

ALLA BELYAKINA

THE HUMAN BEING AS A LEGEND

(translated by Dina Mukhamedkhan)

USA. Missoula
2005 - 2006

Kayum Mukhamedkhanov became a legend in his lifetime, a dignified citizen of Kazakhstan and a profound scholar whose research is held in highest regard today in Kazakhstan. During the political repression of the intelligentsia in the 1950-s my father and our family suffered severely. He was condemned and imprisoned for the research on the “Abai’s school of followers” that he implemented under the supervision of his teacher Mukhtar Auezov.

Kayum Mukhamedkhanov upheld as a supreme life value a Dignity of every human being, high moral principles, humane attitude that he himself demonstrated in everything he did: in dealing with people, in writing, in research, in revealing many names from the oblivion, in teaching, in public meetings.

Recently his colleagues, followers, friends have written a book of reminiscences about this amazing person. A young and talented literary critic and a journalist Alla Belyakina from Kayum’s hometown Semipalatinsk contributed to this book with her breath taking writing on Kayum. She backed up her writing with the original historical and the archives’ materials and her interviews.

I am pleased to bring to your attention this translation – a part from that book.

I consider it to be of utmost importance and value to present to your attention this work: we really need cases and examples of human values and citizenship.

I would like to express my great appreciation and gratitude to my dear friend Kimberly Crook for her generous help in making the English translation more idiomatic and somewhat clearer.

You can also read some information about Kayum Mukhamedkhanov at the website dedicated to him:

www.kayum.freenet.kz

Please write if you have any comments to the following e-mail addresses of Dina Mukhamedkhan and Kimberly Crook:

dmukhamedkhan@yahoo.com

kimsopin@yahoo.com

Dina Mukhamedkhan, PhD in adult education
Fulbright Research Scholar
at the University of Montana 2005/2006 academic year

May 2006

© Dina Mukhamedkhan

“Live honestly and always remain human beings”

Kayum Mukhamedkhanov

My homeland, the golden cradle
From your nest I flew up
Until my eyes close forever
How could I live without you?
The land of Semey, take me back
In your small piece of land I will lie free

Kayum Mukhamedkhanov.1952. Karlag

HARMONY OF LYRICS AND PHYSICS

Abai is called the sun of Kazakh poetry. But there is also the moon on the starlit horizon which reflects the sunlight in search of the way in darkness of uncertainty. These were Kayum Mukhamedkhanov's profound, scholarly, and accurate works on Abai that became a light in the darkness of ignorance.

Abai was the first among poets. Kayum was the first among scholars who researched Abai. Misunderstanding and solitude was the retribution for Abai for his greatness. Deprivation of freedom and prison's tortures was the retribution for Kayum's telling the truth about Abai.

Abai passed away June 23,1904. One hundred years and seven days after Abai's death on June 30, 2004 Kayum Mukhamedkhanov passed away. But even in death there is a moment of rebirth. That is probably why the sorrow funeral repast date which counted out 40 days of Kayum's death coincided with August 10 which is Abai's birthday in the traditional calendar.

But all this is lyrics. Emotional. Exalted. Delighted. Possibly subjective. Definitely not claiming ultimate truth. Lyrics though being backed up by the realistic foundations. This is reflected in mere enumeration of the many accomplishments, merits and titles of Kayum Mukhamedkhanov. The author of the first Anthem of Kazakhstan and the founder of scholarly research on Abai, an educator and a writer, a poet and a translator, a member of the Writers' Union of the USSR and the founder of the Abai's museum, Laureate of the State Award of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Golden Medal of the International Academy of Abai (London), the first Laureate of the International Abai Award of the Writers' Union of Kazakhstan and the first recipient of the Medal of the International literary award “Alash”, a professor, an exemplary worker in education of the USSR and Kazakhstan; honored citizen of the town of Semipalatinsk, Ayagoz, Jana-Semey and Abai regions of the Eastern Kazakhstan, the author of more than 500 research publications, ... - and all this are the stages of life of a single person!

Furthermore, the abundance of the creative flights and the tragic clashes in Kayum Mukhamedkhanov's life would be more than enough for many lives. He became a legend in his own lifetime. However, this legend is not built on myth. By arming

ourselves with the main principles of his work - facts, meticulous research supported with documentation, we invite you to travel into his amazing world, a world where poetry is so eloquently combined with fastidiously accurate research and the biography becomes legend.

Chapter one

EXILED FROM THE WHITE YURT

If you put a white rose petal into a dirty vessel it will soon wrinkle and begin to stink, - this is what the Oriental wisdom says. As a little boy Kayum was protected against this fate. Gifted by heavens with pure soul and many talents he from early childhood turned out to be in such a favorable atmosphere where there was by definition no space for mediocre life and greedy goals. Innate gifts and special family atmosphere of nobility, high inner spirituality and love became that bowstring which propelled the arrow of Mukhamedkhanov's fate to higher and higher altitudes even against great odd and terrible setbacks.

Mukhamedkhan Seitkulov was a vivid representative of the spiritual elite of the Kazakh people in the late 19-th – beginning of the 20-th century. Neither his profound financial stability and well being nor the chance of relaxing on the laurels of universal respect affected his inner nobility, aspiration for knowledge and worship of the arts. This is why everyone in his house felt well, including his second child and the first son in the family - Kayum. The little boy remembered that time forever. The magnificent house was located next to Tinybai mosque in the now Jana-Semei district of Semipalatinsk. Before the revolution this part of Semipalatinsk was called “Zarechnaya slobodka” (a place beyond the river line). From 1917 until 1930 this part of the town was named “Alash”. As father wished the house was designed and decorated by the Austrian craftsmen. Stucco moulding of apples and other fruit, oil paints used for decoration, elegant furniture of red wood, - this all created an atmosphere of warmth and comfort. The richest library in the whole town occupied a big hall. It contained all world classics. The library attracted many interesting people to Seitkulov's house. One could find here masterpieces of the Russian, European and Oriental literature; the first publication of Abai's poems, poetry of Shakarim, the works of Baitursunov, Dulatov, Jumabayev, Toraigirov; newspaper files of “Kazakh”, ‘Sari-Arka’, “Tarjiman” and “Dala ualayati”, magazines “Aikap’, ‘Abai’, and the “Notes of the Emperor Russian Geographical Society”, the Tatar magazine “Shura”, newspaper ‘Uakit” and many more.

Kayum's father - Mukhamedkhan Seitkulov could read Kazakh, Russian, Tatar, Arabic. He collected traditional folk poems. Mukhamedkhan Seitkulov was a generous literary patron. He was the one who funded the first issues of the magazine “Abai” which was established and edited by Aimaitov and Auezov. He also financed the newspaper “Sari-Arka”. His house was open for both the mature writers and the talented youth. He hosted heated discussions on history, culture and literature, - the past and the future of the Kazakh people. The first Kazakh theatre was born in his house. New thoughts and bright ideas were generated here. Among frequent guests to this house were Shakarim, Kokpai, Toraigirov, Baizakov, Kashaubayev, Aimaitov, Almagambet, Jumabayev,

Bukeikhanov, Turlikhanov, Tinishpayev, Dulatov, - in a word all those people whose contribution to history and culture of our motherland made golden pages in the chronicle of glory and honor of Kazakhstan.

However, such a cultural renaissance was destined not to continue. Gusts of social storms that “ruined to the root the old world” approached the Irtysh river steppes. First in 1921 the new power confiscated the house of Seitkulov, permitting the family use of only two rooms. The house was assigned to the Kazakh elementary school number 20. Home became school for little Kayum. Yes, rather coming to classes he came to his patrimonial house!

Year 1928: one more gust of the proletariat struggle with “exploiters’ class” burst on the scene. Mukhamedkhan Seitkulov was arrested along with hundreds of other including Abai’s son Michael. Seitkulov was soon released, but the authorities deprived him of all his valuables. Many years after this his son Kayum will tell his children that he saw tears in the horses’ eyes when ruthless whips forced them from their home to alien stalls. Something essential was gone forever. The blessed jailau (summer pasture time) in Koken (the ancestors’ place) with happy dreams under the arch of white yurts, the astringency of fresh kumis (horse mare’s milk) would exist only in the past. The family was forced out of the remaining two rooms of their own house. The father bought a four room house from Tinybai on the savings.

In 1928 Kayum finished the elementary school but as the son of a “bai” (rich Kazak) it was unlikely he would be permitted to continue his education. Two years later the seven year secondary school was opened in Semipalatinsk. Kayum hopelessly dreamed of entering the school. One day an old friend of Mukhamedkhan Seitkulov - Turlikhan Kasenov knocked at his family’s door.

“Mukhamedkhan-aga, the new school is opening and I have been appointed its principal. I have come to ask your advice about housing: I have no housing in town,” he said. Could you imagine that this kind noble man would ever refuse to the person whom he considered to be a relative?

“You do not need to search for the house. There is enough space for all in mine,” answered Seitkulov. Soon after that Turlikhan moved from Ayagoz to Semipalatinsk to live in Seitkulovs’ house. His first child Bolat was born here. (Bolat is the father of the famous wrestler Daulet Turlikhanov). Kayum was admitted to school. He would very often tell stories about his favorite teacher who recited many of Abai’s and Arip’s poetry and played the dombra, the Kazakh national string instrument. Kayum’s father and the teacher were his guides to the amazing world of poetry.

Again, this time in 1932 the Soviet authorities seized the family’s house. The family moved into a small house on Soldatskaya street in the center of Semipalatinsk. It was clear enough that this was not the last drop of bitterness in the family’s cup. Despite all the hardships Seitkulov did not allow any thought escaping from his native land.

After graduating from the seven year secondary school Kayum worked in different places and studied in the two year teachers’ courses, later at the Pedagogical Institute. He would take any kind of job to support his family. But even in hard times there were happy days. At the courses of teaching Kazakh language he met a beautiful, tactful, educated and wise young woman. In 1936 Farkhinur, a daughter of the mullah of the two-minaret Semipalatinsk mosque, a great granddaughter of the famous Tashkent mullahs, and Kayum were married.

...November 24, 1937 coincided with Ramadan month. Mukhamedkhan Seitkulov's family kept the fast Oaza. The prayer was read, the food was tasted before the daybreak in line with fast rules. All of a sudden clatter of horses' hoofs was heard and loud knocks at the door. Three armed persons broke into the house. They shouted to the head of the family: "Stand up. You are arrested!" Mukhamedkhan Seitkulov was seated near the cradle of the Kayum's first baby. He could not understand what was happening. He and his son were arrested. Kayum was freed the next day. As for the fate of Seitkulov the family knew nothing for a long time. Some time after the arrest they were informed in the "menacing office" that Mukhamedkhan Seitkulov was condemned as a member of the anti-Soviet Muslim clergy and that he was sent to Siberia for ten years with no right for correspondence. ("ten years with no correspondence right" meant death in the official language. This information was not known to common people).

It was not until decades later, in the 1990s that Seitkulov's descendents learned that three days after his arrest he was shot. His burial place remains unknown and furthermore, the family has no other physical momentos to remember him by, not even one picture as everything was confiscated - the library, valuables, furniture. The only "reward" for the decades of obscurity and excruciating worry was the decision of the commission on enacting the order of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR "On additional measures in restoring justice in relevance to the victims of the political repression." (April 25, 1989). The document given to the family reads that Mukhamedkhan Seitkulov is completely rehabilitated.

This took place not long ago. But then in 1937 Kayum felt very quickly what it meant to be the son of "an enemy of the nation". He was expelled from the Pedagogical Institute. Newspapers wrote about "the son of the bai who had no right to be next to decent people". Kayum had to perform physical labor to support his family as he could get not other job with the label of "outcast". He loaded coal in fire-boxes, unloaded trucks, did any work he could get. It took time to be reinstated at the Institute.

Chapter two

ASCENDING TO THE TOPS OF CREATIVITY

But all this misfortunes could not kill the creative aspirations of his young soul. Kayum Mukhamedkhanov became a poet early in his life. Some of his first verses of that time are kept. They were written first in the Latin script and then beginning in the 1940s, in Cyrillic. Those are lyrical revelations about the native land, and love; poetic stories about Kazakh batirs (warriors), poems about the cities of Moscow and Kiev.

In 1937 the publication debut of Kayum took place. The Semipalatinsk newspaper "Ekpindi" published the poem "Shattik tolgau". Kayum's poem dedicated to Jambil won the first award at the poetic contest devoted to the 75-th anniversary of Jambil's creative activity. In May of the same year he took part in celebrations devoted to the steppe poet Jambil. By the end of 30-s Mukhamedkhanov was the author of 20 published verses and two poems, as well as the author of the literary translation of the musical comedy of Gadhibekov "Arshin Mal Alan" from Azerbaijan to Kazakh language. In 1939 Kayum took part in the second congress of the Writers' Union of Kazakhstan representing the

Semipalatinsk region. In 1940 Kayum was admitted to membership in the Writers' Union of the USSR.

At the end of the 1930s Kayum's burst on the scene as a literary critic. He wrote a number of works of literary criticism on theatre performances of Auezov's play "At the border line", Musrepov's play "Kiz-Jibek", Khusainov's "Boran", Sagirov's "Er Targin" as well as the articles about the first Kazakh film "Amangeldi", about Gorky, Ostrovsky, on creative activity of Semipalatinsk poets. In 1939 the article "On the Creative Activity of the Semipalatinsk Kazakh theatre" (coauthor E.Ismailov) was published in a republican magazine "Literature and Arts".

But the most important activity that determined entire Kayum's life was the research on the founder of the written Kazakh literature Abai. This was Auezov who guided young Kayum in taking his research path.

"The name of Mukhtar is one of my earliest memories", - Kayum would recollect. One day there were preparations in our house for welcoming guests among whom there was Auezov. What could be more interesting for a child as playing dombra (*note: Kazakh two string instrument*) and accordion, reciting poems honoring the guests?

"I still remember Mukhtar and his friends' visits to my father's house in Jana-Semey. I was seven or eight at that time. Mukhtar Auezov often stayed in our house with his friends." In 1925 the first rehearsals of his plays "Enlik-Kebek" and "Karakoz" took place in our house. Later when Mukhtar Auezov studied in Teachers' Seminary of Semipalatinsk he used to spend many days in this kind and hospitable house. When Mukhtar noticed Kayum's literary giftedness, he supported the youth and called him younger brother.

When Kayum was a student of the Philology Department at the Pedagogical Institute he and Mukhtar began the titanic work on studying and preserving Abai's heritage. Kayum took Auezov's class in Kazakh literature and he became very much absorbed with the research under the supervision of his elder friend and a teacher. On Mukhtar Auezov's advice he began a research study on the creative activities of Abai's followers: Akilbai Kunanbaev, Magavya Kunanabaev, Aubakir Abaev, Arip Tanirbergenov. He also did scrupulous textological analysis of poets' works that were fast disappearing. He wrote down their creative biographies by collecting in small pieces their works and evidence of their life. This mathematically accurate work grounded on textological analysis helped to find the works and to identify which works belong to what poets to preserve them for generations. At that time Kayum made an outline for the very notion of "Literary school of Abai". Thirteen research articles on this topic were published by him when he was a student!

