makes 1.5 people per family. Wusun state, which had such a perfect hierarchy and military system, and the so-called Kunmo (Kúnbiy which means the Ruler of the Sun in Kazakh language), must find a decent place in the Kazakh history.

**Another novelty in the book is that along with the Saka, the Yuezhi, Wusun, Kangju, the fundamental ethnos, which completed the Kazakh ethnos, Yuebans, which ones had joined Wusuns and was assimilated by them, Huns, as well as Ephtalits, which once ruled Kangju and Alans history was studied, their place and role in the Kazakh ethnogenesis and the development of statehood are analyzed.**

It is especially reasonable to note that the author considers the ancient Kazakh tribes **Ten Bullet tribes** of the Western Turkic Khaganate (Five Dulu and Five Nushebi). Professor Su Beihai attributes five Nushebi from **Ten Bullet tribes** of the Western Turkic Khaganate to Kangju, and five Dulu (dulats) to Wusun. In our opinion, the establishment of the Western Turkic Khaganate 'in the Wusun ancient land' as a state is of great historical significance. In the study of Wang Zhilai they were the nomadic pasture lands of the Turkic tribes. And all the so-called 'cities and states in the western region', inhabiting the grasslands in Central Asia and the southern Tian Shan, were ruled by western Turks [8, p. 207]. In the chapter 'Early Era' of his book *History of Central Asian* Wang Zhilai characterizes in detail the Western Turkic Khaganate's state structure, power system and law-order, language and foreign relations. In short, he describes it as a country of advanced development of its time. Unfortunately, the history of the Western Turkic Khaganate also takes in five volumes in *History of Kazakhstan* only three pages. There, the history of the Khaganate is superficial, too. Often, the economic situation is discussed. By saying: 'There is a lack of agricultural land in the condition that there are few techniques and ground watering, and there are plenty of lands for pastureland', showing the state of agriculture of the state as helpless as possible [16, p. 301]. In fact, the Western Turkic Khaganate was not such a weak state. Through its political, economic, and military capabilities, it imposed its power on the Sassanid Iran and Byzantium, Tang Empire in the east. The Turks, who had access to the west and the east, sought to use all the advantages of the world for their country. They made themselves higher than any other country. In the ancient Turkic monuments: 'K-Tängri was on the top, a human being among the when below the earth was formed. Over the sons of human beings, my grandfather Bumin-khagan and Istemi khagan became a king. He established the Turkic people, the country, the throne (the Government), and ... ruled all the people around' [17, p. 173].

**The author of the book calls the Turkic Khaganate, which existed from the late seventh century to the middle of the eighth century, the first Khaganate, which for the first time united Kazakh steppes, the first Kazakh Khaganate (state).** The author then speaks about the Karluk and **Karluk Khaganate**. He looks for the origins of Karluks in the story of 'The history of Northern Khanates' and 'The Tele' in *The Book of Sui* and refers them to the Tele. He shows that Altai, Tarbagatay, Barlyk, Dzungar Alatau and Ili are as their main lands and the Karluk Khaganate was a new Khaganate created by Kazakhs after the Turkic Khaganate.

The author's opinion about the Karakhan state and its constituent ethnos also deserves attention. According to the author, the founders of Karakhan state were ancient Uighurs (Oghuz). But some scholars [8, p. 55] consider it to be built by Yagmas and Karluks. Here, it is impossible to put the ancient Uighurs in absolutely the same order as today's Uighurs. The ancient Uighurs is the name of the newly formed Khaganate in the place of the Turkic Khaganate, i.e. political term. Therefore, all Turks and Oghuz tribes, who are engaged in nomadic farming, were called Uighurs. Su Beihai writes that Orkhon Uighurs before they moved to Central Asia, the Oghuz lived here, and the Oghuz made a part not just of ethnic Turkmens, but also ethnic Kazakhs and ethnic Uzbeks and in fact the Uighur ethnic group consisted of Toquz-Oghuzs (Nine Oghuzs or Nine Clans) and On-Oghuzs (Ten Oghuzs or Ten Clans) [10, p. 257]. In any case, the Karakhan state was a common country of different ethnic groups living in the Kazakh land.

