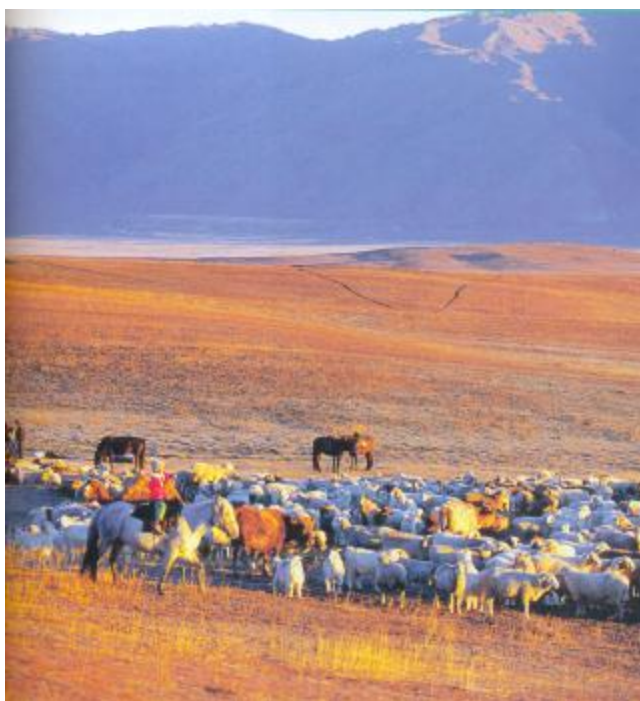


The Kazak Ethnic Group

The Kazak people worship and cherish white swan. It was said that in the ancient times a chieftain named Kalaqiahader was beloved by the people. He was wounded in a war and was rescued by a white swan. The white swan then turned into a beautiful maiden and married the man. And they gave birth to a boy, who was named Kazak, meaning white swan. The Kazak people take white swan as origin of beauty and the symbol of beauty, pure love and mother.



The population and the environment



The Kazak ethnic group with a population of 1,250,458, mainly lives in the Yili Kazak autonomous Prefecture, Barkol Kazak Autonomous County and Mulei Kazak Autonomous County in the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. Some are also located in the Aksay Kazak Autonomous County in Gansu Province and the Haixi Mongolian and Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Qinghai Province.

Most Kazak people live in mountain areas, valleys and basins. Yili region, their major nomadic area, has Tianshan Mountain and Zhun'ge'er basin, Yili River, Wulungu River and E'erqisi River. The Beautiful Kanasi Lake like a shining pearl in the grassland. Yili is in the center of Asian-Europe Eurasia with the average rainfall of 200-300

millimeters. The average year rainfall is low, but is rich in abundance natural resources. The Southern Tianshan grassland and the Southern Slope of Altaic Mountain are among the five pastures of China.

The ethnic origin

The Kazak ethnic origins are complex. Usually it is said that the Kazaks are the descendants of the combination of ancient Wusun, Kangju, Yancai tribes and Saizhong, Dayueshi tribes in Central Asia grassland, and Hun, Xianbei, Rouran, turks, Tiele, Qidan and Mongolian. It became an ethnic group under the regime of Kazak in the end of 15th century.

In 1755, Kazak King Abuji contacted with generals of the Qing Dynasty and submitted to the Qing Empire. Then the kazaks developed more relations with people of the inland and became a member of Chinese Nation.

The ethnic appellation, the language and the script

The name Kazak, which the Kazak people call themselves, first appeared in 15th century and

means :white swan” or “freeman”.

They have their own language, which belongs to the Turkic branch of the Altaic language family. They also used the languages of Turks, Uygurs and Chahetais. In the early 20th Century they had a written language based on the Arabic alphabet, which is still in use, but a new Latinized written form was evolved after the founding of the People’s Republic of China.