It was not only teacher-student relationship that was established between Auezov and Mukhamedkhanov, two researchers of the life and the creative activity of Abai, two men of literature. It was the souls' attraction that is sometimes stronger than the relations of blood. Moreover, warm relations and frequent meetings continued when Kayum had his own family. Farkhinur took care of Mukhtar Auezov, she mended his clothes, washed his beloved shirt with a collar fastening at side. It is that shirt Auezov is wearing when he and Mukhamedkhanov were pictured together. In 1940 Auezov came to Semipalatinsk on a regular basis. He stopped at Kayum's house. At the request of Auezov Kayum's mother Makipjamal and his wife Farkhinur had their pictures taken in the national dresses of the elderly and the young Kazakh women of Abai's time. Those costumes

were carefully kept in Kayum's house. Mukhtar Auezov explained that these pictures were needed for the theatre performance of his play "Abai" so that the theater producer Tokpanov would understand how Kazakh women of that time looked like. Now these unique pictures are kept in Mukhamedkhanov's house as family relics.

Mukhtar –aga (*note: "aga" means respectful address to elder men*) frequently stopped in Kayum's house when he moved out of Semipalatinsk. Here he was treated as a family member. Distances separated two researchers, the two close friends but they continued their discussions in correspondence. The correspondence between them would fill a file cabinet. Auezov was writing his epic novel about Abai at that time. He trusted his younger follower and respected his views and ideas very much. Auezov would ask Kayum to collect necessary materials, to meet Abai's contemporaries who were still alive, to clarify many archive documentary details, to check the locations of Kazakh auls (*note: villages*), and many other tasks needed for his writing.

We must note that this correspondence between Auezov and Mukhamedkhanov was confiscated by the KGB at Kayum's arrest in 1951 could have lent more light on the Auezov's creation of the epic novel "Abai's Path", a work that reflects a significant stage in literary and research life of the great writer Mukhtar Auezov. This means that a huge layer of the historical and cultural heritage disappeared. This unique correspondence was never returned to Kayum despite the many appeals to KGB and other officials.

Equally unsuccessful was his appeal on the same issue in 1981 to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Kazakhstan. Kayum Mukhamedkhanov wrote: "...When I was arrested many books from my personal library and historical documents were confiscated. Among those documents there were all letters of Mukhtar Auezov when he wrote the epic novel "Abai's Path". These letters present a special historical value as I am currently researching Auezov's biography. All my previous appeals and endeavors to receive the letters written by Auezov to me have been unsuccessful..."

By miracle a draft piece of Kayum's letter to the teacher was preserved. It reads:

"Mukhtar-aga!

I have sent to you thorough information based on the museum's archives and other sources about the life and the creative activity of Dolgopolov. Boris Aleksandrovitch (*note: he was Kayum's colleague in the museum of Abai*) went to Moscow to get acquainted with the family and the relatives of Nifont Ivanovitch Dolgopolov. They sent us his books as well as the pictures of Dolgopolov. Last year his daughter wrote reminiscences about her father that she sent to us with his pictures too. We have also received a response on our inquiry from the regional museum of the city of Gorky. There is a division of Dolgopolov in that museum. There is a street and a hospital named after Dolgopolov in Gorky. All the above said information speaks for him to live a dignified life.

We will go on in this search. In a word, we had better not to listen to the gossip about Dolgopolov. We need to defend him. As for Jirensin is concerned, he is alive and he can defend himself. He will continue sharing his own point of view...

"I nurtured the dog from a puppy
And I have known its teeth
I taught the archers the art of marksmanship

And I myself have become their target”
(Abai)

June 28, 1950
Kayum”

Today only this small piece of paper can lay foundations for rigorous research. For example, the research on Nifont Ivanovitch Dolgopolov - Abai's friend as well as a famous doctor and progressive thinker. He was sent to Semipalatinsk in prison in 1884. Dolgopolov stayed in Abai's aul from June through August 1885. When Auezov wrote the epic novel "Abai's Path" he used Dolgopolov as a prototype of the literary hero Fedyor Ivanovitch Pavlov. It can be a research about the heated discussions between the two groups of the researchers – those who supported the objective truth in revival of the historic past and the pseudo-researchers ready to serve the ethnic and political exercises of the Soviet power. The latter wanted to portray Abai in the national literary study as a poet without followers, separated from his environment. This picture would meet the Party's expectations. Or it can be a research about the two Semipalatinsk researchers of the life and the creative activity of Abai – Kayum Mukhamedkhanov and Boris Aleksandrovitch Akerman. And lastly this piece of the letter makes us to realistically assess the catastrophic loss of the entire correspondence between two great people, Mukhtar Auezov and Kayum Mukhamedkhanov...

But this all will be later. Meanwhile one more hardship, one more terrifying stage took place in Kayum's life. In 1941 the World War II broke out. And even here Kayum felt how distrustful and suspicious was the attitude of the power to the descendants of the "enemies of the nation". Such people as Kayum were drafted into the Labor Army. Kayum served nearby Sverdlovsk and Magnitogorsk in 1941-1942. The researcher wielded a sledge hammer to hollow out solid soil for building defense fortifications. He gave himself up to this "black" labor entirely. At that time the heavy physical labor took a toll on his health. He was awarded medal for his labor. In 1942 Mukhamedkhanov was hospitalized and afterwards demobilized from the Army.

On coming back home Kayum resumed teaching at the Semipalatinsk Pedagogical Institute and he was entirely absorbed with creative and research work.

Chapter three

TWO ANTHEMS AND ONE HISTORY

At dawn, all Kazakhstan citizens would wake up to the melody of the Republican Anthem. After the anthem of the USSR the anthem of the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic followed. This solemn song for many years was a poetic and a musical symbol of our motherland.

The author of the anthem was only 27 at the time when he wrote it. Its history goes back to 1943. A young researcher and poet Kayum Mukhamedkhanov was living in Mukhtar Auezov's house in Almaty when Auezov was called to the meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist party of Kazakhstan. Auezov took Kayum with him. At that meeting Stalin's decision that all Soviet republics were to write their own

anthem was announced. This was one of undertakings to consolidate the spirit of patriotism in the state. Right after the meeting the contest to create the best poetic text for the anthem was announced. Many professional poets as well as amateurs took part in this competition.

Some of the candidates who dreamed of winning the contest wanted to have Auezov's name in their text, just for the very name. Ualikhan Tokpatayev referring to the story told by Kayum Mukhamedkhanov writes that there were candidates who were jealous to Kayum. They thought that since he stayed in Auezov's house the two would create a contest entry together. Sapargali Begalin, for example, insistently sought Auezov's co authorship. He would come to Auezov's home and showed his versions for the anthem. Once Auezov mentioned that the text was weak. Begalin redid it, and changed stanzas. Finally Auezov gave up and put his signature under the text but soon regretted it.

Kayum Mukhamedkhanov wrote his poetic text, submitted it to the committee and went back home to Semipalatinsk. In 1945 he was invited to come to Almaty. When in Almaty, Abdilda Tajibayev picked Kayum up at his hotel to welcome him to his house as an honored guest. After that Gabit Musrepov invited him to his house. It was here where Kayum understood the reasons for their surprising hospitality. During their conversation, Musrepov noted: "Kayum, it is likely that your text will win. Myself and Abdilda Tajibayev looked through your text, made a few corrections and signed it".

An unpleasant surprise awaited Kayum in the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Kazakhstan. As he says:

"I was called to the Central Committee and there I was informed that my text was approved. There were some changes made and therefore I have co-authors: the writer Musrepov and the poet Tajibayev. I read the text from the very beginning through its end and found only one small change. The very first line in my anthem reads "**the heroic** Kazakh people" whereas they changed it to "**we** Kazakh people". I asked the question why these people were considered co-authors of the text. They responded that they had inserted the word "we" in my text. Can this simple substitution of words be considered creativity?!"

Kayum Mukhamedkhanov was against this substitution and against attachment of the so called "co-authors". So he left the Central Committee without knowing that his poetic text had been recognized and accepted as the best one. Musrepov had visited Moscow already for final confirmation and the "co-authors" had received the lion's portion of the honorarium. The real creator of the text Kayum Mukhamedkhanov was given a small portion of the remaining money. Soon the text was published with three authors names. The generous Kayum spent his share on the celebrity banquet. Mukhtar Auezov expressed in a harsh form his indignation about the "co-authors" but nothing could be changed. The anthem continued to be published with three names.

The tragicomedy of the anthem creation in 1945 continued. The same scenario was applied in defining the composers. The composers were given poetic versions of the anthems and they composed melodies on the linked texts. A young musician Mukan Tulebayev composed his music on Kayum Mukhamedkhanov's poetic text. Kayum and Mukan spent much time working together on their anthem. Two young men, two

enjoying full rights authors of the text and the music were sitting and singing tunes to the text. Three composers' names appeared under the music scores. It is hard to say how many music notes belong to the "authorship" of Latif Khamidi and Evgeniy Brusilovsky. Clear enough no more than the new sounds in Kayum's text...

Later Kayum would spend years to restore the historic justice for his right of authorship. "One of the most cherished works is the text of the anthem, - wrote Kayum in one of the appeals to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Kazakhstan. Objective evaluation of this work was given in the History of the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic" (volume 5, p. 229). The jury of the contest recognized me as the main author of the text. This was fixed in the sequence of the authors names: main author and co-author followed. (Order of the Supreme Soviet of the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic). Regrettably, many recent editions of anthem ignore this fact. They began putting either Tajibayev or Musrepov as main authors. Finally they distorted the spelling of my name so it could not be recognized. (see the Kazakh Calendar of 1981)."

In April 1989 in his letter to Janibekov - the Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Kazakhstan Kayum Mukhamedkhanov brought convincing arguments: "...the fact that I am the only author of the Anthem's text can be proved by Abdikalikov, Akhmetov and Ilyashev who are alive and who were directly involved in placing the Order on creation of the Anthem."

Justice finally triumphed but after forty years.. ... In the late 1980's a special committee was called that confirmed and legitimized the individual authorship of the first Anthem of Kazakhstan as belonging to Kayum Mukhamedkhanov.

The story yet had its unexpected continuation. After the break-up of the USSR all former Soviet Union Republics gained their independence and they began working on new symbols for their states. A competition for the new text and the music of the Anthem was announced in 1992 in Kazakhstan. Again, Kayum Mukhamedkhanov participated in it. All submitted texts were decoded. Kayum chose the password "Shoga", which denotes one of the tribes of the origin "Uak". The best texts were published in mass media for the public to discuss. Poetic attraction, the might of the verse and the pride for the native people, a specific musical tone of Kayum's poetic text spoke to the hearts and minds of many people. Equally objective was the decision of the professional committee that highly rated his text and nominated it as the best one.

One of the members of that committee a well known writer and a literary critic Gabbas Kabishuli wrote openly about it in the mass media. And he bitterly regretted that again "the telephone power took over professionalism of the committee". Another famous Kazakhstan writer Gerold Belger who worked on three committees related to national symbols recalls: "I remember that I was strongly impressed by the text under number 64. It was clear afterwards that the text belonged to Kayum Mukhamedkhanov. I was sure that I would give my voice for that text. One of the Committee members, a poet noted though that the text had little chance of winning. Very soon I understood that it was not the text that can become a winner but the people who support it".

In the long run another text was selected as a winner, this time with four authors, the unity of three men and a woman who represented three Kazakh *juz* (*origins*). Again, some of the authors tried to find powerful supporters, not from the literary world, but from the political one. i.e., deputies of Parliament. And this time again Kayum was

approached by phone from the capital from high officials who requested him to take co-authors. Kayum categorically refused to do so.

Hence, the team approach, the brigade method worked this time too when a collective text was adopted. It “has not settled down”. This is possibly why at one of the next session of Parliament the issue of the new anthem was brought up again.

Chapter four

ABAI’S HERITAGE AND THE PACK OF WOLVES

In one of his most plaintive verses Abai moans, ”Is there a poison that I have not tried?” This wise man of the steppes whose heart bled for humanity being was tormented by many throughout his life. Torments were the awards for his poems. Those who researched his work and tried to preserve his wisdom for the ages were rewarded with the same fate.

It’s hard to believe that his legacy would have been lost if not for the tireless and relentless work of only a few people. These faithful sacrificed everything: reputation, career, freedom, health, life, dignity, comfort and family to stand up for Abai’s work. The results of their labor of love is now taken for granted, but many books could be written to describe their struggle against those who wished all memories of Abai be completely erased. More than one volume could be written describing the cost Kayum paid for his loyalty to Abai. The price he paid included many months of torture in prisons.

In the mid -1940’s, Mukhamedkhanov made an amazing discovery of handwritten copies of Abai’s works! He could prove through textological analysis and commentary that they belonged to Abai. Through this research nine more of Abai’s poems were included in the collection of Abai’s works published in 1945. The full collection of Abai’s works was published on what would have been his hundredth birthday.

The responsibility for administering the museum of Abai in Semipalatinsk was given to the Academy of Sciences in 1947 and Kayum Mukhamedkhanov was appointed director of the museum. Both changes were ordered by the president of the Academy, Satpayev. This ended the changing roster of political appointees to the position whose sole qualification was their loyalty to the Party. One of those political appointees was so unqualified that he replaced a museum exhibit with the portraits of shepherds, the “Heroes of Socialist Labor”.

Kayum was persecuted for his work as museum director. He was accused of “anti-Soviet activity and nationalism”. In the Semipalatinsk archives there is a document, the minutes of the August 28, 1951 meeting of the Presidium of the Academy of Sciences of Kazakhstan. This document states that “serious ideological mistakes”, “bourgeois and nationalistic anti-research concept of “Abai’s followers” were the focal point of the museum’s propaganda. It continued that “some exhibits were not in compliance with the ideology as they were dedicated to Kenesari Kasymov, a suppressor of people who was presented as people’s defender. The division “Abai’s relatives”, “Abai’s family” idealized a patriarchal, tribal society. The sayings of Kenesary, the worst enemy of the working people were cited. The first two divisions represented the portraits and pictures of khans, sultans, biys, aksakals (men of wisdom), mullahs, auls’ heads and tsar

colonizers. The division “Literary school of Abai” represented portraits and works of politically doubtful people”...

So, Kayum Mukhamedkhanov was dismissed as director of the museum. Kayum himself would say: “I was blamed for the creation of the biography department and that I devoted space on the exhibition to bais and khans. But if there were no Kunanbaev, how could Abai – his son, evolve? If there were no sultan Shyngiz Valikhanov we would not have had Shokhan Valikhanov. However, no one would ever consider this elementary logic.”

Kayum’s contribution to the museum was invaluable as its current director, Ibragimov testifies. He is not tired of repeating that “each and every item in the museum is directly related to Kayum-aga. He was the founding father of the museum”. When in 1940 the museum was opened, Kayum who worked as a senior researcher there and began a relentless search for documents, pictures, personal belongings, household articles of Abai and his environment. As the result of this laborious work he gathered more than 500 items for the museum. For example, in 1941, thanks to him the museum collection was enriched with the unique photo of Abai and his sons made in 1896. Imagine, that by the time the museum was created in 1940, that is 36 years after Abai’s death, these artifacts could have disappeared forever!

At the same time, (the 1940’s) Kayum Mukhamedkhanov put all his energy and efforts to build Abai’s mausoleum on the poet’s burial place and restore Abai’s winter home. We can see in Kayum’s letters that he made appeals to the Government, and to the Academy of Sciences. These letters speak for Kayum’s tireless advocacy for Abai’s legacy. They include detailed plans and concrete suggestions to immortalize Abai in national monuments, in art, and in establishing memorial complex like the house-museum of Pushkin, Lermontov, Tolstoy, and Chekhov. Sadly, the nuclear test site constructed on Abai’s land delayed this dream for fifty years to come.