After the Kara Khan state, the Khitan state came to the historic stage of Central Asia. In the history of China, the Kidany state, the so-called The Xianbei built by Khitans, is called the Liao Kingdom in the history of China. This country's history consists of two stages, namely, the past and the next. At the earliest stage, they founded a state in the north of China, later they were demolished by the Jurjits (ancestors of the Manchus) and moved to the west and settled in the Shu and Talas region. Previously, they crossed Orkhon and Otuken regions, crossed the river Enessey, and then returned again across Altai along Tarbagatay and Zhongarian Alatau to Zhetysu. Rashid ad-Din [18] writes about Black Khitans going to Yenissei Kyrgyz and Atâ-Malek Juvayni writes how they were beaten by Kyrgyz and turned back [19]. Not Chinese by origin, but having ruling elites under the influence of Chinese culture, Black Khitans after their settling along Shu played a significant role in the political life of Kazakhstan and Central Asia. Their state structure, power system, economic and cultural advantages influenced the local Turkic peoples and accelerated the process of ethnogenesis and enriched the content of statehood traditions in the Kazakh land. They also gradually became Turks. Prof. Su Beihai considers the history of Western Liao from this point of view.

In Central Asia and Kazakhstan, when the Black Khitans revived, Middle Ages states of strong tribes appeared on the original land of Turkic tribes in Central Mongolia in the north of the Kazakh steppes, which then formed the Kazakh population. Prof. Su Beihai, extensively reviewing the chronicle of China and other countries and nomadic peoples, devoted a great deal of attention to the history of Kerey (in the history of Kazakhstan — Kereit), Naiman, Merkit, Karluk, Kipchak, Kangju, Asu, Uak ethnos one by one revising such a rich history.

The subsequent history of **the Golden Horde, the White Horde (the Ak Horde) and the Siberian Khanate** is well-known in the domestic historiography. However, it is time to reconsider the Khanate of Sibir. According to the author, the Siberian Khanate was formed by Kazakh tribes, which made Irtysh their centre after the collapse of the White Horde in 1428. When the author speaks of **Abulkhair Ulus**, he strongly opposes calling it the Uzbek Khanate. He states that the peoples making Shagatai Khanate are mainly Kazakh Uly Zhuz tribes, all under the common name Dulat played a key role in the political life of the Khanate, and even influenced political decisions. Thus, the history of the eastern part of Chagatai Khanate known later as Moghulistan has never been left out of the history of the Kazakh people. The Kazakh Khanate was established by Janibek and Kerey along the Shu shores in 1465 (in 1456 by the author), Moghulistan's support at the time was not a casual

decision. In this work is widely studied how Shagatai Khanate was taken under the control of Kazakh Dulat tribe, as well as the distinctive status given Dulat by Chagatai khans, and Dulat's influence in the south of Tian Shan.

In the manuscript of the writer a special place is given to the history of the Kazakh Khanate in the fifteenth–nineteenth centuries. There are widely considered the issues such as the formation and development of the Kazakh Khanate, the Dzungar invasion, the expansion of the Qing and Russian Empires to the Kazakh land, getting of the Kazakh land into the fight zone of two empires, the collapse of the Kazakh Khanate and border negotiations between Russia and Qing, division and settlement of Kazakhs in two lands, formation of Kazakh irritants in China and so on.

The particular importance of this work is part 4 (Volume IV), the Man-Qing Empire and the history of Kazakhs under China after **the border agreement of 1864**, the formation and development of Kazakhs of that time, their socio-political status and culture are described and they are worth studying.

**Though this work completes Kazakh history, some parts not reflecting historic reality and the historiographical principle should be discussed.**

Whatever we say, the author wrote this work in the light of the Chinese historiographical principle. Therefore, it is impossible to expect the work to show Kazakhs from the very point where the fairness of the Kazakh history is justified. Moreover, no doubt, the work was influenced by the ideological climate in which the author lived. Besides, since the late 1980s, the works on the history of minorities in China have been subjected to severe censorship. However, all this cannot justify some mistakes made because of the author's personal views. Some errors and points in the book, which deserve particular attention, can be grouped as follows:

**The term 'Western Region': it is called Xiyu (西域) in Chinese, the term is used originally to describe the Western Historiography and it has both historical-geographical and political significance.** It is first mentioned in the Chinese book called *Yan Tielun* (盐铁论). It has a broad and a narrow meaning. In its broader sense, 'Western Region', implies the central and western parts of Asia, the Indian Peninsula, north Africa and the eastern Europe, while in the restricted sense, it points to modern Xinjiang in the western Chinese fortress. But due to the military-administrative influence of the Chinese central authority at each stage, its meaning was also different. For example, during the Han, Tang Empire, the Chinese conception of 'Western Region' covered south and north of the Tian Shan, and some parts of Central Asia. As Chinese historians regarded the great Mongolian Empire, built by Genghis Khan as a part of the history of China, they called all places, reached by Mongolian horses as the 'Western Region'. That's why North Africa and the eastern Europe are also covered by this term. Later, all the regions reached by Man-Qing horse-riders were called the 'Western Region' [20]. Thus, we see that the name 'Western Region' is a distinctive term of the Chinese historiography, whose primary intention was imperial extension. This term is often used in Professor Su Beihai's work.

