

Scientific Travels by M.V. Pevtsov and N.F. Katanov in Eastern Turkestan (1889-1892)

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Abstract: During the era of the “Big Game” (1850-1917) Russia and the United Kingdom opposed to each other by the ways that were actively used after that during the Cold War. First of all, these are the attempts to buy the loyalty of the peoples and states in Central Asia in the conditions of insufficient information about the region. The following issue is studied: the relations between the Imperial Russian Geographical Society and the War Ministry at the performance of scientific expeditions to Xinjiang region, implemented by M.V. Pevtsov and N.F. Katanov almost simultaneously. The study used historical-genetic, historical-comparative and historical-typological method. It is concluded that the Russian studies in Central Asia made a complex intersection of domestic and foreign policy interests and a scientific research. In this respect, M.V. Pevtsov and N.F. Katanov traveling to Xinjiang implemented on virtually the same area and at the same time, provide a reference material for comparison.

Key words: Geopolitics, expansion, “Big Game”, the Russian Geographical Society, ethnography, Xinjiang

INTRODUCTION

The concept of the “Big Game” was introduced by A. Connolly (1807-1842), an officer in the East India Company which sought to penetrate the Khanate of Khiva through Afghanistan. Rudyard Kipling popularized it in his novel “Kim” (Hodge, 2008). In 1990, in the book on Russian geopolitics Hauner (1990) mentioned casually that the big game was attended by the representatives of the Imperial Russian Geographical Society but did not provide any extensive disclosure of his thesis, which was characterized as a “provocative” one (Schimmelpenninckvander, 2014).

The big game was well reflected by its contemporaries and led to the creation of a geopolitical theory by Mackinder (1904); the problem was also considered by the Russian side (Hopkirk, 1992). The experience of Big game was used by Terentyev (1875) and Snesarev (1906), the main opponent of Mackinder. Currently, his theory is developed by Zotov (2012, 2014) using the same geographical and geopolitical material. An extensive research on the course of the Big Game in 1856-1907 was introduced by Sergeev (2012).

Problem statement: The history of the Big Game may be considered as immediately preceding the Cold War as it marked by very few direct military confrontation of the main players and the main efforts-military, diplomatic and economic ones were focused on the acquisitions of a third party loyalty, the use of it as the buffer zones (Edwardes, 1975).

The geographical knowledge about the Central Asian region, even in the middle of the XIXth century was extremely poor and a certain role in the Western and Russian science was played by the data of ancient and early medieval authors. We should not forget that until the beginning of the XXth century China remained a closed country (Chvyr, 2012).

In the situation of 1850-1860ies, there was the combination of scientific curiosity and military interests. In 1845, the Imperial Russian Geographic Society (IRGO) was founded, whose members were presented mainly by military and naval officers and the Company’s goal were more than purely scientific ones from the beginning. A special interest of the society members was called by the regions east of the Urals and over the eastern borders of the Russian Empire (Cherkasov, 2014). The result is that almost all geographical society expeditions to Turkestan, Mongolia and Tibet always included the military members and were guided by them often (Baskhanov, 2014).

The Russian Geographical society had an academic opposition, dissatisfied by the “military dominance” and an excessive enthusiasm of Foreign expeditions to the detriment of the actual Russian territory study. In this regard, we may recall the incident of N.N. Maclay, whose research on the study of New Guinea caused a very simple question: “What is the interest of Russian Geographical Society in all this?” (Tumarkin, 2011). There was even a kind of bias: by the beginning of the 20th century many areas of Central Asia were studied better than most areas of East Siberia. An example of the successful cooperation between the Ministry of War and

IRGO was the expedition by N.M. Przewalski and the statistical researches by M.I. Venyukova (Baskhanov, 2014).

The characteristics of similarities and differences in the geographical, historical and ethnographic study of Xinjiang held in the same period of time by two quite different researchers; M.V. Pevtsov (1843-1902) and N.F. Katanov (1862-1922) are studied in this study. This will allow to consider various aspects of the Russian Empire messenger attitude to indigenous peoples of Xinjiang as well as to the Qing dynasty authorities of Manchu and to assess their relevance to the regional peoples of that world. The basic materials of N.F. Katanov travels are not published and are gradually introduced into scientific circulation.

Historical-genetic, historical-comparative and historical-typological methods are used in the study. The main sources are the diaries by M.V. Pevtsov repeatedly published and also an unpublished manuscript of N.F. Katanov diary about the traveling to Dzungaria, Tarbagatai and Chinese Turkestan in 1890.