Kayum’s main research topic, from 1939 when a graduate student through 1950 as a faculty member of the Semipalatinsk Pedagogical Institute, was “The literary school of Abai”. For the first time, a thorough analysis of the creative activity of Abai’s followers was introduced in academic research, definitely premier and ground-breaking work. Among Abai’s followers were Akilbai, Magaviya, Kokpai, Aset, Arip and many other talented poets, composers, and musicians. This was the first systematic work on the generation of the poets, Abai’s followers. Kayum’s dissertation (318 pages of the research text and 478 pages of the appendices) was prepared based on the unpublished manuscripts of Abai’s followers. Most of these matchless works were revealed and collected by Kayum himself! He scoured the countryside, visiting all the places related to Abai and his followers. He interviewed those who had known Abai and his followers, documented his findings and collected their creative work fragment by fragment, piece by piece. Kayum found a number of Akilbai’s poems that were considered lost by that time. The text of Akilbai’s poem “Zuluz” was a sensational discovery. In the middle of last century only 104 lines of the poem were known, but Kayum discovered 140 additional lines during his research. Kayum not only discovered the romantic poem of Aset “Salikha-Samen” but also wrote its first analysis.

However, Kayum Mukhamedkhanov did more than tireless research and meticulous recording of the oral tradition. For the first time, he formulated and justified the very fact of the existence of the literary school of Abai’s followers! This became a

distinctive bridge that connected two sides of abyss: on the one side there was Abai and on the other one the Soviet Kazakh literature. A special attention of the researcher was focused on the accurate and detailed analysis of the creative assignments that Abai used in his work with the followers. Equally important was the research on their collective discussions of creative works, main genres and styles of works and the development of free critics. Mukhamedkhanov showed creative interrelations of Abai's followers' works to Abai's poetry. He defined independent value of every poetic creativity of that generation and their connecting role between Abai's heritage and the Kazakh Soviet literature.

It seemed that a young researcher was in store of triumph: excellent job, priceless discoveries, all round and thorough analysis... In April 1951 Mukhamedkhanov presented his research findings in front of the United Scientific Council of the Institute of Language and Literature and the Institute of History, Archeology and Ethnography of the Academy of the Sciences of the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic. The defense of his dissertation led to heated discussions that lasted for three days! This was the beginning of a sharp struggle for Abai and his followers. The defense of the dissertation by Kayum reflected the political situation in the state, in culture and in literature.

How is the policy connected here? Why would the authority have these undertakings with poets and the philological research? The thing is that the totalitarian regimes of all times needed names-symbols, political bugbears who served their support in constructing the ideology - the victory over minds. This method was used by Stalin, in defining "the best poet of modern times" – Mayakovsky. For decades Mayakovsky's creative activity was presented completely emasculated. Gorky was forgiven for his doubts about the Soviet power for the sake of coming back of this "stormy petrel" from Italy to the Kremlin golden cage. Only Abai in the Kazakh culture belonged to that rank. All of a sudden the notion of the "poetic school of Abai" was researched the representatives of that school having doubtful reputation from the authority view point. Research objectivity was not counted by the authorities. The officially combed literature was supposed to be up to the Party's liking and convenience. Therefore it was quite clear during the defense of the dissertation that "the court" philologists would do everything possible to root out the very notion of "Abai's school of followers" from the research discourse. There existed only one school, that of Marxism-Leninism.

One can easily see the consequences for Kayum that the following comment of the professor Jumaliev during harsh Stalin time could have:

"...the author takes an apolitical position. He considers Abai's son Turagul as his follower whereas Turagul had undergone confiscation in 1928... The author of the dissertation writes that "Kokpai was the best and the closest friend of Abai.." Kokpai can never ever be considered to be Abai's follower. His poems...are reactionary, he sings of khan and monarchic movement of Kasimov... Praising khans is not a good argument for considering Kokpai as Abai's follower. The Party press sets a goal of eliminating any praise of Kenesary Kasimov". Equally dangerous sounded the professor Nurishev who declared that "this work must be considered as pulling in the soviet research the anti Marxist views on part of both the author of the dissertation Mukhamedkhanov and his research supervisor Auezov".

The young scholar was blamed for referencing to Auezov's works, the latter having had undergone accusations and imprisonment. The involvement of the

Coryphaeus of the Kazakh literature Sabit Mukanov with his delicate aesthetics feeling sounded especially painful and unexpected. A peaceful research discussion became a rally of political proclamations. The attackers on Auezov and Mukhamedkhanov talked on everything but the research itself. They talked on Lenin and Marx, feudal times and pan Islamism. With this all the majority of the attackers, the so called “research judges” had not even read a piece of work of Abai’s followers but they all were ready to evaluate its existence. The stream of frenzied words hindered many from hearing Auezov’s message:

“You wanted to cancel with one stroke of your pen all that has been achieved in the research on Abai. With this no one of you have ever contributed a bit in this research... Today you are willing detach Abai from his literary environment. Instead you should analyze and evaluate this rigorous research on its own merits. You are doing all this not for the sake of truth or research but in order to hurt a young scholar who has been working seriously on it for twelve years. Today he has demonstrated that he is undoubtedly a rigorous scholar and a talented researcher.”

Kedrina, another renowned expert in Kazakh literature, was also ignored. She argued for the unique significance of Mukhamedkhanov’s research topic as it “helps to successfully research the actual problems of the literary critics. His work is not an archive research but it is an operational mean for the research development.”

In the long run the dissertation was defended. The attacks continued. Mukhamedkhanov’s research became in the center of debates on which major opponent of the research findings became Sabit Mukanov. Kayum Mukhamedkhanov had to prove..., not the value of his research but the very fact of the existence of Abai’s literary school!

In June 1951 Mukhamedkhanov took the floor with the speech. He said: “A teacher without pupils is a widower”, Abai noted in one of his words of wisdom. Abai’s enemies did not take a risk of lifting their hands against him. So popular he was among Kazakh people. They would rather made great efforts to leave him without followers. By intrigue, intimidation, sending them away and even killing them “the wolves pack” deprived Abai of his supporters and followers. They made some keep silent and some took their side. Do the debaters understand that by denying the existence of the literary school of Abai they leave the teacher without pupils, the poet without readers of his poetry? They made Abai a widower, a tragic single man. Do they really see what it means to neglect Abai, to deny his outstanding role in the history of our literature and culture? By doing so they present Abai as an occasional phenomenon without followers and supporters of his ideas in his lifetime and after his death.”

On the 13-th of October 1951 a defeating publication in the republican newspaper “Kazakhstanskaya Pravda” took place. It condemned Kayum Mukhamedkhanov for his wrong research ideas and false concepts: “...some literary critics of Kazakhstan made rude political mistakes by prophesying anti research, bourgeois concepts of the so-called “school of Abai”... It drove to the following: in April 1951 the united Research Council on humanities of the Academy of Sciences of the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic accepted to defend and implemented the defense of the harmful dissertation of Mukhamedkhanov “Literary School of Abai”. Under the umbrella of “Abai’s followers” he praised bourgeois nationalists who became sharp enemies at the Soviet times.”

Kayum Mukhamedkhanov did not pay heed to the public “whipping” at the defense of the dissertation and to the attacks in central press and by the local Party

leaders. No, he did not. And soon he was harshly punished. The former leader of Kazakhstan Kunayev wrote in his book “On my Times”:

“...It is necessary to note that after the war unjustified repression against the outstanding representatives of the culture and research of Kazakhstan did not stop. The famous historians Bekmakhanov and Suleimenov were arrested and sentenced to many years of imprisonment. The same fate followed the philologists Ismailov and Mukhamedkhanov, the latter being imprisoned for the “nationalistic mistakes” in the research of the literary school of Abai.” Kunayev also pointed out to the activities of the ideological leaders of that time:

“Shayakhmetov exercised gross faults relating to the best representatives of the Kazakh intelligentsia. The policy became even more severe and took an acute turn in 1951-1954 when Suzhikov became the Secretary on Ideology of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. One can imagine the impact of the massacre Party resolutions about anti nation essence of the best epos and research works of the many philologists, historians and entire research teams. The best fiction like Auezov’s epic novel about Abai was strongly criticized in the article in the newspaper “Kazakhstanskaya Pravda” (“Kazakhstan truth”) of June 1953. The accusations in the press and at public meetings were followed by actual arrests of the cultural leaders mentioned above.”

Kayum’s book “The Collection of the Poets’ Works of Abai’s Environment” very soon became a bibliographic rarity. The foreword to it was written by Auezov. The biographies were collected, compiled and the textological commentaries to the works were prepared by Mukhamedkhanov. This was a unique monograph based on his dissertation on Abai’s followers. The book was confiscated and its whole edition was destroyed. This book had a chance to see the light only in forty two years when in 1993 the first volume was published. The fourth one was published in 1997. These books are now the fundamentals of the research on Abai and readers in the Kazakh literature. The names of all Abai’s followers that were researched by Mukhamedkhanov are included in all books, textbooks on Kazakh literature. Their names are immortalized in street names. They are our national pride. Nowhere can we find mention of the high costs paid to preserve this legacy.

Chapter five

“IF THERE IS HELL, THIS IS IT”

Once the writer Gabbas Kabishuli said: “If Kayum was offended by the evil and the sufferings that some people caused him throughout his life, he would not have lived such a long, vivid and fruitful life. He as always was above this. I never saw him bemoaning his fate. Once I asked him about his time spent in prison and he would joke: I am afraid I am starting to forget it.” Kayum Mukhamedkhanov indeed had no malice toward his torturers. It is hard to say if he could erase his memory of the dark 1950s. But we, who on the other hand, want to truly understand the historical record must not forget it...

Kayum’s older children vividly remember the violent pounding on the door that preceded the KGB bursting into the apartment the night of December 1, 1951. Then they began ransacking everything. They took away all books and manuscripts of Kayum’s

research works. They confiscated more than a trunk's worth of Kayum's correspondence with Auezov and other colleagues. At this time, none of the family knew that it all was gone forever. No matter how many times Kayum would appeal to KGB and other authorities, it was never returned. This huge layer of the historic and cultural heritage disappeared into KGB archives. Everything else in the house was confiscated – bonds, furniture, valuables. They confiscated even children's beds and chairs. This nightmare lasted whole night, until Kayum was taken by the KGB. When he was leaving his home, he gathered the strength of mind to smile at his wife and children and say reassuringly: "I will come back". His older children ran after him, crying with powerless tears.

First he was put in the internal prison in Semipalatinsk. Next, he was taken to Almaty prison for nine long months. He remembers a small, windowless basement room measuring a meter squared. He soon realized how the floor and the concrete walls were unbearably hot, baking his naked body. Many hours of this torture continued until he lost consciousness. Any prisoner who collapsed was taken away on stretchers. The torments continued for those who were stronger. Feet burning, prisoners would begin jumping from one foot to the other. At some point the door would open and guards would give a flat dish of water to the sufferer who was at the point of frenzy. But this was a dish-sieve and one could not get a mouthful of water out of it. At night, at 11 pm the prisoner was taken to the latrine to pick up feces covered board and carry it to the prison cell. It meant the following: if you do not want to burn on the heated floor then sleep on the dirty board. Kayum-aga recollected that when he was tortured in the burning prison cell he thought: "If hell exists –here it is." Then the heat was changed to bone-chilling cold. The cycle was repeated.

Prisoners were prohibited to lie or to sit in their cells. Their pillows and mattresses were scrap metal. The only "food" was a bad soup with rare cabbage pieces. A prisoner could not eat this as it was frequently brought before interrogations. When interrogations finished a prisoner would find leftovers after rats' feast. No less was the suffering of watching luxurious food placed on the other side of the prison bars. There was one cost for it: Mukhamedkhanov's signature confessing to anti-Soviet activities. Refusal to sign meant watching rats consume the food in front of the hungry prisoner.

What else did Mukhamedkhanov endure at that time? A monstrous torture that is said to be invented by the Chinese: water dropping on the temple. They wanted to break Kayum physically so they drove needles under his nails and kicked him with military boots. Kayum remembers a moment when he thought that he was left without a face: they broke his nose. Mukhamedkhanov suffered another horrible torture: his legs and hands were tied up, the head was covered with rubber sack and he was beaten with truncheons. When the suffocating victim was at the edge of losing consciousness the sack was taken away and the paper was given to sign the invented by the KGB confessions. Kayum was firm and resisted signing it. This wonderful man with a subtle soul of a poet had unbending will.

During our talk Kayum Mukhamedkhanov noted: "A human being dies only once. I thought: if I die, what is my death compared to the perished great Kazakh people of Alash..." The physical tortures did not make Kayum refuse his research ideas on the existence of Abai's school. Kayum did not betray his teacher and research guide Auezov as the authorities wanted him to.

Very soon it was clear that the reason behind this imprisonment and torture was Auezov. During one of the interrogations seven interrogators in succession attacked Kayum replacing one another as they were exhausted. They kicked him with military boots, attempting to break him down so he would sign a document that said Auezov made Mukhamedkhanov write his dissertation on Abai's poetic school. "I would rather die than slander. How could one live on with such a slander?..." –this is what Kayum never doubted throughout his life.

Several years later when Auezov asked Mukhamedkhanov to reflect on his time in prison, Kayum responded with a verse that he wrote there. It is not easy to express the level of the emotional strain and bitterness in a word for word translation. There was everything in this verse: endless prison's nights, bitter tears and the overwhelming desire to be in a future far away from the suffering. Yet the strength of love for life and lack of malice prevails in this verse:

I am not embittered by fate
Through all the hardships and harshness
My heart remains alive.
Fate, you have taken my freedom
But I am not under your thumb...

Many years later during a conversation with Auezov Kayum still was able to joke that in the Almaty prison he was privileged to be placed in "individual luxury room".

This time was hard for the family. Many of Kayum's friends and frequent guests in his house turned away. Some of them even began shadowing the family and writing denunciations. Some even advised Farkhinur, Kayum's wife, to abandon children of "the enemy of people", and place them in a children's home so she could begin a new life without the stigma of being Kayum's wife. The children remember this clearly. They also remember how the family, which then included six children and their pregnant mother, were forced to move into the smallest room of the three room apartment where they lived. The rest of the apartment was occupied by the families of military officials or Party members. Nowadays it is 155 Ibrayev's street in Semipalatinsk.

The younger children were moved from the front of their classrooms to the back. The children became outcast despite their intellectual gifts. The family was left without anything to live. Farkhinur had to take a job in the hospital that was located across from the house. She was continually threatened with eviction from their tiny room because she could not pay the rent. Therefore the two oldest children had to leave school and go to work.

There were a few who were not intimidated and were faithful to the family. Boris Akerman, Kayum's colleague from the Abai museum, visited the family and helped as he could with money and advice. He compiled inquiries and appeals on Kayum's fate and the letters in defense of the family's rights on housing. Kayum-aga could only guess about the hardships that his family had to survive.