**The link between Wusuns and Han dynasty.** The author [10, p. 109] considers Wusuns to be the most reliable ally of the Han kingdom, and then characterizes this alliance as a subordinate relationship. Thus, he claims that the territory belonging to the Wusun state had originally belonged to China, and 'Wusuns contributed to the unity of the Han Empire'. Indeed, the Han Empire policy towards Central Asia was to get rid of

Huns influence on these lands, turn them into their own lands, and control the Silk Road, which connected east and west. That is why René Grousset [21] wrote: ‘The liberation of western Huns and the removal of eastern Huns from Tarim strengthened the dominion of the Chinese Empire in the Central Asia.’ To achieve this goal, the Han dynasty gave Wusuns their daughters. This can be seen from the later matchmaking history of the Turkic Khanate and the Zhou, Sui Dynasty or Tibetan and Tang Dynasty. Moreover, such historic sources, like *Book of Han: Reports of the Western Regions*, describe the relations between Wusun ethnos and Han dynasty in a specific language as a normal international communication of that time [11, p. 626–687]. Wusuns are described there as an independent nation, with its own military and hierarchical system, bordering with the Han dynasty, giving one thousand horses as a gift for the Chinese princess, and holding her as a right-hand lady rather than a left one. Because the heart is placed in the left side of a person, it is regarded as the main place. So the left-hand lady is the close lady to the Kunbiy (Kunmo). It demonstrates what importance Wusuns gave to the Huns and put the Han dynasty in the second place. Thus, the ‘scientific evidence’ of Chinese historians, who exaggerated the relations between Wusun ethnos and the Han dynasty, to be regarded as a kind of ‘dictatorship and subordination’, can never stand.

**The issue of Hun.** When it comes to the history of the Wusun state, the issue of Huns is a necessary part. China’s long-standing policy like ‘befriending with those far away and oppose one’s neighbors’, ‘defeating enemies by means of enemies’ was one of the main principles of the strategy against Huns. In order to take control over the Silk Road, leading from the Hexi corridor through Central Asia to the West and avoid the threat from the north, the central government of the Han Empire established a policy of alliance with Wusuns against Huns. Therefore, according to the Chinese sources, the Huns are not mentioned in a positive way as opponents. By the middle of the first century of our era, the Hun Empire’s power in northern China was abolished [22]. Professor Su Beihai writes about the Wusun state, describes acts of northern Huns in Central Asia as a destructive external force and shows them as a hindrance to China too.

**Links between ancient Turks and Kazakh.** In the second chapter of the book, analyzing myths about the Kazakh origin, the author Sh. Kudayberdiuly [23] regards the view linking the emergence of the term Kazakh with ancient Turks, and tells the legend, in which Kazakhs historically were under the Turkic people, and that one part of Turks joined Kazakhs, explaining in this way why mistakenly some people call Kazakhs as Turks [10, p. 27]. It is a hand-made concept that Chinese historians thought of for the denial of the historical roots of Turkic peoples. The Chinese authorities also want him to say it in this way. It is known that Kazakh is of Turkic origin and that it was formed on an ancient Turk basis as a nation, and it has been scientifically proven and numerous works have been published on it [10, p. 189].

The author further developed this view: ten Western Turkic Ten Bullet tribes (On oq taipacy in Kazakh) were not of Turkic origin but Kazakhs and only their tribal leaders were Turkic nobles. ‘Then, in the *Tang Book* he calls the Dulu (Dulat), Nushebi, Kesa tribes ‘one Western Turkic tribe’ or ‘other Turks of Western Turkic tribe’. In fact, they are not Turkic, but Kazakh’ he says [35].

