

Abai Kunanbaev (1845-1904)



Abai Kunanbaev - great poet, writer, public figure, founder of the modern Kazakh written literature, culture reformer in spirit of rapprochement with Russian and European culture on the basis of the educated liberal Islam.

Abai was born on August 10, 1845 in Chingiz Mountains, Semipalatinsk region (nowadays administrative division) He was the son of one of four Kunanbai's wives. Abai's family was aristocratic, both grandfather (Oskenbai) and great-grandfather (Irgizbai) predominated over the sort as governors. He was lucky relatively to family cosiness and house upbringing as both mother Ulzhan and grandmother Zere were extremely charming and gifted natures. Exactly following mother's example name given by his father "Ibragim" was replaced by caressing "Abai", that means "circumspect, thoughtful". With this name Abai lived his life and has gone down in history.

The joining to oral people amateur of and house education with mullah started in early childhood has been continued in madrasah of Ahmed-Riza imam. At the same time he was studying in Russian school and by the end of five years' study he starts to write poems. From age of 13 Kunanbai starts to accustom Abai to administrative activity of the head of a sort. Abai's appeal to the Russian culture which has experienced in XIX century the period of "storms and impacts" in literature and art, appeared to be especially natural so as poetic word was highly appreciated in east tradition. Pushkin, Lermontov, Goethe and Byron's poetry appeared to be really close to Abai, and he subtly transferred the spirit of the translated poems and adapted for attitude of his nation.

During 20 years versatility blossoms the Abai's genius, he gains extraordinary authority, huge and hitherto unknown popularity in steppe. Akyns, singers, composers was flowing down, the talented youth was crowding about him. Social-philosophical and literary schools were created.

But as the master of thoughts Abai causes wild envy, blind fury shown in guileful forms. The last stroke of destiny was concerned with death of Abdrahman and Magavya. He rejected treatment of an illness and voluntary condemn himself to death. He is buried near his wintering in Zhidebai valley, not far from Chingiz mountains.