On May 13, 1930 in line with the petition of the Kazakh authorities the camp for specific purposes was established in Akmola and Karaganda regions of Kazakhstan. It was 110 000 hectares of lands and for unlimited time use. This is how one more "sister camp" of GULAG was built that was called Karlag. That was a huge country of camp

islands scattered in the dull steppe. That was a country inhabited by semi-slaves, semi-hard laborers who became the symbol of hostility to the socialist paradise. It was here where Kayum Mukhamedkhanov was to stay for several years.

The undefeated prisoner was sentenced to 25 years of imprisonment according to the deadly article 58 by the verdict of the Supreme Soviet of the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic. The hearing of his case lasted for three days, from May 28 to May 31, 1952. Kayum Mukhamedkhanov was brought to the court from Almaty prison to Semipalatinsk. He denied to admit the allegations and blames. It was, certainly, not considered. Certainly, the false evidence of recent colleagues was taken into account. Kayum Mukhamedkhanov escaped supreme penalty because the death penalty was abolished in the USSR in connection with the victory over the fascist Germany. Was the idea of staying behind the barbed for 25 years easier then? Can one call it a life?

The prisoner Mukhamedkhanov crushed and carried stones for several years. He was never once called by name, but had a prisoner number assigned. Shout: "Number such, stand up!", - became customary. Every several months the prisoners were moved to different prisons. Kayum-aga stayed in Temirtau, in Karabas, in Dolinka, in Darya, in Kula-Agir... The entry in his file stating "ready for physical work" meant inhumane work in quarries with harsh norms on crushing and carrying stones.

It is hard to say what was more difficult: lack of communication with the loved ones or the psychological pressure. The prisoners were allowed to write about health, weather, children's study, about relatives, nothing else. Even at night he could not rest, for perhaps the unkind eyes of secret agents were watching him so they could bring a negative report to the authorities, resulting in more beating and humiliation in the morning.

The prisoners were habitually robbed by the prison staff, who opened their packages and mail. Kayum did not escape the mass robbery. The majority suffered but only few were not afraid of repercussions and spoke up. Mukhamedkhanov wrote several times to prison authorities about the problem. He gave detailed information including dates and names of these incidents. "I do not desire revenge, but my insulted humane conscience made me bring this to your attention...", he wrote.

Even in prison's life there were moments that left good memories. For example, when finally released, Kayum would tell his children how expressively well the Russian folk singer Lidiya Ruslanova sang the Russian folk song "Valenki" (felt boots). She sat in the same prison. The best intelligentsia were imprisoned by Stalin, so imprisonment was an opportunity for the meeting of many great minds. One of Kayum's fellow prisoners had a copy of the Russian writer Karamzin's novel "Unfortunate Lisa". Kayum translated it from the Russian prose into Kazakh verse version in 15 days only. Surely the sad mood of the novel coincided with the spiritual mood of the prisoner-translator.

Behind the barbed wire Kayum struggled for his future. In 1952 he wrote a letter to the chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers of the USSR -Malenkov, to the first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union -Khrushchev, to the General secretary of the Writers' Union of the USSR - Fadeyev. The lines of the letter written by the hands of the exhausted prisoner contain everything: hope for reason, anguish, last hope on the fair outcome and end of the horror: "...literary court Mukanov and his supporters had used the tested strategies of Abai's enemies that of slander and intrigue to humiliate and discredit their enemy Auezov. I have become the victim of

unprincipled literary courts and KGB who harshly violated law using falsifications of the accusation materials and by applying prohibited by law methods of interrogation. I could not hope for justice and humane approach to the fate of the human being on behalf of the prosecution and the court... Indifference of these people rose up like a stone wall in front of me. They seem to stick to the rule: let the one who fell down be trampled!”

Kayum was fortunate to give this letter to the wife of the prisoner to send it out. Kayum Mukhamedkhanov’s note to the type-writer is also kept in the family archives. It says: “Dear! I request to type on one side with interval of one and a half or two. There are two names in the text of my appeal. This is poet Abai and khan Ablai. I pay your specific attention to this. This letter contains my fate. You surely understand this. You will do me a great favor by typing the letter. I hope you will not refuse your kindness to the unfortunate one...”

There was no response for some time. The only safety-valve although cut back and censored was the possibility of correspondence with the wife and children. The messages from the prison, there are not many, but each one is full of love and hope: “...My dearest, I am all right. I understand well enough, my dearest, that it is hard for you to live without me. I am also sad at the thought that I am far away from you. But this is just temporary. We have to accept these difficulties...My dearest, all you have in youth time – the strength of spirit and thought, eye observation, skills, - all devote to your study. I have no other wish but one so you can study well and have a happy life... I am grateful to the people who render a helping hand in hard times. I am especially thankful to them for helping my children. I wish them long, happy and rich life. All honors and praise to them!”

Behind barbed wire was where Kayum wrote the verses devoted to his children and his wife. Naming every child, recollecting their dear and ingenious traits the prison’s poet created the lines full of love and gratitude to Farkhinur. These verses were published forty years after they were written. Still they pierce everyone who reads them: “...you burn out with me in the flame of sadness. You love me sincerely with your generous heart. You are a sacred person and I worship you. You keep your husband’s honor with dignity. You keep with dignity hardships of motherhood, my trustful friend, my dear Farkhinur. I am always proud of you. Kayum.”(line by line translation). Mukhamedkhanov had been always proud of his wife. Kayum carried her picture in the inner pocket of his suit, close to his heart till the last days of his life.

...In December 1954 (they say it was Fadeyev’s help), Mukhamedkhanov’s sentence was cancelled and he was rehabilitated. However, he was not released until 1955. The court machine did not hurry in this. Finally that day came. Kayum was given a train ticket from the station Makinka to Almaty. At the Almaty station he made a call to Ismailov who was freed earlier. He informed Kayum that Auezov is very much concerned about Kayum. Certainly, Kayum called his teacher. Auezov urged Kayum to come to his place right away. Kayum was wearing a padded jacket that the prison gave him and he had six rubles in his pocket. The train for Semipalatinsk was scheduled in three hours. He decided to see his family first. In two weeks he returned to Almaty to talk with his teacher. There were long hour non stop talks. This time they both were linked not only with Kayum’s father’s name – Mukhamedkhan Seitkulov at whose house young Auezov used to stop and live for long time. Not only common research interest to Abai connected them. This time the prison’s recollections were in common. They both had

undergone imprisonment at age of 35 with the only difference that Auezov was imprisoned in 30-s and Mukhamedkhanov in 50-s. During these talks Auezov recollected that he was in prison with the Alash intelligentsia –Jumabayev, Aimaityov and Baitursinov. Baitursinov would advise to Auezov: “We have to ask forgiveness from the Party if we want to save the name and the works of Abai and bring his legacy to people. We have to step back in order to preserve the heritage.” This humiliation was the cost for the possibility to go on with the work in propagating and keeping the cherished for the Kazakh people name of Abai.

Mukhamedkhanov had to struggle for several years to restore his research degree, return to the workplace, and receive a teaching workload that was reduced and he was shifted from one department to another. There was red tape in restoring the records of his labor length. It was quite an ordeal to return to his own apartment. It took time to write appeals, wait to receive bureaucratic formal replies, and write again to go to the court until the apartment was returned. On top of that Kayum was for a long time under the annoying surveillance of the authorities. For instance, the notification document of December 8, 1955 that is kept in the family archive says that he was supposed to show up in Almaty KGB office.

Did he become a different person after the prison? Malice, revenge, offence on the entire world or readiness to bend in front of the authorities could not infect Kayum’s pure soul. But the life had added up some different after taste...

Kayum played dombra well. The political prisoners in Karlag taught him to play mandolina (*note: it is a Russian string instrument*). He brought this instrument home. The children remember how the father would take it and played singing in a calm and sincere voice one and the same song of Nekrasov “Troika” (three horses bent together): “Why are you fully absorbed watching the road...” Besides, he would very often cite lines from the Lermontov’s verse:

Farewell, unwashed Russia,
The country of slaves, the country of masters
And you, blue full dressed uniform,
And you, devoted to them people

The communist ideologists under Lenin’s push called themselves the direct descendants of Decembrists (representatives of higher society who struggled against Tsar for people’s well being). In Stalin’s time the main function of the authorities was suppressing the intelligentsia’s free thought. The authorities of Stalin’s time became a copy of the “blue full dress uniform” of the Tsar regime followed by the blue headwear of the KGB of that time. The Russian poet Anna Akhmatova in “Requiem” drew a comparative parallel between the blue uniform of tsar time and the blue headwear of the KGB of that time. The analogy of the color of the uniform is a political analogy. Apparently this comparison came to Kazakhstan poet Kayum Mukhamedkhanov even though he probably did not know about Akhmatova’s “Requiem”. Deep in his thoughts he would cite Lermontov’s verse about the country of slaves and masters, about blue uniforms and the obedient to them people...

In 1952 in Karlag Kayum Mukhamedkhanov wrote one more verse that can be considered as the epitaph of that period of life. It is full of yearning for the native land. It concludes almost in moaning:

Return me back, the native land of Semey,
In you small piece I will lie free
(line by line translation)

As the future long life of Kayum Mukhamedkhanov proved he truly did not wish more happiness as the happiness of living on the cherished piece of land close to the loved ones. And those who tried to deprive him of all this...

Two years before Kayum Mukhamedkhanov's death I was lucky to talk with him about this period of his unique fate.

At some point he asked me to stop the talk about the time beyond the life. This was the pain on the face of a 85 year old man. The pain. Alive. Unbearing. Sharp. The pain that had not lessened in years. The whitened old fingers tied up the edge of the bed cover.

This was the pain, though it did not leave the scars of malice at all: "They only implemented orders...What is their guilt?..."

Chapter six

THE LIFE IN THE LIGHT OF ABAI

The major research activity of Kayum Mukhamedkhanov was on Abai's legacy. At the end of 40-s Mukhamedkhanov wrote a number of articles with in-depth analysis of the creative connections of Abai's outlook and the great representatives of the Russian literature: Pushkin, Lermontov, Krilov. It is a truism for the today's researchers of Abai's works that they are penetrated with allusion and reminiscences of the masterpieces of Russian and European poetry. Mukhamedkhanov's works on these issues (for the first time in the middle of the 20-th century) gave the research based justifications that Abai's poetry is built and properly understood only in connection with the history of mankind's common culture. The real value of poetic creativity of the Kazakh genius is revealed only through this connection.

Right after being freed from the prison he found three previously unknown of Abai's poems and in 1956 six more. They were all published with thorough textological analysis and relevant commentaries that Kayum Mukhamedkhanov prepared. In 1955-1959 he wrote eleven research articles on Abai's legacy. He published two monographs: "Magavya Kunanabaev. Life and creative activity" and "Textology of Abai's works". The latter still remains the unsurpassed and rare work in the Kazakh textology. It brings research objectivity and research grounded justifications in establishing the canonical text of the Abai's works. The textbook on the history of the Kazakh literature states that Mukhamedkhanov's work "marked discovery of new horizons for our (Kazakh) literary study".

On June 12, 1959 he returned to face the Research Council again to defend

successfully for the second time the dissertation on the poets of Abai's time (as it is known he was deprived of earned degree at the arrest). Kayum Mukhamedkhanov continued finding new materials in many aspects of culture and literature; he worked in archives and did analysis. In 1970's the name of Ilyas Boragansky, the first publisher of Abai, was discovered by Mukhamedkhanov. The first book of Abai's poetry was published by Boragansky in St.Petersburg in 1909. But the name of Boragansky was in oblivion for many years. Kayum's discovery was preceded by the many years of search, correspondence with the research institutions, libraries and the archives of Moscow, St.Petersburg, Tashkent and Ufa; the study of the old dusty newspaper files and magazines and many documents of that time. The scholar's hard work brought one more sensational discovery for the history of the Kazakh literature. It filled in the unknown gap in the Abai's biography.

If the creativity of the poet and the philosopher Abai is compared to the greatness and endlessness of the Universe, then Kayum remained it's tireless researcher till the very last days of his life. Invaluable is his contribution in preparation and publication the two volume academic edition of Abai's works published in 1995 for Abai's 150-th anniversary. For the first time Abai's verses and poems were published with textological commentaries! This publication became one more sensation in the Kazakh literature study.

Although not on time but the recognition at the Governmental level came to Kayum Mukhamedkhanov. In 1995 he was awarded the title: Laureate in literature of the Republic of Kazakhstan. He received many other honorary titles and prestigious awards. He continued working tirelessly searching, writing, bringing new facts and returning from oblivion forgotten historical names.

Chapter seven

REVIVAL OF A FORGOTTEN SHADOW

For more than thirty years, Kayum Mukhamedkhanov strove for historical justice for the poet Shakarim. For him as a researcher it was the issue of dignity to keep the disappearing thread in the objective study of the Kazakh literature. For Kayum the revival of Shakarim's name was a moral duty to the ancestors' memory. Kayum's father, Mukhamedkhan Seitkulov told his son many stories about this wonderful man. One of the stories was an amusing incident. In 1912 Shakarim came to Semipalatinsk and stayed in Seitkulov's house as a guest. He was an exceptional poet, an intellectual and besides, he was "Jack of all trades". He could sew clothes and leather footwear; he could make musical instruments from traditional Kazakh dombra to the unusual in the Kazakh steppes violin. After having breakfast with Seitkulovs' one morning Shakarim decided to walk in town. He said he would return by lunch time, but he did not return. Seitkulov began to worry. Suddenly there was a knock on the door. A policeman told Seitkulov they had a man in custody who claimed to be staying at their address, but had no documents. Seitkulov had to go to the police station to free Shakarim. The police thought Shakarim was a spy, as he looked so odd. They were suspicious of the tall, handsome man in the one-of-a-kind long gown Shakarim had sewn himself.

It was at this time that Shakarim's photograph was taken, the only one kept and well known to all. After Shakarim was shot the authorities did everything possible to make his pen-name "The forgotten one" come true. Shakarim's books, manuscripts, personal belongings, family pictures – all were destroyed so that no recollections of him remained. The authorities forced a deaf and dumb guard to burn all the personal papers of Shakarim. The guard was an admirer of the poet, so he folded up one picture and hid it in his clothes. That famous picture was kept in Seitkulov's house for a long time.

The fate of Shakarim refuted the saying that manuscripts do not burn. As it turned out they burn and disappear. Some of his books published in Semipalatinsk, Tashkent and Kazan perished in his lifetime. Thanks to Shakarim's son Akhat three volumes of his works were kept. Akhat suffered as the son of the "enemy of people" too. He had the tragic lot of a prisoner. Kayum Mukhamedkhanov was not afraid to visit Akhat in prison. Akhat asked Kayum not to come, not to take these risks as it was dangerous and could have serious consequences. But Kayum listened to the voice of his conscience and he continued supporting Akhat, the son of the great person.

Akhat became the director and a researcher at the Abai museum from 1957-1967 after many years of imprisonment. Akhat who had been struggling for his father's rehabilitation finally received it in 1958. The office of the General Prosecution of the USSR proclaimed that Shakarim was found innocent of any wrongdoing and rehabilitated due to lack of evidence. However, this document could not restore Shakarim's work and reputation. He had become a non-entity. Kayum Mukhamedkhanov knew this. He put all his efforts to restore the reputation and renown for Shakarim. He had to work hard with the authorities.