We do not agree with such opinions of the author. If we take into consideration that scientists in the whole world unanimously acknowledge that the Kazakh people are linguistic, spiritual and genetic continuation of ancient Turks, and still remain as

a single nation in the same region where the Western Turkic Khaganate was created, the author's 'novelty' of the Kazakh and the ancient Turks as two different ethnoses cannot withstand. The book *A Brief History of Kazakh*, published in China, also does not exclude the connection of Kazakhs with ancient Turks; on the contrary, it says that the ancient tribes of the Kazakh people have grown up under the ruling of the Western Turkic Khaganate [25]. Only one example from the book titled *Taipin Huangyuzhi*, which says 'Turks, consuming koumiss made of horse milk, sing songs and compete with each other (aitys) after drinking it' [26], indicates that the Turks and Kazakhs have common traditions and culture.

**Not mentioning Turkic history.** If in the era of Qin, Han dynasty, the main problems for China were Huns, while Turks became the problem for the rulers of Sui and Tang dynasty. With the beginning of the Old Turkic Age, the empires of the Early Middle Ages, such as Byzantium and Iran in the Western and Central Asia, China in Western Asia, lost their dominant hegemony in their respective regions [27]. Today, more than forty Turkic-speaking countries and peoples around the world are searching for the origins of their own history in ancient Turkic Khaganate. 'Even at that time the consciousness of the nation and the state reached a high ideological level. China in its own history also grew to an imperial level at that time. That is why the conflict of interest with the Turkic Khanate was exacerbated' [28]. Thus, starting from the beginning of history, searching for the roots of today's Turkic peoples from the Turkic-Oghuz era can be contrary to the internal and external interests of some neighboring countries with Kazakhstan. Therefore, they are interested in minimizing the ancient Turkic history in terms of time and space and content. So it is not surprising to see similar trends in Professor Su Beihai's work.

**The concept of 'kingdom' and 'empire'.** Prof. Su Beihai renders the fourth paragraph of the VI chapter of this work as 'Kazakh tribes under the dominance of the Tang kingdom'. However, the colonization of the Turkic Khaganate by the Tang Empire lasted only for fifty years (630–681) (Kultegin monument, eastern facade, line eight: Tabgash kagan obeyed, served for fifty years) [29]. For this reason, the period among 630–751, when the ambition of the Tang dynasty to increase its lands grew and for some time it reached Central Asia and occupied the lands of the Western Turkic Khaganate, then the Tang state of that period should be called a 'empire' not a 'kingdom'.

**Turgesh issue.** Turgesh Khaganate originated from the Turkic Khaganate itself. Even if Turgesh is of the Turkic origin and is believed to be the strongest among Ten Bullet tribes, five Dulu (Dulat) tribes, Su Beihai says it is not a Turkic, but a Kazakh tribe. So, he divides Turks and Kazakhs again. Here, the scientist's mistake is that he understands Turkic as Ashina tribe and explains it in this way to the public. 'The ancient Kazakh tribes under the ruling of the Western Turkic Khaganate, opposed the Ashina aristocratic hardships. Among them, Turgesh tribe was the strongest' [10, p. 201], he says. In this case, Kazakhs, for whom the Turkic Khaganate was the dominant power from outside, are believed not to recognize historically the authority of the Turkic Khaganate, and the Turgesh had barely got their independence from them. This corresponds to the logic of Chinese historiography. In fact, the independence of the Turgesh people started with Ashina aristocracy, which gave up to Tang oppressing governors and put Ten Bullet tribes under their colonial oppression. This is exactly what Kultegin, Bilge Kagan monuments tell us about that time: 'Because of the deceitfulness of the Beks

*and people, because of the belief into the Tabgash people, and brothers became enemies, because of the lack of unanimity among Beks and people, Turkic people destroyed their land by means of force. They destroyed the Khaganate'* [17, p. 173]. This time again, Su Beihai cultivated Turgesh, making the Turks outsiders in the history of Central Asia. And Turgesh Khaganate was completely independent from the Tang dynasty political power, which was formed throughout the Ili and whole Zhetysu, Shu and Talas regions. Its relationship with the Tang dynasty was not to seek oppression but to maintain its influence through external forces. As for the controversy of the Turgesh and Ashina dynasty, it is a contradiction in the Turkic Khaganate itself.

**Karluks on the side of Arabs.** The author describes Karluks as Tang ally, leading the same policy, and explains their joining Arab army at the time of the 751 Talas war by the failure of the Empire's systematic policy of minority nations. In fact, the Karluks' departure from the Tang Empire was the consequence of the violence of the empire's military commander in Central Asia, Gao Xianzhi, to the indigenous peoples. Even Chinese sources say that Gao Xianzhi had been severely destroying and robbing the local populatio.