M.V. Pevtsov travels: M. Pevtsov joined IRGO in 1867 and took an active part in the organization of the West Siberian Department of the Geographical Society in Omsk (Chvyr, 2012). The first trip of M.V. Pevtsov in 1876 was a formal escorting of a merchant caravan with bread from Zaisan to Chinese Guchen. After the main task completion Pevtsov conducted the survey of Ulyungurlake and the South-Eastern region of Altai territory, studied the territories between Altai and Tien Shan. In 1879, he was awarded by Small golden medal of IRGO.

The second trip by M. Pevtsov to China in 1878-1879 was also the operation of trade caravan escort from Kobdo to Hohhot. IRGO passing instructed him to investigate the issue of Khangai ridge connection with the Mongolian Altai and map the North-Western outskirts of Mongolia. In summer 1878, M.V. Pevtsov crossed the Gobi Desert in its broadest and most dangerous location with six Cossacks. After the escort of caravan M.V. Pevtsov returned to the Russian border and moved to the East. Expedition lasted for 13 months, its results were the visual mapping of the area over 4,000 km (a map of 5 km scale is drawn up). The topographic surveys of 29 points were conducted and 44 climate research were performed. The results of Pevtsov's mapping allowed to demarcate the Russian-Chinese border precisely and to create a summary map of Mongolia in 1883. The glacier in the Mongolian Altai was named after Pevtsov.

Pevtsov's expedition in Xinjiang was his third independent travel. At that, first of all the team should be headed by N. Przewalski, who set the goal to get to Tibet

(Baskhanov, 2014). On October 20, 1888 Przewalski died and IRGO decided to appoint Pevtsov as the head in order not to disrupt the prepared journey. In May 1889, the team overcame the pass Belel and arrived to Uch-Turfan and then to Kashgar Plain and headed to Yarkand. Without the refusal from Przewalski's plans to march on Lhasa; the capital of Tibet, Pevtsov considered, it is also necessary to examine the approaches near Kunlun and explore Kashgar at the same time and these plans were implemented.

However, N. Przewalsky developed a uniform methodology of field work, used by all subsequent expeditions. It was based on the principle of integrated geographical research; the systematic topographical descriptions of terrain and water system with definition of latitude and longitude of each item.

The Xinjiang expedition of Pevtsov in 1889-1890 had a purely scientific nature and it was performed by former Przewalski's employees who were distinguished travelers Lieutenant V. Roborovsky and Lieutenant V. Kozlov. The expedition overcame 2,000 km across Lop Nor, Karashahr, Toksun and Urumqi to Dzungaria and the Lake Zaisan. Several outstanding discoveries were made at this stage: the legends about migrating Lop Nurlake were confirmed and the causes of this phenomenon were established. In November 1890, when the expedition arrived at the oasis of Turfan, it was found that it is the lowest place in Asia-Turfan Depression (148 m below the sea level). A few months before Pevtsov, the brothers Groom and Grzhimailo (2014) visited this place and made the similar conclusions.

M.V. Pevtsov described the set of caravan roads and paths unknown to Europeans as well as the branches of the Great Silk Road through the Taklamakan Desert, connecting Aksu and Yarkand Valley. All this was reduced to "the map of the Eastern Turkestan and the Northern margins of the Tibetan Plateau", summarized the geographic discoveries of the expedition.

N.F. Katanov travel in 1890-1892: The personality of Nikolay Fedorovich Katanov stands out from its predecessors in many ways. Being an ethnic Khakass, he was a shepherd and a hunter till the age of 14 but then with the help of Krasnoyarsk gold miners Kuznetsovs (who sponsored the artist Surikov), Katanov graduated from the Krasnoyarsk East faculty of St. Petersburg University. During the period of study in gymnasium, his research about Khakassian shamans was published by G. Potanin. Later he became a professor at the Kazan University, an active member of the Society of Archeology, History and Ethnography and also taught at the Theological Academy.

The main role in the formation of Katanov as a scientist was played a prominent German and Russian Turkic expert Vasily (Wilhelm) Radlov (1837-1918), famous by his excavations in the Altai, Minusinsk Basin and the deciphering of ancient Turkic writing (Sayfulina and Karabulatova, 2014).