Shakarim was shot in 1937 and rehabilitated in 1958. None of his work was available in 1958. Rehabilitation did not mean revival. Although the authorities were not against restoring his writings to the public, Shakarim's penname "The forgotten one" was becoming true. There is a draft letter kept in the family archives of Mukhamedkhanov's which is Akhat's appeal to the authorities. Kayum Mukhamedkhanov helped Akhat to draw the letter to authorities. Kayum also continued sending appeals and letters to various authority bodies and editorial boards. He argued that Shakarim was the second greatest Kazakh poet after Abai and that it was necessary to make his creativity known to public. "I suppose they refrain from publishing out of false precautions. "if something might possibly happen", Kayum wrote in one such letter.

One more example speaks for Kayum's citizen and professional position. During the so called "stagnation time" (70s-80s of the Soviet time) a delegation of writers and culture representatives came from Russia to Semipalatinsk. They were also brought to the Abai's birthplace that is located three hours outside of Semipalatinsk. They visited Abai's burial place. The Party members guided the delegation. Suddenly Kayum Mukhamedkhanov declared: "There is a burial place of another great son of the Kazakh people". With these words he led people to Shakarim's burial place. The Party people were shocked and indignant by Kayum's behavior. Someone told him: "You killed us all!" Kayum knew no fear of them as the voice of his conscience was louder. He continued working no matter what in the hope to see Shakarim's works published.

During the Gorbachev's era the situation did not improve. Kayum wrote riches of materials on Shakarim's biography and his creativity with deep analysis. As it was always these materials are research grounded, based on the originals and make the

biography of the poet backed up with research findings. In July 1987 Mukhamedkhanov wrote a letter to Kolbin - the first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Kazakhstan and to the first secretary of the board of the Writers' Union of the USSR – Karpov. "... Restoration of Shakarim's name is one of the most important and acute problems for the history of the literature and the entire Kazakh culture... I dare to express my conviction that somebody might not like the international spirit of Shakarim's creativity and those "some" try to label him with nationalism. This dirty method is familiar to me. I myself was a victim of that labeling", wrote Kayum in one of those letters.

Mukhamedkhanov submitted the article about Shakarim and the editorial board of the newspaper "Kazakh Adebieti" ("Kazakh literature") did not publish it, again, out of that fear of publishing an article about the "disgraced" poet.

In this connection in February 1988 Kayum wrote a letter to Moscow, to the chief of the editorial board of the magazine "Ogonyok", Mr. Korotich: "How can this be explained that beginning with 1958 at Shakarim's official rehabilitation nothing of his works are still published. Two volume of his works were prepared for publication in the mid-1960s. During all this time only fourteen of Shakarim's poems were published in translation in the book "Poets of Kazakhstan". And it took place in Leningrad. It is quite obvious that serious roadblocks have been thrown up by authorities in Kazakhstan against restoration Shakarim through publishing his works", wrote Kayum.

A month later Kayum received a response from the Writers' Union of the USSR. "We have read your letter on the fate and creativity of the Kazakh poet and thinker Shakarim with great attention. We have talked with the people from the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Kazakhstan. We are awaiting Shakarim's works from them to know them in detail. (*Alla Belyakina's remark: The latter phrase is one more unsolved puzzle in the fate of Shakarim's creative heritage. Who are those Party members who kept Shakarim's works?*) We are arranging with the magazine "Literary review" for you to publish the article on Shakarim. In case they ask you to add something or correct –please, do so. Shakarim is the second great poet after Abai, as you know".

On April 7, 1988 Mukhamedkhanov received an urgent telegram from the first secretary of the Writers Union of Kazakhstan who personally congratulated Kayum:

"Congratulations! Shakarim has been rehabilitated by the directive authorities!". This was indeed a victory and Kayum alone had full right to accept this commendation.

At last, after so many years in darkness Shakarim's works saw the light. He finally received his due. However, his true genius was distorted again. Many publishing houses rushed to publish Shakarim's works and biography. As the result of this haste many mistakes were published. Again, Mukhamedkhanov wrote textological articles, making comparisons with the original works of Shakarim and correcting mistakes. Turdikul Shanbai, director of Shakarim's Center of the Semipalatinsk Pedagogical Institute, tells that Kayum-aga gave him one of such hastily published books and told: "I will recite by memory Shakarim's poems, you follow and correct mistakes in the book." Shanbai exclaimed: "I was astonished by his memory. How many slips, mistakes, distortions of the original verse were found! What if he did not correct them? These distorted versions would go on being disseminated..."

On April 23, 1988 the newspaper “Irtish” in Semipalatinsk published the first article on Shakarim’s biography, philosophical views and his creativity written by Mukhamedkhanov. The article was entitled “The Return of the Poet”. As if it was devil that did not let “The Forgotten one” to come back to people. Due to technical problems some lines and even phrases of the article were deleted. This destroyed the perception. Being by nature a kind and mild person who would not struggle for his personal well being, Kayum was very rigor and firm in profession. He insisted that the article be republished without errors. And it was published again. “Our people need Shakarim in his true and original individuality. Shakarim is needed for enriching our spiritual life...”, - Kayum concluded that essay.

This is only a portion of what Kayum did to more than rehabilitate Shakarim. Through his efforts, Shakarim’s greatness is again known, and another gap in the history of Kazakh literature has been filled.

Chapter eight

A MAN - A RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Today, going through Kayum Mukhamedkhanov’s works –published books, monographs, articles, studying directions of his research, touching hundreds of his files with riches of materials, you stop at some point to ask a question: how could one person research volumes of work that is the job of several research institutions? Each one of his articles would be a good foundation for a dissertation. All his articles are research grounded and based on primary sources, archival documents followed with in-depth comparisons and analysis.

In the 1940’s Kayum Mukhamedkhanov submitted manuscripts of previously undiscovered primary sources with his analysis to the branch of the Kazakh Academy of Sciences. They were approved for publication. Among them there were “Kabanbai batir”, “Bogenbai batir” (both in around 90 pages, 1943); “Poet Arip” (more than 500 pages, 1944), “Literary School of Abai” (more than 700 pages, 1945); unpublished verses and words of wisdom of Abai, Abai’s sayings on his followers Shakarim and Arip.

In 1945 Kayum Mukhamedkhanov participated in preparing the first volume of the “History of Kazakh Literature” for publication. Mukhtar Auezov had entrusted him with writing the section on folk creativity, connecting it with national heroes of the past. Kayum organized the manuscripts on folk and historical poems, many of which he had discovered: Kabanbai batir, Bogenbai batir and others. Kayum worked hard as practically no other materials on this issue existed. The volume was published in 1948, but without the section on the folk historical poems... When Kayum asked his supervisor Auezov why, the answer was: “It was not my decision. The authorities demanded that nothing on Kabanbai batir or Bogenbai batir, or anyone like them, be disseminated. They said that they did not want any nationalistic materials.”

Few people know that Auezov was dismissed from the book’s editorial board for “ruining the work”. Both the teacher and pupil suffered of this injustice. Fortunately Kayum’s works were preserved and published in the last decade of the 20-th century. Now the heroes he wrote about are a matter of national pride.

Many of Mukhamedkhanov's works and research findings were seminal for the literature and culture of Kazakhstan. For instance, for many years various theories existed on exact date of the birth and the birthplace of Bukhar jirau, another great poet of the Kazak, hindering the developments in the study of the Kazakh culture. Because of his research and extensive knowledge Mukhamedkhanov was able to pinpoint the location and date of the poet's birth, an exciting victory for research.

The staff of the Semipalatinsk museum of Dostoevsky still gratefully remembers that Kayum Mukhamedkhanov stated the exact date of the famous photo of Dostoevsky and Valikhanov. For many years it was considered to be 1856. Mukhamedkhanov conducted research, studied archive materials, made comparisons, studied their correspondence and came to the conclusion that the photo was made two years later.

This is just a small part of what Mukhamedkhanov accomplished. Mukhamedkhanov's research interest also encompassed historical, literary and textological study of many cultural and literary traditions. He wrote and published articles on the Russian writers Rilejev, Dal, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Chekhov, Gorky, Vsevolod Ivanov; on the Ukrainian writer Shevchenko, on the Tatar writers Tokai, Nasiri, Kamal, and Faizkhanov; on the Kyrgyz writers: Satilganov; on the Turkmen writer: Kerbabayev; on the Uzbek writers: Navoi and Niyazi; on the Azerbaijan writer: Gadjibekov; on the Armenian writer: Nalbandyan; on Lezgin: Stalskiy; on Latvian: Rainis; on the Polish writers: Mitskevitch and Yurandet; and on the Chinese writer: Lu Sin.

He continued with in-depth research on Kazakh literature and culture. Kayum Mukhamedkhanov is the author of the monumental research works: "The textology of Bukhar jirau's works", "The textology of Makhambet's works", "Research grounded biography of Auezov".

He prepared for publication the collection of works of Abai's follower Uais Shondibayev followed with his textological analysis. He wrote many research articles on significant representatives of the Kazakh literature, culture, art and theatre: Amre Kashaubayev, Estai Berkimbayev, Sadir akyn and Beisembai akyn, Shokan and Maki Valikhanov, Utemisov, Dauletbayev, Jambil, Shanin, Baiseitova, Musin, Sain, Seifullin, Jansugurov, Mailin, Altinsarin, Jomartbayev, Dulatov, Baitursinov, Aimaitov, Toraiyirov, Khasenov, Momishuli, Kaliyev, Jarokov and others.

Kayum Mukhamedkhanov's memoirs on Mukhtar Auezov, Estai, Sain, Vsevolod Ivanov, Khadzhi Mukan are included in the heritage of the history of the Kazakh literature. He also did a significant research on the history of establishment of the Kazakh theatre.

Is it not true that you have dizziness on enumerating only the names? And this is not all. In 1977, when the 12 volume Kazakh encyclopedia was published, Kayum Mukhamedkhanov analyzed all 12 volumes. He corrected erroneous dates, sites, chronology and biographical information. This included articles on all aspects of culture, art, theatre, literature and history of Kazakhstan. Again, each correction was research grounded and supported by the documents in his own archives. When he retired, the invitation to edit the new editions of the Kazakh encyclopedia was certainly no surprise. At the same time he was working on his articles for the "Abai" encyclopedia as well.

For Kayum the highest assessment of his work was that of his research supervisor Mukhtar Auezov. This was his moral support throughout Kayum Mukhamedkhanov's

life. Due to political repression and imprisonment Mukhamedkhanov had to defend his dissertation for the second time after imprisonment. In one of the talks Auezov told Mukhamedkhanov: “The two dissertations you defended are of great value to research. Their content, innovative ideas and research findings surpass many doctoral dissertations. But for the formalities you could have your Doctorate now.” (*note: In USSR defending dissertation equals to what is PhD degree worldwide. Besides, there existed terminal degree for opening up new theories that was called Doctorate degree*).

The only person who could truly assess Kayum’s research was Auezov. After Auezov’s death Kayum continued working on the textological analysis of Abai’s works and his followers. The formalities of that time required sending all dissertations to Moscow for final approval of the defended degree. Kayum scoffed at the idea of translating his research into Russian. How could one translate the analysis of nuances in the unique Kazakh language that brings spirit and emotional mood to poetry into Russian? Furthermore, there were only two prominent scholars in textology (text analysis) in the territory of the USSR: Likhatchev and Jirmunsky. But they were specialists in Russian poetry! Only Auezov would be able to give an objective academic analysis of Mukhamedkhanov’s research in the Kazakh language. The others were analysts in name only.

Mukhamedkhanov’s research is a constituent part of the treasure of Kazakh literature study. Hundreds of files with riches of materials left after death of this great researcher could lay foundations for new directions in research. He embodied the most important characteristics of the conscientious researcher: strict faithfulness to primary sources. To publish one article could mean for him processing a dozen file drawers of sources.

Practically all his work was based on materials he himself discovered; materials that might remain undiscovered if he had not done this work for Kazakh literature and culture. Hundreds of letters from the libraries and archives all over the former USSR speak for this scrupulous and accurate work. This work took much energy and personal expenses. He would not have it otherwise.

One example of his research from the article published on Ilyas Boragansky, shows his intensive painstaking methodology. He wanted to identify the first publisher of Abai’s works. (*note: as it is known Abai’s poems were first published in 1909 in Saint Petersburg. The publisher’s name remained in oblivion for many decades*).

What Kayum tells is the research methods and this is what Kayum Mukhamedkhanov tells:

“ In 1966 I sent an inquiry to the Lenin State Library in Moscow. They did not find any materials on Boragansky and so readdressed my inquiry to the library of the Institute of the Peoples of Asia in the Academy of Sciences of the USSR. Soon I received a response saying that no materials related to Boragansky were found there. Professor Dantsig, the scholar of Oriental Studies of that Institute recommended that I write to professor Kononov and Novitchov of the Leningrad branch of the Institute of the Peoples of Asia. When I received that address, I sent my inquiry again.

Kononov responded. His staff member did some search and found a review for 1855-1905 of the Oriental Studies Department of the St. Petersburg University. There was a mention: “Ilyas Boragansky is teaching the Turkic language from August 20, 1908.

...This remained the only source and my further efforts to know more reached a dead end in 1966. Two years later, I happened to be looking through the old newspaper files of “Kazakh Language”. All of a sudden I saw the following written in capital letters in the newspaper of October 28, 1922: “Boragansky –Elder” The Bashkir government congratulated him on his 70-th birthday. Now my search was aimed at Bashkiriya.

Excitedly, I sent inquiries to the central library and the archives of Bashkiriya. Alas, this did not bring results. No information existed there, but I did not lose hope and I sent out letters to writers and poets of Bashkiriya. Soon the oldest writer Saifi Kudash responded. He directed me to further search in magazines. Then I sent out inquiries to a number of libraries in the USSR. Finally, in 1970, I was happy to hold in my hand that same magazine with the article on Boragansky and his picture.”

Indeed, the question arises: if not him, then who? Who could spend that much time and energy, personal money for innumerable inquiries for the sake of revealing the historic person’s name? The name that brought more light in research related to Abai. Who else could have that many years of patience and fortitude to continue searching and reach the goal? This search was done on the background of versatile hard work of Mukhamedkhanov on many other issues.

The tremendous amount of materials that were sent to him from libraries and archives were in Arab, Persian, Tatar, Bashkir and other languages. Again, tireless Kayum did the work of entire research institutions in translating those materials in Russian, in Kazakh, in Tatar, etc. All his fundamental works, articles, correspondence are written in accurate minute handwriting. Kayum never forgot the exact location of any materials. When he was away from home, he could call and ask someone to open a certain file to find a page he needed. Not long before death, even while bedridden young researchers consulted him. They were struck by his amazing memory: he could quote poems word for word and give the exact page number where they could be found.

Kayum Mukhamedkhanov always read with pen in hand. He conducted a dialogue with any author: he corrected mistakes, wrote commentaries on margins, put question marks where he found discrepancies. All that captured his attention was systematized in files.

Knowledge of several languages, professional skills in seeing the value of literary work, his own poetic and playwright talent molded Mukhamedkhanov into a good translator. It was translation that was a pass for the future man of letters.

When Kayum was fourteen, one of his father’s frequent guest, Idris Mustambayev (a prominent representative of the Kazakhs intelligentsia) asked Kayum to come to his home. He showed him a thick manuscript in Arabic language and asked him to read it .

“I read it all well, “– recollected Kayum many decades after.

-And can you translate it and rewrite it from the Arab script into the Latin one? What would you say?

-Well, aga, I will try. (*note: “aga” means respectful address to elders*). With these words I took the manuscript home. I sat day and night for twenty days to complete the assignment.