**Ten centuries of silence.** People who know Chinese history know well that from the middle of the eighth century of our era to the middle of the eighteenth century the Chinese did not show themselves in Central Asia. That is why, in this work, when the main events of the Kazakh history are repeatedly described, the idea of the centrist idea of Professor Su Beihai is slowing down itself. Because the Kazakh Steppe was partially or completely under the control of the Karakhan at that time, Black Kidani, Kimak, Kipchak, Naiman, Kerey, Kangju and Asu tribes, and then under the leadership of the sons of Chengys Khan, Jochi and Shagatai, Ogedei. Therefore, no stranger put a foot to the Kazakh land. Then the history of the Golden Horde, the White Horde, the Abulkhair Khanate and the Moghulistan pave the way. At that time, Oirat state appeared between China and the Kazakh Khanate.

The first Oyrat Ambassador to the Kazakh land met with Amir Temur in the place of Aktas in 1397 [30]. According to T. I. Sultanov's writings, the Oirat army participated in the wars of the White Horde rulers in Central Asia at that time [31]. After the death of the first king of the Ming Dynasty Zhu Yuanzhang (1399), the Ming rulers wanted to use the Oirats to resolve their domestic fight for power and in the fight against the eastern Mongols [32, p. 42]. At the beginning of the fifteenth century, the Ming dynasty was deeply concerned by the expansion of the Temur state to the east. Shakhruh and Yongle (Zhu Di), who ruled after Temur and Zhu Yuanzhang, established a strong relationship with the king and repeatedly sent ambassadors. In 1419, Giyas-ad-Din Nakkash, who went on an official visit to Beijing on behalf of Shahruh, wrote a great deal of details in his diary. Later V. V. Bartold [33] and A. Buriev [34] devoted their research to these facts. The Chinese Ambassador Chen Cheng (陈诚), who visited Herat, the capital of Shahruh, and other places in Central Asia from 1413–1415, told about Central Asia in his works 'Western Region Countries' (西域番国志) and the 'Travel Memories from the West Region' (西域行程记) [35, p. 437].

Oirats participated in the war against Kazakh Abulkhair and Shaibani dynasty in 1456. According to V. V. Belyaminov-Zernov, in the period from the Khans Essenbuga and Rashid Khan of the Mogolistan (Moghulistan), Oirats and Kazakhs were always in good neighborly relations [35, p. 437]. I. Y. Zlatkin also argues that Kazakhs and Oirats had for

centuries lived peacefully and as good neighbors [36]. But this good neighborhood was only temporary. The British merchant and traveler A. Jenkinson, who was supposed to go through Central Asia to China in 1557, wrote that he was unable to accomplish his mission because of the war between Kazakhs and Oirats. According to him, it was a war for Tashkent [37]. The wars that began in this period have not stopped until the middle of the eighteenth century. As a result, Oirats were preserved as a big barrier between the Ming Kingdom and the Kazakh Khanate. That is why Chinese scientists cannot say anything about the Chinese factor in the Kazakh history of that time.

**The theory of Kazakh 'subordination to Qing Kingdom'.** Like other Chinese historians, Su Beihai mentions in chapter II of Volume III of his study that 'Abylai khan's Kazakhs obeyed the Qing kingdom'. As a proof of it he shows a Chinese-language document [38, p. 275–283], titled 'Abylai's Letter to the king' (阿布賚表文), which was written in September 1757. That is why the Dr. of historical sciences B. Ezhenhanuly reading in the original manuscripts about the Kazakh-Chinese relations of the eighteenth century writes: 'Most of the documents based on Chinese language books are not the first hand sources, they were translated from the Manchu-language in the documents of Qing Kingdom And these second hand sources, we have just recently reached them: since the beginning of the twenty first century historical archive documents that have been left under dust for more than 300 years have been published one after the other. It gives us a lot of opportunities to deepen our understanding of the Kazakh history, including the history of the Kazakh-Chinese relations in the eighteenth–nineteenth centuries.'

