





# KAZAKHSTAN



FLINT RIVER





Photographs by  
Dragoljub Zamurovic



Handwritten text in Cyrillic script, likely a signature or a note related to the drawing.

Text by

Klara Serikbaeva





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# FOREWORD

I accepted with pleasure the invitation to write a short Foreword to this book on Kazakhstan, which has been prepared for publication by Kazakh and British publishers. In my view this book will be useful, above all, because it will acquaint the foreign reader with our country, its prospects for development, and with the learning, culture and traditions of this multinational state. This would seem to me to be very timely. It is very important that the world should know more about Kazakhstan, the progress of its reforms, the country's potential, its efforts for peace, and the lives and problems of its peoples.

We need to stimulate interest in order to broaden co-operation on all levels between Kazakhstan and foreign partners and to attract further foreign investment. It is also important that we expand our political, cultural and information dialogue with other states.

Readers will probably be familiar with the processes taking place in the former state of the Soviet Union. Each republic has its own specific features, but there is also much in common. We are all moving towards a market economy, building our statehood under the difficult conditions created by the severance of the former strong ties. However, the countries of the Community are striving to overcome the processes of disintegration. Success in this will undoubtedly depend on the stabilization of the individual economies, the creation of normal conditions of life on a purely human level, and the free movement among states that were once completely open to each other.

It should be emphasized that in Kazakhstan there are favourable conditions for positive change in the social, economic and political spheres, which permit an optimistic view of the future. These favourable conditions are the geographical position of the republic, its huge natural riches, a highly-educated population, and the stable socio-political atmosphere.

The reforms which we are undertaking are aimed, in the first place, at creating a basis for a market economy, the democratization of public life, and the foundation of an appropriate legal system. We are endeavouring to make more effective use of our economic and production potential, while at the same time promoting the spiritual values of our society and unity among the many nationalities. We are learning to look more widely at the world, keenly observing the experience of other countries, and we are dedicated to creating truly democratic state institutions.

In pursuing the modernization of our young sovereign state—and by this I mean modernization in all areas: technical, economic, political—we are not blazing a new trail, but following a road that has already been laid down by mankind and the civilized countries. I am convinced that step by step we will reach world standards in all these respects.

I am an active supporter of the reforms, endeavouring to make Kazakhstan a country of international standing and ensure that it will not repeat the mistakes of the recent past, with its irrational experiments, its forgetfulness of the national traditions and cultural heritage.

In this respect, 1995 is a special year: the 150th anniversary of the birth of our great poet and thinker, Abai. For the first time Kazakhstan is commemorating Abai on an international level, for UNESCO has declared this to be the Year of Abai. We are grateful to this important international organization for extending its support to the celebrations.

I am convinced that this event will give a powerful impetus to the development of the artistic and moral potential of the people of Kazakhstan, and to the rebirth of national consciousness. The scope and profundity of Abai's thought is such that all who know his work will come back to it again and again throughout their life. If every one of us lives only



a small part of our lives under the aegis of this great man, our nation will pass the test of spiritual strength.

I would also sincerely like to thank the British publishers, Flint River Press and Philip Wilson, as well as the Kazakh EL Bureau and Rollan Seisenbaev, who have helped to publish Abai's work. This is of mutual benefit: Kazakhstan gains an intellectual product of a high standard, and the western reader, I hope, will gain an insight into our cultural heritage. I would like to hope that our foreign visitors and readers will not be so preoccupied with practical matters as to neglect the many other aspects of life that will give them an understanding of the soul of our people.

Historically, Kazakhstan, located at the meeting place of two cultures, has absorbed many aspects and valuable features of both, and has become a truly multinational state. People of more than a hundred nationalities now live in the republic. The Kazakhs are the most numerous, followed by the multi-million Russian diaspora, Ukrainians, Germans, Azerbaijanis, Uygurs, Koreans... Over the ages they have all settled on the welcoming expanses of the Kazakh steppe. Many have come in more recent times—to open up the virgin lands and to develop industry.

It must be said that there are black pages in the history of my country. It is enough to recall the forced collectivization of the 1930s, when thousands upon thousands of my fellow-countrymen lost their lives and many Kazakhs were sent into exile.

It is well known that whole nations were exiled to Kazakhstan in the Stalinist years. However, they were not treated as aliens here—nobody has ever held a grudge against the Kazakh people. I can state with conviction that there has always been a genuinely friendly atmosphere in the republic.

We are also striving to establish ourselves as a peace-loving state in the international arena. When the question of the fate of nuclear weapons in the former Soviet republics was raised, Kazakhstan showed its good will by voluntarily signing the nuclear weapons non-proliferation treaty. In December 1994, at the summit meeting attended by the USA, Great Britain and Russia, a memorandum was accepted guaranteeing the security of Kazakhstan, Ukraine and Belarus. With this act, a significant phase was concluded in the realization of the combined efforts of our countries to achieve a more secure and stable world order. I regard every official visit I make to any country as an opportunity for furthering efforts in this direction.

It was Kazakhstan that put forward a proposal to convene a conference, similar to the European Conference on Security and Co-operation, to discuss measures to increase mutual trust and security in our huge region. Likewise, the idea of forming a Eurasian Union has as its aim the strengthening of international ties among the members of the CIS and those states wishing to join it, the elimination of sources of tension in the post-Soviet era, and the establishing of friendly relations between peoples.

I have only briefly talked about Kazakhstan today, but I hope that this book will significantly broaden the reader's knowledge of our country. It is my sincere wish that citizens of other countries will find here loyal friends and partners, and that bonds of friendship, mutual understanding and collaboration will bring us closer together.

I take this opportunity to wish you all peace, happiness and prosperity.

Nursultan Nazarbaev  
President of the Republic of Kazakhstan

22nd March 1995