When I brought the work to Mustambayev he said: “You did the work well and accurately.” He shook my hand and gave me a hug. I was about to leave when Mustambayev gave me some money. I was perplexed and did not want to take it

- This will not do, he said. This is your hard work and excellent result. Any work should be rewarded.

“So, this is how I first earned money”, - Kayum recollected.

In 1940 Mukhamedkhanov translated the musical comedy of the Azerbaijan composer Gajibekov “Arshin Mal Alan”. It was staged for many years in the Semipalatinsk Kazakh Musical Drama Theatre and in the State Academic Theatre of Opera and Ballet.

His translation work was extensive. To give some examples, in 1941 he translated Pushkin’s “Mermaid”. An official document in the family archive says that Kayum was entrusted to translate Bomarshe’s “Marriage of Figaro”. The manuscript was confiscated at the time of Kayum’s arrest. He resumed this work after his release but only small portion of it survived. In 1952 in prison he did a poetic translation of the Russian novel of Karamzin, “The Unfortunate Liza”. In 1955 he translated “Dekameron” of Boccaccio. In 1973 he translated the play of the Tatar writer Sharif Kamal “Khadji Afendi is Marrying”, which was staged for ten years. His translations of Oriental legends and the Tatar poet Gabdulla Tokai are well known.

Thanks to Mukhamedkhanov’s translation the play of the Polish playwright Yurandet “This is such a time” and the Grakov’s drama version of the novel by Fadeyev “Young guards” were articulated in the Kazakh language.

In 1968 Mukhamedkhanov coauthored a script of the documentary film “The town of my youth” with Semyon Anisimov, which was dedicated to the 250 th anniversary of his native Semipalatinsk. He also wrote a guide to the Abai Museum. This guide was translated into Russian by Kayum’s colleague Mstislav Shatalin. Beginning in 1970 Kayum supervised the work of a TV show where he lectured every month on the prominent Kazakhs.

He also wrote more than 100 verses and poems himself. He wrote five plays himself that were successfully staged in theatres. Unfortunately they are not published in a separate book in full version. Publishing his works was an arduous process due to the political climate. In one of his letters to the Central Committees of the Communist Party of Kazakhstan Kayum wrote: “...In 1978 I submitted five plays to the “Jalin” publishing house. They are: “Commissar Gabbasov”, “From front to front”, “Courageous Bilisai”, “Perne”, “Khadji Afendi is marrying” (translation from Tatar language). Although all were approved for publication, this book was not published. A small portion of my plays were transferred to the “Oner” publishing house, which published them in 1981. The condensed version of the plays was published in a distorted way, destroying the plot. They presented my plays in a parody form, thus insulting me. Elementary literary norms and the law on author’s right are rudely violated”, bitterly stated Kayum. In this same letter he also wrote on the necessity of finding and returning his correspondence with Auezov. “I have a sharp pain for the fate of all my works”..., Kayum concluded in this letter. Who knows if a professional text analyst can be found for Mukhamedkhanov’s creativity to restore his original texts?

Chapter nine

“REMAIN HUMAN BEINGS”

(Kayum Mukhamedkhanov)

Incredible workload determined Kayum Mukhamedkhanov's lifestyle. There was practically no time for what the philistines call personal life or relaxation. An ongoing process of analysis, considerations, and comparisons pushed him out of the frames of habitual life. Although he did not fit the caricature hero of the Marshak's poem for kids of “An absent minded person from the Basseinoy Street” he happened to be in funny situations himself.

Kayum's wife Farkhinur took the household and habitual responsibilities on her. Kayum was fully absorbed in his work. He never carried a wallet. Once in 1960s there was nobody to send to buy bread, so Kayum went shopping. During the war, bread was distributed by the gram, so he asked the clerk to weigh him a kilogram of bread. The salesgirl laughed at the funny customer who did not know that bread was sold in loaves.

Another episode the family likes to recount was when he went to buy cigarettes. There was not much time left before his classes began. So, Farkhinur advised him: “Take this change and just hand it to the clerk right away saying you want cigarettes. Do not get in a line, if there is any.” Time passed and he did not come back. Farkhinur went down to the shop that was located on the ground floor of their house. Kayum was standing silently in front of the line with the coins in his hands. The salesgirl was surprised: “He has been standing there, without a word. I thought that he was waiting for somebody. No problem, we always take small purchases at the front.” Kayum's extreme sense of modesty did not let him disturb the line with his request.

The image of Kayum is that of a hard working throughout all his life. He used to work at nights. Children remember him sitting at table writing papers deep in his thoughts. The father of a big family received highest respect from everyone in the family. Once one of his daughters [Dina] did not want to attend her mathematics class, because there was a test. Kayum responded: “You yourself know best what should and what should not be done”. Dina drew her own conclusions about the relationship between freedom and responsibility.

Kayum Mukhamedkhanov often repeated: “Live honestly. Remain human beings.” His family treasures and follows this philosophy.

Modesty was another of his stellar traits. He tried to stay out of photographs at important events. He never lorded over anyone with his knowledge and research authority. He never showed off his accomplishments. He never used his prestige for benefits or financial gain. Even when he deserved something, for instance, treatment in a prestigious clinic for distinguished retirees, he would only agree to modest services.

One might exclaim: “What a wonderful eccentric!”

Kayum Mukhamedkhanov was this kind of human being. Once the poet Kalikhan Altinbayev wrote: “Kayum climbed to the top of mountains without becoming short breath... Others cannot: their hearts do not let them do so.” Who knows: this can be the pure strength of Kayum's heart that let him so easily and calmly ascend the heights of spirit.

Chapter ten

THE FORCE OF CHARISMA

The force of Mukhamedkhanov's charm was so strong that it impressed all who met him. He and his father were famous for their hospitality. First his father's and later his own house was always full of visitors and guests. Colleagues and friends, prominent people of Kazakh history and culture, students, - all were greeted here with a smile and treated with warmth. Mukhamedkhanov's personality and intellect attracted the famous Kazakh wrestler Khadji Mukan, the Russian writer Vsevolod Ivanov; Estai - the poet from Pavlodar, and the Kalmyk writer David Kugultinov. Kayum communicated closely with the Kazakh writer Musrepov, the famous scientist Margulan, and the composer Jubanov. Mukhamedkhanov wrote his recollections of Mukhtar Auezov, Jambil Jabayev, Jumagali Sain, and Sabit Mukanov. Kayum and his wife Farkhinur had interesting conversations with the actors Morgunov, Mironov, Mishulin when they met on vacation in the House for Writers in the Crimea and the Caucasus.

Mukhamedkhanov's recollections about interesting people that he met are one more layer in the history of the Kazakh culture. They read like fiction as they were written in a good literary style.

In 1938 Kazakhstan celebrated the 75th anniversary of the Kazakh poet Jambil's writing career. Sabit Mukanov, who was the head of Writers' Union of Kazakhstan, came to Semipalatinsk with the news that all writers, poets, both mature and young, could participate in the competition for the best poems devoted to Jambil. Kayum wrote a poem devoted to Jambil. At that time he was in the last year of his study at the Teachers Training Institute. His poem was recognized among the best, so Kayum was invited to come to Almaty for the celebration. This event was a big gathering of Kazakh poets and *jirshi* (*poets who sang historic poems*). Writers from all over Soviet Union also attended. It was a time of inspiration and joy.

During the celebration the news that Jambil had been awarded the Lenin prize came from Moscow. A small delegation of young poets, which included Kayum, was selected to visit Jambil at the house where he was staying. Kayum was chosen to bring the news to the old wise poet. There is a photo of these young poets with Jambil.

When the delegation came to the house Jambil was praying. Although the propaganda of that time depicted Jambil as supporting the Soviet ideology, he followed his own muse. He was a poet of the people. When he heard the news about the award he was not impressed and asked how it would change his fate in the hereafter. When the town of Aulie-ata was renamed in his honor Jambil asked forgiveness from the ancestral spirits there. When Stalin sent him special regards he responded immediately with a satirical epigram about Stalin.

The next two days, May 20-22, 1938 another event followed. It was the Plenum of the Writers Union of Kazakhstan. Poets-winners of the competition recited their poems from the stage. Jambil sat in the Presidium. Kayum recollected:

“My turn came. I recited and then gave my poem to Jambil. He gave me a hug, thanked sincerely and wished me all well. After that Sabit Mukanov who chaired the meeting recited his verse devoted to me. He wrote this verse - wish on the back of the picture where him and myself are pictured together. He probably was also inspired by Jambil’s speech as he gave the picture to me at that moment.”

Kayum met Jambil several times at other meeting of the kind. He came to say the last farewell to this great poet of Kazakh people in 1945.

One more meeting surprise awaited Kayum during that event. This was the poet Jumagali Sain. He met the delegation of Semipalatinsk in Almaty. Meeting with him developed in friendship between poets. In 1939 Sain came to Semipalatinsk. One day Kayum and Sain went to the outskirts of Semipalatinsk, they talked, relaxed. The awakening nature, blue skies, unlimited horizons of the steppe inspired their talks. One moment Sain took a pencil and paper. He wrote something. He gave it to Kayum. It was a poem devoted to their friendship:

We are all energetic and merry when we are young
We are happy to see the shining golden moon.
We want youth time come back when we get older
Someone wants the love back
Someone yearns for merry days
Some dream of winds’ flight in the skies.
Some recollect childhood that had run as fast as maral.
And I will remember happy days of our communication.
This filled my heart.
When I go back to Almaty
I will remember you, Kayum.
You will also remember me.
We spent much time together like old friends.
Let this verse be reminder of our talks.

(word for word translation)

In June 1939 the second congress of the Writers Union of Kazakhstan took place. Writers from Kazakhstan and other Republics participated. Mukhtar Auezov, Ivan Shukhov, Leonid Sobolev were among them.

Kayum Mukhamedkhanov was fascinated by the Kazakh poet from Pavlodar - Estai Berkimbayev who was always surrounded by writers, composers, youth, and journalists. Everyone wanted to talk with him. Kayum listened to breath taking songs of him that he sang to dombra. He could not talk with Estai at the event. But later he was given a chance. It happened so that they were given train tickets back home in one compartment. People continued to come to the compartment to say hi to Estai. Kayum invited Estai to stay in his house in Semipalatinsk. He agreed and stayed there for two weeks. Kayum recollected: “I did not bother him. He relaxed. Sometimes he would take dombra and sing in a calm voice. His verse was sincere and true. He was 70 that time but

was full of energy and he had young soul. His speech sounded like a tune. I was curious to know about this unique poet's life, thoughts, his creative plans. One day I asked Estai on what the first song he composed was. There was a pause. He seemed to frown. Then he told me the following story:

“This was the song “Khorlan”. I composed it when I was 20. That was a love drama. Khorlan was a daughter of a rich sultan from Kipchak-uruk tribe of Sunkar place. I met her and her sister at one of the events where I sang. I loved her from the first sight. She liked me too. In a year I wanted to marry her. But I was not a good fit from her father's thinking and he quickly engaged her to another person.”

Estai then told Kayum that in six years he came to his beloved just to look at her and to greet her.

Last time he saw her was in 1931. They both were old.

Estai went back home by ship on the Irtysh river. In 1945 the 100-th anniversary of Abai was celebrated. Kayum was working in the organizing committee of that jubilee. He invited Estai as an honored guest of the event. Estai gave Kayum the last song he created and some materials about himself. Kayum forwarded these materials to the composer Jubanov to be included in his book “Nightingales of centuries”. Estai was not open to all people. He talked sincerely with those who he felt he could trust. Kayum was that kind of person.

After meeting Estai Kayum shared with his acquaintances and colleagues the story of the creation of “Khorlan”. Soon after it he read the article written by Begalin. He retold Kayum's story and wrote as if it was him (Begalin) to whom Estai had told the story of the song creation. Kayum was not cross at it. He only noted: “OK. Let people know the truth from his retelling. At least he did not distort my story...”

...June 1948. Several writers and poets of Semipalatinsk were awaiting the arrival of the Russian writer Vsevolod Ivanov. They headed their way by the ship on the Irtysh river in the direction of the airport. Somebody remembered that the very first story that writer created was “On the Irtysh river”. When Ivanov showed up at the airplane ladder he smiled. He greeted everyone as if he had known him for a long time, like old friends. Kayum remembered his impressive face, big nosed, wide forehead so specific to the steppe's inhabitants. He smiled with kind smile seen through thick glasses.

At that time Kayum supervised the Semipalatinsk branch of the Writers' Union of Kazakhstan. He was responsible for the work of Semipalatinsk, Pavlodar, Ust-Kamenogorsk towns and their outskirts. These sites were included in Semipalatinsk oblast/region of that time. So Kayum followed Ivanov in all his meetings, be it meetings with the editorial boards of the local newspapers or farmers, industrial enterprises and cultural events. Ivanov stayed in Kayum's hospitable house. He did not want to go to the hotel. Kayum remembers the days when they visited the museums of Semipalatinsk. It is well known that Kayum himself had devoted much energy and effort in gathering the materials, historical documents, items for the museum of Abai. He cherished museum work. At that time the museum of Abai was located in five room house where Abai used to stop when he came to Semipalatinsk from the steppe. The museum produced great impression on Vsevolod Ivanov. Later he wrote an article on Mukhtar Auezov's novel

“Abai”. And the article began with the visit to the museum of Abai in Semipalatinsk that amazed him.

Long walks and talks around Semiplatinsk left vivid recollections. Kayum told: “When we stopped at the house-museum of Dostoevsky, Ivanov addressed to me:

- Kayum, you are the director of the museum of Abai. You have to also remember about Dostoevsky. He was a friend of Shokan Valikhanov. (*note: scientist, traveler*) and he kept memories on him through the very last days of his life. You know that Dostoevsky kept his manuscripts in the rosewood box that Valikhanov gave him as a sign of their friendship. –

Kayum continued: “Frankly speaking, I did not know that and I muttered something – Yes, they were big friends.”

Vsevolod Ivanov told Kayum:

- It is needed to establish the house-museum of Dostoevsky in the mansion where he lived for several years (*note: Dostoevsky was sent in prison to Semipalatinsk from St.Petersburg for his free thinking*). I will talk on this with local authorities.-

Kayum continued: “Later I read more about the rosewood box in the recollections of Dostoevsky’s wife - Anna Grigoriyevna Dostoevskaya. Dostoevsky would tell to her: “Do you see that big redwood box? This is a gift of my Siberian friend Shokan Valikhanov. I cherish it so much. I keep my manuscripts, letters and all that is close to my heart here.”

Kayum went on: “True, Vsevolod Ivanov had a great memory. He remembered all he saw and heard. Then we headed our way to telegraph station. Before sending a telegram home Ivanov noted:

- The telegraph line between Omsk and Semipalatinsk was laid in 1872...-

When we talked about traveling by ship he told:

- In 1863 the first ship sailed on the Irtysh river from Semiplatinsk to Ust-Kamenogorsk and the lake Zaisan. It was called “Hurray!” This is wonderful: ”Hurray!-, and he laughed.”

Ivanov felt at home in Kayum’s house. He praised tasty food cooked by Farkhinur. He enjoyed listening to Kayum’s children reciting of the Russian poems. He was amazed at it. More talks on culture and history took place during long evenings at table.