Hence, the Chinese-language data on the Kazakh-Chinese relations emerged from Manchu sources. The Chinese version is more enriched than the original Manchu version, it has been improved in content and has been subjected to views of Chinese historians B. Ezhenhanuly clarifies that because of the different purpose of writing various positions of the authors, and the ability of those authors to identify historical material, the historical data contained therein are not always complete and objective [32, p. 27]. Consequently, the content of the Chinese language data was always influenced by the authors' view and attitude. In the first historical archive of China, B. Ezhenhanuly found Totyn-Mongolian versions and two other Manchu versions of Abylai Khan's letter to Qianglong. Comparing the Chinese version of this letter to Emperor and the newly discovered Totyn-Mongolian and Manchu versions, the scientist noted that this letter of Abylai khan had been edited, modified, and supplemented by the secretaries of the palace of the Qing Dynasty according to their own interests [38, p. 279–288]. Moreover, since all these versions have been written by historians and secretaries of the Qing Kingdom, it is natural that there is an imperial ideology, intolerance, or deliberate distortion. According to B. Ezhenkhanuly, all the palace workers in the Manchu-Qing horde at that time served the Qing ideology. That is why, when they wrote about Kazakhs, they had a strong sense of superiority [39]. In addition, the Kazakh version of Ablai Khan's letter has not been found yet. Thus, opinions of Su Beihai and other Chinese historians on the subordination of some Kazakhs to the Qing Empire might be based on the fictional 'data' and not on a historical basis.

**The issue of '440 thousand square kilometers occupied by Russia'.** Prof. Su Beihai, as well as his predecessors and followers, also dwells on the history of 'Pertinent to China' 440 thousand square kilometers of land in the east and south of the Balkhash Lake occupied by Russia. This is a concept that Chinese historians have been continuously arguing, but never accepted by the international community. It is not true.

The US scholar Lattimore [40] writes on the Chinese colonization in Central Asia: ‘The history of the Chinese in Central Asia is the history of imperial aggression. The Chinese did not come to develop this place. ... In fact, their stable dominance in the region is only 425 years from the whole 2000 years. This period can also be divided into several stages. China’s current domination in Xinjiang relates to its fifth period.’ In our opinion, this time frame is too extensive. In fact, the period is much less and the dominance was not permanent. As for the Manchu-Qing Empire, it is not China. In his work Su Beihai condemns the Russian colonialism on the Kazakh land, while the colonial policy of the Manchu-Qing’s empire is justified. He wants to show all the lands touched by their feet as ‘Historic Chinese lands’.

## Conclusion

To conclude, having read Su Beihai’s works, we have reviewed Chinese historians’ points of view at the Kazakh history, and have clarified the points to negate. At the same time, we feel the need for a new look, methodology and deeper vision in Kazakh history. Thus, the search of Chinese scientists, such as Su Beihai, encourages us to deepen research in this area. Especially the scientists studying the history of Kazakhstan, need to think on how to write history, where to begin it, what should be the chronological framework and territorial space, should it be ‘Kazakh history’ or ‘History of Kazakhstan’.

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### Рукопись китайского ученого Су Бэйхая об истории казахского народа в Центральной Азии: исторический и источниковедческий анализ\*

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Проведен научный анализ исследовательского труда китайского ученого Су Бэйхая об истории казахского народа, являющегося одним из древнейших на евразийском пространстве. Важнейшее достоинство рукописи — исследование казахской истории с ранних времен до наших дней, в котором отражены взгляды китайских ученых на историю Казахстана. Научный анализ Су Бэйхая написан в конце 1980-х годов в Китае. Казахстан тогда еще не был независимой страной. Су Бэйхай основывался на различных источниках и исследовательских работах, материалах своей экспедиции в Казахстан и доказал конкретными фактами, что казахский народ, живущий в своих современных поселениях, имеет 2500-летнюю историю. Несмотря на то что труд был написан в соответствии с принципами коммунистической историографии Китая, китайская цензура помешала его публикации. Сегодня казахстанские ученые приближаются к завершающему этапу изучения и перевода этой рукописи. Поэтому в статье сначала анализируются наиболее важные и инновационные аспекты этой работы для истории Казахстана: внимание акцентируется на этапах казахской истории, традиции государственности, экономике и культуре. В исследовании китайского ученого рассмотрены древний сакский период казахской истории, современный Южный Казахстан, возникновение Даюэчжи и государств уйсун в Семиречье, государство Канглы, Западно-

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тюркский каганат и тюркская степь, объединение Кара-хана и Кара-кидана (Западный Ляо), развитие традиций государственности в казахских степях, нашествие Чингисхана в Центральную Азию и казахские степи, русская колонизация, расселение казахов в России и империя Ман-Цинь. Помимо позитивных оценок исследования китайского ученого, в статье содержатся критические отзывы по отношению к некоторым китаецентристским взглядам ученого.

*Ключевые слова:* казахская история, Су Бэйхай, казахский этногенез, Казахское ханство, русский колониализм.

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