The resident characteristics-the yurts

About 2000 years ago in the West Han Dynasty, Xijun princes who married Wusun described the residences in Central asia as “Qionglu is the room and Xini is the walls”. Here Qionglu means yurts, the traditional residence of the Kazaks. In spring, summer and autumn, they live in collapsible round yurts and in winter build flat-roofed earthen huts in the pastures (also called “Dongwozij”).

They use red willow to make bars and roof, and then pave Jiji grasses on the bars and spread felt on the roof. There is skylight in the roof, so it is well ventilated. There are patterns of red or other colors on the roof and the door usually opens to the east. Anticlockwise it is respectively the kitchen, the main bedroom, guest room and the bedroom of sons and daughter in law. And the houses of those settled kazaks are similar with those of other people.

The costume characteristics-the takeya hat and the dress

Costume of the Kazaks bears distinctive characteristics of grassland life. They used to wear garments make of animal skins, and now cotton and coarse cotton cloth are very common. Men usually dress in black and brown. In summer, they often wear white fabric shirts with high collars and embroidered edges, with white felt hat. They also wear waistcoats with the shirt and with a short jacket. In winter they usually wear “Tumake” or “Kulapare” hat and leather clothing and trousers with a cow skin belt at the waist and a sword hanging at the right side. In order to ride, the trousers are usually loose. Their shoes are special. They put on soft shoes first and them the outer shoes, which can prevent the rain and snow, so when they enter into the house, they can just remove the outer shoes.



The Kazak women love to wear dress with embroidered sleeves and sleeveless jacket with beautiful patterns outside. Unmarried girls wear various kinds of hats, such as, Takaya, which is made of colorful silks, and the otter had “Bie’erke”. The brides usually wear “Jielieke” made of red silk. In summer, middle-aged women wear short sleeve jacket, and leather coat in winter.

The dietetic habits-the fumigated horse intestine and the horse milk wine

The Kazaks’ staple food consist of meat, mile, tea and wheat flour. Meat includes meat eaten with their fingers, fumigated horse intestine and roasted sheep. Horse milk wine is absolutely necessary drinking in parties and feasts. The Kazaks love to drink tea and they are particular about mil tea, which is

indispensable when they serve guests and in daily meals.

The wheat flour food is not as much as milk and meat, but it keeps their own traditions. For example, their Nang (a kind of cake), which is cooked with two pans, is different from those of Uygur. To cook "Bao'ershake", they first mix milk, salt water and wheat, and then cut the bread rhombus and fry it. Fried wheat, which is to peel off the shells of wheat first, fry it with mutton oil and crushed it to powder and then mixed with tea, is another table delicious. The Kazak people believe in Islam, so they have the same taboo as other Moslems.

The festival customs-the Nawuruz festival and the holding a sheep in the mouth and girl-running-after-boy game



The Nawuruz festival is the traditional festival of the Kazak ancestors, before they believe in Islam. In the first month of the lunar calendar, it is a grand occasion to say good-bye to the old, usher in the new. Like the Spring Festival of the Hans, they dress up and pay New Year's calls on each other and have Nawuruz meal and sing Nawuruz song to welcome the New Year. The tune of Nawuruz song is fixed, but the lyrics can be impromptu. When they have the festival meal, every family will present the head of the sheep to the elder, who will pray for peace and a better year in stockbreeding.

They also celebrate the Corban Festival, Almsgiving festival and Kaizhai festival, as do other ethnic groups of Islamic faith. During Almsgiving Festival, the Kazaks gather in the mosques nearby to clean their bodies and greet each other. The Corban Festival is very also alive. They will have the game of holding a sheep in the mouth and girl-running-after-boy game. A-keng singing and performing is also an important content during the holidays.

The religion-Islam

The Kazak people believe in Islam. The creed and religious rules are the same as other ethnic groups of Islamic faith, on the other hand, they develop their own characteristics, for example, and they do not have religious conflicts among different schools. Because they like a herding life, so expect in the agricultural areas, usually there are no mosque in herding areas. So every family will do religious serves indoors or in weald.