Kayum told: “Ivanov talked about the Kazakh literature with great professionalism. He recollected his work with the writers Mailin and Musrepov on writing the film script to “Amangeldi” (*note: Amangeldi led liberation upraise in 1916*).

- I can not write about something that I have vague idea... I was born and grown up here in Semipalatinsk oblast. I used to stay for a long time in the Kazakh auls. (*note: villages*). In childhood my friends were Kazakh children. Can you believe that I spoke the Kazakh language in my childhood? I know well the history of upraise of 1916. I met its participants. I have begun writing a book on this issue.”

Kayum continued: “Then we talked about the translations of the Kazakhs poets and writers in Russian language. Vsevolod Ivanov ridiculed the notion of “word for word translation”. He talked with great respect about Marshak’s translations:

- Why does not Marshak need “word for word translation”? Why his translations of Shakespeare and Burns are so vivid and popular in Russian language? Unfortunately, this is not the case with Abai’s poetry. It is known that Abai himself composed music on poems. But Russian translations of Abai lack something, there is no music in them and they are less popular...-

Kayum remembered Ivanov as an erudite, a cheerful and open person. His recollections about Ivanov are red as a novel itself.

After Ivanov’s death his wife Tamara Ivanova continued correspondence with Kayum. Her letters to him are full of respect and appreciation of the Kazakh writer and the researcher. She invited Kayum’s family to rest at their summer house near Moscow. Kayum did not have a chance to go there. Tamara Ivanova read Kayum’s recollections on Ivanov and she wrote in her letter:

“ I am writing you the second letter. I wrote the first one when I had read your article “ Ivanov in Semipalatinsk” in the newspaper “Star of Irtysh lands”. This time I read a the article in the newspaper “Irtysh” entitled “In one breath with the steppe” devoted to Ivanov. I am so grateful to you for writing these articles. I wish you join them to publish in a magazine. I think that it perfectly fits with the magazine “Friendship of peoples”. I know the chief editor there and I will suggest your article provided you want this and you send it to me. I apologize if my suggestion is not in place...” , - she continued.

Kayum Mukhamedkhanov was a happy person as the fate gave him many meetings with the prominent people of culture, arts, literature, and history. He was a lucky person to talk with them, communicate, and become friends and colleagues. They told him details of their biographies and creativity. Kayum’s reminiscences on those people built one more layer that contributes to understanding of our culture and literature development. And today his recollections are the foundations for future research!

People saw that Kayum was not only a great researcher but he was also a preserver of manuscripts, original documents. He was the one who carefully dealt with the originals and cherished them as invaluable foundations of the Kazakh history.

And definitely it was not by chance that Abai’s granddaughter Maken gave to Kayum an old note-book. This notebook was a genealogical tree of their family that she created. She highly respected Kayum and she trusted him. Maken invited Kayum to her 80-th birthday that she celebrated in a restaurant. Kayum as always was not seen in a crowd. According to the tradition she assigned the most honored places at table herself. Maken –*apa* (*note: “apa” is the address to elderly female person*) announced:” On right from me Kayum will sit and on the left side Gulnar Dulatova”(*note: Gulnar Dulatova is a daughter of Dulatov, one of the “Alash Party” intelligentsia who perished in 1930-s*).

... Just little time will pass. Kayum Mukhamedkhanov himself will become an object of worship and research. People who met him, who knew him will write their recollections about Kayum. They will try to restore in their memories his look, his movements, and his words. These threads will connect the past, today and the future through his personality. These threads logically will reach out to all significant people of the Kazakh literature and culture. And these threaded patterns are the crossroads of the fates. This is here where we begin to understand the overall picture of our great history.

Instead of an afterword

OBVIOUS BUT IMPROBABLE INTERVIEW

I do not know how Kayum Mukhamedkhanov would have been taken the idea of a hypothetical interview with him. He valued accuracy, factual justification. He was very careful in research so that the “subjunctive mood” did not violate the truth. Of course the interview with the passed away aksakal is improbable. (*note: “aksakal” means an elderly wise person*). But paradoxically enough it is obvious! His numerous works, articles, reminiscences, draft papers contain answers to many questions that I would have asked this amazing person. In reality my colleagues and I were lucky enough to talk with Kayum Mukhamedkhanov and hear his responses to some questions. Kayum’s published works have the responses on those questions that I did not ask him.

Looking back with your mind’s eye are you ready to point out the major outcomes of your long and hard way of life?

Every human being has his fate and his recognition. There is always time to draw conclusions. Time flies so fast. I am not the one to evaluate the value and amount of my research or my literary creativity. But what I know is that my long life was filled with disciplined, focused work. I was born in the middle of winter, in January. Because of that, I feel my life was a sunny, blossoming summer rather than a bitter, stormy winter.

You have written an enormous amount of research , most of an academic nature. Therefore, the logical question is: Why didn’t you defend your doctoral dissertation? You had achieved so much academically through your excellent research?

There are many reasons for this. I believe the most objective are the following. Too heavy was the blow of unjustified repression in a moral and physical sense. Also, there was overload with teaching and community service work; my age and my state of health speak for themselves; and the responsibilities of taking care of my family

and raising ten children. As a member of the Writers' Union I had to save my time and energy to write creative works.

Probably this question is not important but still it arises. Why have you kept so much of the materials that you used for your research? Or there might be a hidden pedagogy so as future researchers analyze mountains of the “research ore” before they come to the truth?

Sources, given correct and thorough analysis, are the only proof of truth. Mukhtar Auezov and I were always together in defending our ideas. Many of our “colleagues and friends” took the path of slander. They wanted to root out everything that Mukhtar had been doing for 30 years. They called me Mukhtar’s “tail”. They considered Shakarim a bandit. Fate has beaten us but it could not break us! Well, what is me... It saddens me deeply that Abai, Mukhtar, and the Alash intelligentsia suffered so much and experienced such great injustice. Mukhtar Auezov was attacked throughout his life. But neither of us retreated from our research ideas. Time is a great judge. It returned everything to its place. Now our ideas are the pride of the Kazakh nation.

Fortunately, times have changed. Would you say that Abai’s creativity and that of his followers are currently being studied widely and objectively?

Abai was always used for ideological purposes. His philosophy definitely needs further study. Mukhtar Auezov, the most important expert in his philosophy, is gone. Some academicians do not understand Abai even today!?...They are ready to accept the idea of publishing Abai’s works with the same textual errors previously published... Abai’s collection of works in two volumes has been published and for the first time with textological analysis. I insisted on four volume publications. We have to go on with this work. We need to understand Abai properly. We need to know the canons of the research in order to avoid falsifications and fabrications in research. But this is still not the case. Abai said: “Dreams are ahead. Disappointment is behind. Life is deceptive.”

What kind of state are we building? What ideology do we have? Our history is still going on. Today “the fabricated” batirs from this or that tribe are revealed. They did not exist in reality! (*note: batir is a Kazakh warrior that led people. Batirs were also men of literature, composers, and poets*). The false “batirs” obscure the real heroes and the true history of the Kazakh people. Even though I am not a historian, I consider it my duty as a Kazakh researcher to contribute to the development of the principle of historicity in the national literature. Falsehoods continue to be created by those in search of glory, and believed by the gullible. Can we be called a nation if we do not consider this?

It seems that you know everything or almost everything about Abai. You studied Abai’s amazing life and times thoroughly. If you had the chance to ask Abai one question, what would it be?

I would ask Abai a question that might sound naïve: “How did you become a poet?”
And he would laugh and respond: “Poets are born. They do not become poets.”

And happiness... Can you tell now what it is?

It is great happiness to be free, to tell the truth and not to be afraid of anything. This is the only way to live! And this is the most important principal for every human being.

Kayum Mukhamedkhanov on his origin

The following is an introductory speech of Kayum Mukhamedkhanov at one of his meetings with people. He took the floor all his life talking on issues of literature, culture, intelligentsia and its role, rehabilitation of the members of the “Alash” Party, on novices in his research and many more. Kayum Mukhamedkhanov’s speech only adds to more understanding of the role his father Mukhamedkhan Seitkulov played in fostering this sort of discussions that determined the future of the nation. His house was a center of education and culture. New ideas were born here. Here Kayum gave a brief description of his own life and creativity. It is clear to a reader that his parents played a significant role in nurturing Kayum as a human being and as a professional. Some notes in brackets make the text more clear to a foreign reader.

I would like to begin our talk about my family upbringing as it plays a great role in my spiritual development. I must note that I had a happy childhood. My father, Mukhamedkhan Seitkulov, was born in 1870. He was an educated and cultured man, interested in the history and culture of his people. He had the richest library that occupied a hall.

My father subscribed to many newspapers and magazines published in Kazakh, Russian, and Tatar languages. For example, in our home, one could read the first published magazine “Aikap”, and the newspaper “Kazakh”; Tatar newspaper “Time”, magazine “Shura” and many others. He also subscribed to the newspaper “Sariarka” and the magazine “Abai” both published in Semipalatinsk in 1917-1918. The “Abai” magazine was published on funding of merchants and Maecenas. My father funded the first issues of this magazine. He also funded the publication of the “Sariarka” newspaper. Mukhtar Auezov and Jusipbek Aimaityov established the magazine “Abai”. It was soon closed down.

New books were added to the family library on a regular basis. Part of my father’s collection included books on oral folk creativity, important classical books of the world and Russian literature.

It is important to note that my father had the first published book of Abai’s poetry. It was

published in 1909 in St. Petersburg. The library contained Shakespeare, Shakarim's works "Kalkaman-Mamir" and "Enlik-Kebek" (*note: the latter is similar to Romeo and Juliet*). Such editions as "Kazakh mirror", "Genealogy of the Kazakhs, history of the Kazakhs and the Kazakh khans", "Book on religion of Moslems" were also part of his collection. There were too many books to list. One by one I worked my way through the volumes. Multi-volume edition of the "Complete geographical description of our motherland" under editorship of the Russian scholar of oriental studies Semyonov-Tyanshansky was on the library shelf too. The 18-th volume of it was called "Kyrgyz lands". (*note: earlier they did not distinguish and call both Kazakhs and Kyrgyz under a common name "Kyrgyz"*). That volume published in 1903 was devoted to the history of the Kazakh people. One of the authors of this volume was a great representative of the Kazakh intelligentsia Alikhan Bukeikhanov, the future leader of the Party "Alash" and the head of the Government "Alash" (*note: these democratic and progressive people who formed the independent state and the government elaborated principles of autonomy for Kazakhstan, its constitution. But it was suppressed by the Soviets and they all perished in the massacre of 1937*).

Bukeikhanov depicted true history of the Kazakhs and their culture. I would like to cite some of his thoughts that help in better understanding of my people. He wrote the following:

"The Kazakh people in the quantity and the vast territory they occupy are in the first place among all Turkic people of the Asiatic continent and in the second place after Turks-Osmans on the earth" (p.199). "Kazakhs are the most cultured nation among all Turkic people of the Asiatic continent and no doubt they are in store of the best future. Their population is growing and it is open to cultural gains. One can judge on the culture of the Kazakhs by the nature of the language, ability and form for thought expression or richness of folk literature and the state of arts development" (p.203)

When speaking about the history of Kazakh literature, he wrote about Abai: "Abai Kunanbaev's name should be named as a representative of new directions in Kazakh poetry. He is the author of many verses that are elegant in form and poetic in content, especially in his descriptions of nature. Abai is the author of excellent translations of Pushkin's "Eugene Onegin" and many verses of Lermontov. He made them understandable to the Kazakhs" (p.204).

It is clear from these quotes that Bukeikhanov could assess Abai's genius during his lifetime with the merit that Abai deserves. Bukeikhanov was the first one to bring the message on Abai to Russian speaking readers.

In Abai's obituary Bukeikhanov described Abai's life story and creative work for the first time in print. The obituary was published in the newspaper "Semipalatinsk leaflet" in 1905 and in "Notes of Semipalatinsk branch of Western Siberian branch of the Russian Emperor Geographical Society" (edition 3, 1907).

At the end of the obituary Bukeikhanov wrote:

"The originals of Abai's works, his translations of Pushkin, Lermontov, Krylov have been collected by his son Turagul and will soon be published by the Semipalatinsk branch of the Russian Emperor Geographical Society" with Bukeikhanov, editor.

As his works proved Abai was a poet of great force. He is the pride of the Kazakh people. There was no such a poet as Abai before. He put on the highest tops the spiritual creativity of his people. His beautiful verses on seasons can compete with verses of great European poets.

(Biographical data for this was collected by Abai's nephew - Kakitai).

Alikhan Bukeikhanov”

This sort of reading was in the library of my father. My father created a favorable atmosphere of intellectual spirit and insightful communication in the house. Prominent representatives of the Kazakh intelligentsia, scientists, people of literature and arts gathered in our house. Among them there were great representatives of the “Alash” Party: Alikhan Bukeikhanov, Akhmet Baitursunov, Mirjakip Dulatov, Mukhtar Auezov, Jusipbek Aimaitov, Sultanmakhmud Toraigirov.

When I was in the elementary school I was fortunate to study from textbooks written by Baitursunov and Dulatov. Baitursunov was a famous linguist who reformed Kazakh grammar.

I want to point out a specific attention to the fact that Mukhtar Auezov was one of the people closest to my father. He used to stay in our house with his friends in 20's. I remember well how he conducted rehearsals of his plays: “Enlik-Kebek” and “Karagoz” in my father's house. The strong and clear voices of the famous Kazakh singers and musicians Amre Kashaubayev, Isa Baizakov, Isain Janbirbayev often resounded throughout the house. Shakarim and Abai's friend and follower Kokpai stayed in my father's house when they came to Semipalatinsk from steppe auls.

In 1928 a horrible time came to our people. First, confiscation of the cattle from bais (rich people) took place. It was then followed by forceful collectivization (*note: when all live stock was taken from people and put in a collective farms; more than one million people perished of starvation at that time*). Although hidden at the time, people are now aware of the starvation of a massive numbers of Kazakh people in the 1930's.

Mass repression of the Kazakh intelligentsia took place in 30s. Baitursunov, Dulatov, Aimaitov, Auezov and others suffered in prisons. Many representatives of Kazakh intelligentsia perished at that time.

Repression of intelligentsia in 1937 dealt our family serious blows. My father Mukhamedkhan Seitkulov was arrested by NKVD on November 24, 1937 and on November 27 he was sentenced to death by three people (*note: any three signatures were enough at that tie to kill a person without a court*). He was shot on December 2, 1937. (*note: NKVD – the first letters of these four words stay for the National Committee of Internal Affairs at that time. In 50-s it was renamed into KGB- Committee of State Security*)

I will stop now a little bit on my research, pedagogical and literary-creative activity. When I was a student of the Philological Department of the Semipalatinsk Pedagogical Institute I was fortunate to study from such professors as Sovsun, Kokumbayev, Pereligin,

Ismailov, Shashkin, Tsarevskaya, Malishev, and Struve. They not only transferred knowledge but they fostered a love of learning and involved us in the process of research. I was invited to teach at the Department of the Kazakh language and literature upon graduation from the Semipalatinsk Pedagogical Institute.

In 1937 my first poetry was published in a local newspaper. 1939 I began working closely under Mukhtar Auezov's supervision on my research on Abai and his literary school. Our collaboration and friendship continued until Auezov's death.