On 11 December 1887, V.V. Radlov made an IRGO report on the prospects of "Turkic tribes remnants research in the far East". He recommended Katanov as the executor of this task. It was decided to send him alone, providing some money from the budget of the company and the Russian Academy of Sciences. N.F. Katanov's expedition performed by a single researcher with a minimum set of tools and equipment should be among the greatest travels to Central Asia, Eastern Turkestan and Siberia, performed during new epoch by the importance of the extracted geographic, linguistic, historical and ethnographic materials. In March to September 1889, he visited Tuva (Uryankhai territory), traveled about 700 miles and visited 14 settlements. After Tuva travel, Katanov studied the folklore of his countrymen, Khakas until the February of 1890. In the Summer of 1890, he went to China through Chuguchak and Urumqi hoping to reach Hami that interested him primarily as a linguist and an ethnographer. A single traveler was more concerned about the Chinese government and he posed himself as a merchant or an inspector. However, even at the border he was warned that the authorities will allow him to travel only to Urumqi. The researcher all the time collected the folklore of the Uighurs and Kazakhs in the field terms. He characterized its content as "the historical tales about the wars in East Turkestan, songs, chanted during the main Muslim holidays, erotic songs, the interpretation of dreams, riddles and proverbs" (Valeev and Tuguzhekova, 2014).

Hami Katanov managed to get to oasis only in November, 1891 and in May, 1892, he returned to Russian territory and lived in China for about 18 months. A single researcher was able to visit 8 Uighur oases (Hotan, Kashgar, Aksu, Kuchar, Karakash, Baia, Loguchen and Turpan). He learned the language of the local population and collected unique materials. His informants allowed to certify each folklore unit specifying the age, tribe and other features.

Katanov wrote that occasional materials brought by him weighed a quarter of a pound (i.e., 4 kg of papers, about 3,000 of manuscript pages). They were unpublished partly: In 1893, the "Letters from the East Turkestan" were promptly published and a huge amount of folklore material was issued by V.V. Radlov in "The samples of Turkic tribe folk literature" (1907) in two volumes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Features of Katanov and Pevtsov Ethnographic Method:

The field ethnography appeared in the second half of the XIX century, its themes, a range of problems, the specific means and methods of analysis were determined. New methods of research were developed in its own way by M.V. Pevtsov and N.F. Katanov. The latter, following his teacher V.V. Radlov was a pioneer of the comparative method use in linguistics. The same method was successfully used in the synthesis of ethnographic data. An Ethnographic Method invented by Pevtsov manifested during the first expedition to Dzungaria. During the caravan transitions, one could capture only separate facts from the life of local population and with their accumulation, reduce them to a system. At first Pevtsov recorded the settlements of various ethnic groups Manchurian settlers (Sibo and Soluns), Chinese, Tuvan, settled and nomadic Turks and others.

N.F. Katanov had already published works about the geography and ethnography of Xinjiang, with whom he could consult and correct the errors that he noticed if there was a case.

Since ethnography was not Katanov's purpose, it is easy to notice that his notes in his diary remained relatively haphazard (it is striking when it is compared with its folklore passports). Pevtsov's ethnographic scenes and pictures acquire a systematic character and at the processing of manuscripts the fragmentary travel experiences are united in a generic text that Katanov never had. Pevtsov developed a unified description scheme: first, the information on the traditional economy (for nomads it is the herd composition, the methods of livestock maintaining, the forms of nomadism, etc.), the data on settlements, at the same time, the detailed descriptions of differences between Kyrgyz and Kazakh yurt are provided, a description of the stable interior features, a traditional costume and a diet. These things were not of great interest for Katanov because they were close to his own daily experience and he, who knew 60 languages, could communicate with the locals, to penetrate deeply into their inner world and life experience, which, of course has a generalization level. Katanov tried to preserve in the works prepared for printing the individualized nature of the raw materials.

CONCLUSION

The Russian study of Central Asia in 1850-1910's was a complicated intersection of domestic and foreign policy interests and also research interests. In this regard, the traveling to Xinjiang by M.V. Pevtsov and N.F. Katanov performed virtually within same area and the same time, provides a very remarkable material for comparison. In the

era of the Big Game, the figure of a military traveler can be regarded as a typical one. This figure decided in the first place the political and intelligence tasks. N.F. Katanov was an exception within this background, although the peculiarities of his method, the certification of folklore and linguistic data, required a large amount of personal information collected through questioning. Pevtsov tended to an organized, a coordinated, a systematic and a thorough collection of heterogeneous scientific information; he preferred to synthesize these data presenting a high quality synthesis of natural science.

The circle of N. Katanov's interests according to his published materials is grouped in the following areas: geographical, linguistic, folklore, cultural, historical, religious, economic and administrative ones. Katanov's huge material was not structured. He kept a dairy form of his reports consistently not by chance. Different information could be placed within at the same day.

Nevertheless, he managed to show the unity of the history and culture of the various Turkic peoples (Khakassia, Kazakh, Tuvan and Uighurs) in the field terms and show that the academic opinion about foreigners as doomed to extinction is unfounded and affects the political development of Russian Empire.

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