In 1940 I published a series of articles on creativity of the poets, and composers who belonged to Abai's followers under the common title "Literary school of Abai". I was happy to find previously unknown handwritten manuscripts of Abai and to prove that they were in fact his, by doing research analysis of the text (*textological analysis*). Nine verses of Abai that I discovered were included in the "Complete Collection of Abai's Works" of 1945 edition. In the following decades I discovered more of Abai's poetry.

In 1940 I was admitted to the membership of the Writers' Union of the USSR. Also in that year I actively participated in establishing of the Abai's museum in Semipalatinsk where I worked first as the senior researcher. In 1947, when the museum was under the umbrella of the Academy of Sciences, I was appointed the museum director.

Also during that time period I was a plenipotentiary of the Writers' Union of Kazakhstan in Semipalatinskaya oblast .

In 1944 a competition on creation of the State Anthem of the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic was announced. I participated. My text won and was approved by the competition commission. In 1945 it was approved by the Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic.

Between 1945 and 1950-s I published eleven articles on literary school of Abai and the articles "Abai and Pushkin", "Abai and Lermontov", "Abai and Krilov" and others.

In 1951 I defended my dissertation on the topic "The Literary School of Abai" on Candidate of Sciences Degree. (*note: equals to PhD degree*)

In the 1950's there was another purge of the intelligentsia. A few months after defending my dissertation, on December 1, 1951 I was arrested by MGB (*note: Ministry of State Security which later was renamed in KGB*). I was sentenced to 25 years in prison.

I was released from imprisonment and fully rehabilitated after Stalin's death in 1955.

In 1955-1959 I published 11 articles on Abai and two monographs "Magaviya Kunanbaev" and "Textology of Abai's works".

In 1984 a collection of my plays was published. I will name only few of many published research works:

 "Research-based Biography of Auezov"

 "Biography and Textology of Bukhar jirau's works" (*note: jirau means poet*)

 "Textology of works of Makhambet"

I edited the collection of works of Abai's follower Uais Shondibayev for publication and it was first published in 1988.

...During the last few years many prominent members of the Kazakh intelligentsia were rehabilitated, among them Shakarim, Baitursunov, Jumabayev, Aimaurov, Dulatov, Bukeikhanov. I prepared and published series of articles about their lives and work.

In 1918 Auezov and Aimaurov established a magazine “Abai” in Semipalatinsk. It was banned almost immediately after publication. Seventy years later, in 1992, we resumed publishing it in connection with 150-th anniversary of Abai. (*note: Kayum Mukhamedkhanov was a very modest person and he even did not mention that this was him who put the great effort to resume this magazine*).

...In short, this is my life route.

I retired in 1989 after having worked for more than 50 years at the Semipalatinsk Pedagogical Institute.

Currently the Auezov Institute of Literature and Arts of the National Academy of Sciences of Kazakhstan where I now work is preparing an academic edition of Abai’s works. I am also preparing for publication my research about Abai’s students – his followers and the collection of their creative works.

Kayum Mukhamedkhanov
(beginning of 1990s of the 20-th century)

Note: Kayum Mukhamedkhanov was extremely modest person. He did not mention here that a lion portion of all that work, i.e. textological commentaries to 2-volume of Abai’s verses and poems was done by him and it is based on his life-long research. That is why they invited him to Almaty to prepare this edition. Research/academic commentaries include but are not limited to explanation of Abai’s usage of Persian, Arab, old Kazakh words, religious terms etc. Kayum gave proper explanation for correct understanding of Abai’s works. Several editions distorted meaning of Abai’s words by incorrect spelling or using instead quite opposite, ridiculous words- definitely not Abai’s. They could not read his thoughts properly or comprehend what Abai meant, so wrote his complex ideas very simplistically. Often their interpretation was opposite of what Abai intended.

Note: “Abai’s school, literary school of Abai, Abai’s followers” is a unique phenomenon indeed. There are but few such schools in world literature. A large group of Abai’s followers, who were poets, composers, fairy-talkers, young talented thinkers were united around Abai, taking his ideas and his spirit and developing them in their creative works. Both Abai’s and their works were handwritten or by those who listened to them. Some were only preserved orally. Some did not survive. So, Kayum Mukhamedkhanov made trips to auls where Abai and his followers lived. He talked with elderly people, wrote down from what they recited, found manuscripts, researched them and by knowing canons of text analysis and peculiar language of each and every poet – he revealed and fixed what poem/verse/other big work is whose! Huge, unbelievable work! Besides, he wrote not only just biographies of all poets - Abai’s followers but he wrote research-based biographies analyzing their creativity: why, how, based on what comparisons with Russian, world

literature, Oriental motives/legends, folks, historical events of the past here and there this was written.

INTERVIEW with Kayum Mukhamedkhanov conducted by
Edil Assylbekov, journalist of the newspaper “Kazakhstanskaya Pravda”: April, 1995

“A teacher deprived of students is a bitter widower” (Abai)

Kayum-aga, your life and creative route was not covered with roses. One can talk much about you. We would like to know about your recent activities.

In connection with the preparation of Abai's jubilee I was invited to work at the National Academy of Sciences in 1991. The Department of the Study of Abai was re-opened at the Institute of Literature and Arts, where I work as a senior researcher.

As my health and age allow I am helping researchers and publishers prepare an edition of the collection of the works of Abai. In particular, I have completed the work on textology (text analysis) of the two volume Abai's works with commentaries on each piece of work. These books contain previously unknown verses and translations of Abai. To tell you the truth, I suggested to publish full collections of Abai's works in four volumes with research commentaries. At the moment the decision is to publish only two volumes of Abai's works with research commentaries.

And when will we see these books?

The manuscripts are at the printers. Soon Abai's admirers will hold these books in their hands. Another book of Abai is under preparation in “Jalin” Publishing House. I participated in its preparation at the request of their publishers too. When the agency “People” published Abai's works my help was also needed.

I am an honorary chairperson but as well as contributing author of the magazine “Abai”. This magazine was established in 1918 by Aimaitov and Auezov, but closed down the same year. In 1992, after more than 70 years, the magazine is again available for readers.

In relevance to the issue of undeservingly closed and unfairly repressed. We know that you are a researcher, a writer, a scholar on literary study who never participated in politics. You devoted all your life to the study of Abai and for this you were imprisoned for political reasons. Your “crime” was that you supported Auezov's position on the study of creativity of Abai. You studied and implemented these ideas by defending the dissertation. You have been always courageous in striving for the ideas. Today is the time to implement the ideas of the remote youth.

Now it may sound ridiculous that a researcher can be imprisoned simply for his or her literary philosophy, but it certainly happened. No other literary or historical analyses other than that of Marxist-Leninism were permitted. The book “Abai and His Followers” that

Auezov and I prepared for publication was destroyed at the printers. A big campaign was organized around our “different mindedness.” Auezov and I were accused of Pan-Islamism, Pan-Turkism, and other “incorrect” ideology. The prison cell instead of the professorial chair was my reward for my scholarship. My research became my undoing.

Though I am old and many years have passed since my original work was denied publication, I am happy that my works are finally being published. Yet, how much more work remains! In 1993-1994 “Daur” Publishing House agreed to publish the series “The Poets Who Followed Abai”. These books consist of the materials on the life and work of Abai’s sons: Akilbai, Magaviya, Turagul and other Abai’s followers who are: Kakitai, Kokpai and Uais. The third book is at the printers. It highlights the life and creativity of Arip, Aset, Muka and Aubakir.

Justice has been restored but at what a price! The disputes on Abai himself continued until 1950-s regarding: “Is he contemporary? Is he a friend? Is he needed for the proletariat?” Abai used to be depicted as a huge tree that had grown on a lifeless soil with no roots, no fruit. But now all has changed. What is the state of one of the branches on Abai’s study – on the School of Abai?

In theory the importance of studying Abai’s creative surrounding, his students and followers is not questioned. At the same time no one studies it to the rigorous standard of modern literary scholarship. Moreover, the fate of Abai’s works today is not a concern of the so-called “researchers”. Can you imagine how I could feel when some of them suggested to leave all as it was in several editions, meaning to continue publishing Abai’s works with mistakes and distortions? The only argument being that this has become familiar to a reader?!...Can you imagine that this is suggested by those “researchers” now, after decades of my painstaking analysis of Abai’s texts, correcting misspelled words, adding deleted ones, and checking all punctuation? Accuracy is not important to them.

It is obvious, if Abai were alive he would not be happy with his works that had been published with distortions and mistakes. Saying nothing about the translations of Abai’s works in Russian. Translations of Abai can not be mastered by mature and young poets-translators. Translations did not achieve the level of the original. Moreover, they have not even approximated them. Let us put the question more broadly: Do you think if Abai would be satisfied with the life, manners, moral of our citizens today?

Definitely not. Where are those ideals for which Abai called his compatriots? Have moral standards improved since his time? The same failings Abai criticized so strongly with such anguish live on. Idle talk, bragging, arrogance, hypocrisy, envy, laziness, “honoring” titles, careerism, selfishness, and many other faults flourish like weeds in society today. Nowhere near disappearing, some have changed shape and style, but not substance. I do not want to say that this is true of every individual in society, but it is clear these vices still play a very influential role in society today.

Why is it so that these negative traits of inner world of people did not disappear many

years after Abai's death?

There are many reasons for this. Philosophers, politicians, historians, sociologists, psychologists expressed their professional views on it. I will say the following. We talk much about Abai, especially at the eve of his every anniversary. Some in our society want to turn him into an idol, another ideology, just as was done with the classics of Marxist-Leninism. And still many do not know Abai, do not read him. And if they don't – they can not see their own and others' shortcomings as clearly as Abai saw them.

One should not have to "show off the love" for Abai. It is enough to know him and to aspire for the ideals that he called us to. A person who mastered Abai, can check his step with him and overcome difficulties of life easily. One does not need other moral codes. We need more people with deep understanding of Abai. Today when sharp changes in moral criteria have taken place, when many have turned the wrong way at the crossroads of modernism, Abai's words are even more important to use for guidance in these confusing, shifting times.

Kayum-aga, we began our talk about Abai's jubilee. Let us conclude with it too.

Let us all of us and especially the youth know that their great contribution to the jubilee is in understanding Abai and studying his heritage. I strongly believe in the following: the time will come when talking about Abai's followers we will consider not only those who saw him, heard his wisdom, listened to his truth in his life time, but we will also consider all grateful posterity, many generations to come. Only then one can say that Abai's dream come true and he is not "a teacher without students."

Biographical information on Kayum Mukhamedkhanov

Born January 5, 1916 in Semipalatinsk, Kazakhstan

Died June 30, 2004 in Semipalatinsk, Kazakhstan

- 1924 -1928 study at Kazakh elementary school, Semipalatinsk
- 1929-1932 study at the school for young collective farmers, Semipalatinsk
- 1932-1933 work as a cultural worker at the management unit of flour processing plant, Semipalatinsk
- 1932-1934 study at the agricultural school, Semipalatinsk
- 1933-1934 taught Kazakh language for the transportation workers and worked there in personnel department
- 1934-1935 taught Kazakh language at the intensive courses for medical workers and teachers, Semipalatinsk
- 1934-1935 work at the river fleet as a provisory, Semipalatinsk
- 1935-1937 study at two year teachers' courses, Semipalatinsk
- 1936-1940 teacher of Kazakh language and literature at secondary school, Semipalatinsk
- 1937 –first publications of his own poems in local newspaper, Semipalatinsk
- 1937-1938 taught literature at two year courses for teachers, Semipalatinsk

- 1938-1939 –a student of the Semipalatinsk State Teachers Training Institute (graduated with distinction)
- 1938-1940: published a number of literary critics articles in local and republican press. Translated classical works in Kazakh language from various languages.
- 1938-1941 a student of Semipalatinsk State Pedagogical Institute (graduated with distinction; passed exams for 3-4 courses by extern). When he was a student he was invited to teach the Kazakh literature for Russian groups at this Institute.
- 1939 – beginning of the research under supervision of Mukhtar Auezov
- 1939-1941 – a faculty member of Kazakh literature of Semipalatinsk Pedagogical Institute
- 1940 – was admitted to membership of the Writers’ Union of the USSR
- 1940 – active participation in establishing the museum of Abai in Semipalatinsk
- 1940-1941 – senior researcher of the museum of Abai in Semipalatinsk
- 1941-1942 - service in the Soviet army (Labor Army) as a building unit at Sverdlovsk and Magnitogorsk
- 1942 -1947: plenipotentiary representative of Writers’ union of Kazakhstan in Semipalatinsk oblast/region.
Revealing of previously unknown poems and verses of Abai. Writing several plays.
- 1942-1951 - a faculty member, a senior faculty member of Kazakh literature department of Semipalatinsk Pedagogical Institute. At the same time work in the museum of Abai.
- 1945 – author of the verses of the first State Anthem of Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic. Music by Mukan Tulebayev.
- 1945 -1950: publication of a number of articles on literary school of Abai and on its interrelation with Russian literature. Completion of the dissertation “Literary school of Abai”(research supervisor Mukhtar Auezov).
- 1947-1951 – Director of state literary museum of Abai (work at the Pedagogical Institute same time)
- 1951: publication of the “Collection of works of Abai’s followers” with research commentaries
- April 7,1951: public defense of the dissertation: “Literary school of Abai”for PhD degree. The Diploma was awarded after confirmation in Moscow as per procedure.
- December 1, 1951 - January 13, 1955: imprisonment as politically repressed intelligentsia under article 58
- September 1,1955 – reinstatement as a faculty member at the Semipalatinsk state pedagogical institute; work as a senior faculty member of the Russian philology department
- 1955-1959: published 11 research articles on Abai’ study and two monographs: “Magavya Kunanbaev. Life and creativity” and “Textology of Abai’s works”.
- June 12, 1959 – second defense of the dissertation “Poets of Abai’s life time”
- 1960 -1989 : senior faculty member; associate professor; professor of Semipalatinsk Pedagogical Institute. 1989 – retired. Longevity of work in this institute is more than 50 years

- Longevity of teaching activity throughout life – 70 years (Kayum began teaching at the age of 16)
- July 27, 1990 – 1995 – senior researcher of the department on Abai of the Institute of literature and arts named after Auezov. (was invited by the Government of Kazakhstan to prepare academic publications of Abai to 150-th anniversary).
- 1992 –significant contribution to the revival of the journal “Abai”
- 1993-1997 – publication of 4 volume books “Poets - Abai’s pupils” and the book “Abai’s followers”
- 1995 – significant contribution to jubilee 2 volume academic works of Abai (with research commentaries) and the encyclopedia “Abai”
- 1995 through the end of life: June 30, 2004:
Creative work; meeting with public; publications.
The last four years of life – a research consultant of the Semipalatinsk Pedagogical Institute

Some of Abai’s poetry translated
by Dina Mukhamedkhan in 1993-1994:

Poetry is the governor of language
Genius creates wonders even from stone
The heart gets warmer if speech is light
And the ear is caressed by the beauty of the language

.....

Be your own self
Look into the depth of your soul
You will find treasure there
Keep it
Do not discard it

.....

I nurtured the dog from puppy
And I have known its teeth.
I taught the archers the art of marksmanship
And I myself have become their target

.....

The speech of the beloved does not know words.
Love's language is this:
Eyebrow moves
Slightly eyes flash
The question or answer is this.
I remember I also talked in this manner
And the language was clear to me,
That language...
But the memory is vanished...
I have forgotten it.

[Click here for pictures...](#)