

# Nauryz Holiday in Aksai: Celebrating the coming of spring

Nauryz is one of the oldest holidays on Earth. This holiday of spring and the renewed life of the Earth has been celebrated for over five thousand years by many cultures of the Middle and Central Asia and, according to some sources, by eastern Slavs as well. Nauryz has been celebrated in Kazakhstan starting before 1926, but Stalin then banned it as a religious holiday.

Historical records referring to this holiday can be found in ancient and middle age documents. In the oriental chronology, it corresponds to Navruz, the Iranian New Year. Kazakhs passed the Nauryz traditions from generation to generation. The roots of this holiday can be traced to old pagan rituals. The celebration was meant to reflect people's love to nature. People have preserved the rituals, and today the holiday has acquired new spiritual and ethical meaning.

This holiday has been celebrated on 22 March, the day of the spring equinox. That's why the Kazakhs call the month of March Nauryz. It was celebrated as the day of the renewed life which comes with the spring. People believed, the more generous the celebration of Nauryz was the happier the year would be. Therefore, there are so many rituals and festivities related to this holiday. On the eve of the holiday, people would clean their homes, pay back their debts and reconciled with their opponents

because, as the old people used to say, if Nauryz entered the house, all diseases and failures would pass it by. On the night before the festival, all vessels in the house would be filled with milk, airan (plain yogurt), grain, and spring water because it meant that people would have a lot of milk, good yield and plenty of rain during the coming year.

During the day, everybody tried to be in good spirits, would give a big hug to each other and wish good fortune and happiness to others. The celebrations would begin with sunrise. There is an old ritual "If you see a spring, clean up its source". At dawn, all adults, youngsters and children would pick up spades, go to an agreed place near a spring or aryk (small water canal) and clean it. There, they would also plant trees under the supervision of respectable old people. During the process, they had to say: "Let a man leave a tree rather than a herd in the people's memory" and "If you cut one tree, you will have to plant ten!"

A great deal of food was prepared during these days. It symbolized prosperity and wealth in the coming year. Each family would lay a festive table. People would sit down at the table at noon. Mullah would read prayers dedicated to ancestors before and after the meal. At the end of the meal, the oldest men among them would give a blessing so that prosperity would never leave the family.



Celebrating Nauryz holiday in Aksai

The Kazakhs attached special importance to the number of seven during the Nauryz celebrations because it symbolized the seven days of the week, which was considered to be a time unit of the universal eternity. Seven bowls with the Nauryz-kozhe drink (made from seven sorts of seven types of herbs) would be put in front of the aksakals (respectable old people). The meals were composed of seven components, usually meat, salt, fat, onions, wheat (a type

of cheese) and irimshik (a kind of cottage cheese). The celebration always included mass games, traditional horse races and other competitions.

The history of Nauryz has been complicated. The totalitarian Soviet system did not recognize the existence of any national identity and any reference to traditional heritage was considered to be an anachronism and remnants of the past. Nauryz was cancelled in 1926. It was first recreated in Kazakhstan only in 1988 and was extremely popular. Officially, Nauryz was recognized on 15 March 1991 by a Presidential Decree. The President declared 22 March, the day of the spring equinox, a holiday.

Since then, Nauryz has been widely celebrated across the whole country. Of course, the modern festival is essentially different from the old.

Nowadays, it has become a truly national holiday of spring, work and unity. It is dear to all the peoples living in the multinational Kazakhstan. The ancient holiday of Nauryz has naturally become a part of the modern life, preserving the old traditions.

Residents of the town of Aksai celebrated the holiday in a grand fashion and in a big way. The main holiday events were celebrated at the Gasmen Municipal Park. Citizens of other countries, representing KPO as well as other contractor companies involved

with the Karachaganak field development, did not refrain from participation in the celebration. On this occasion, Akim of Burlin district Bolat Shakimov, KPO General Director Giuseppe Pasi and other officials arrived at the Gasmen Park to congratulate the Aksai residents with this wonderful holiday.

According to the established tradition, many companies conducting the project, including KPO set up yurts, where every resident of Aksai was able to enter and try holiday dishes. War and labor veterans were the honored guests at the KPO yurt on this day.

KPO General Director Giuseppe Pasi on behalf of KPO congratulated all of the veterans heartily on this bright spring holiday, wishing them all of the best.

On this day, residents of the Czech Camp also enjoyed Nauryz holiday which was organized in the Czech Camp canteen. Everybody could enjoy traditional Kazakh music and folk dancing performed by children from Aksai School of Arts.

In addition, Antonio Salvatore Fois, the head chef of the Czech Camp restaurant who represents Multicatering Kazakhstan and his team cooked traditional Kazakh dishes which were amazingly delicious and tasty. All the dishes were cooked by the chefs in exactly the same way that Kazakhs would use at home.



Giuseppe Pasi and Akim Bolat Shakimov at KPO yurt

## It's not just what you say, it's what you do!

The KPO programme called "It's not just what you say, it's what you do!" started on the 1st October last year was initiated by Corporate Safety Department. This project was announced winner in the category "Project of the Year" during the traditional annual contest "Person of the Year 2009" which was held in Aksai in late December. The programme is conducted in Russian and Kazakh languages.

The main purpose of this initiative is to improve the awareness of Aksai population on safety, environment and health issues relating to the everyday life and prevent population from incidents which might happen at home. In this connection every Thursday representatives from Corporate Safety, Corporate Environment and Health and other departments discuss and present different topics, answer the questions, which concern KPO and population of Aksai as well.

Representatives from other departments of KPO are also invited for the programme as guests. At the end of each programme one question for radio listeners is asked in order to fix the new topic in their mind; first listener with the right answer obtains the prize on behalf of KPO.



KPO employee Manarbek Adilov at "Radio-Aksai"

## Vocational Enhancement Programme within the KPO STEP initiative started

The third step of the Safety Training & Enhancement Programme (STEP) for HSE professionals was launched on 8 March, 2010 through commencing a Vocational Enhancement Programme (VEP).

Graham Scotton, KPO Operations Director, Roberto Demitri, Field Manager, Bryan Popowich, Acting Field HSE Manager and Oksana Rastorguyeva, Training and Development Manager took part in the programme start-up.

The first group of 20 HSE supervisors and superintendants from different KPO operational units will undertake day-to-day operations and enhance own inspection skills under the guidance of experienced mentors throughout 2010. Delegates besides just being assessed will be able to develop professional knowledge and skills to the standards of the present programme though constant interrelation with the mentors. Thus, mentor will help the individuals to develop HSE competence in inspection techniques with minimum impact of their daily activities. By the end of this program there will be created

internal assessors and verifiers certified by OPITO.

Graham Scotton spoke with delegates highlighting the high level of trust KPO puts on delegates of the programme. Further development of HSE culture and compliance

to high HSE standards both in the company and its contractors' operations in many ways depend on the success of delegates' participation in the programme. Roberto Demitri encouraged the delegates to communicate to the

field personnel as much as they can and to transfer the obtained knowledge and skills.

KPO Vocational Qualification Programme (VEP) is a qualification that assesses someone's competence (skills, knowledge



Roberto Demitri, Field Manager



The first group of KPO STEP programme

and understanding) within a work situation. VEP is based on the UK national occupational standards (NVQ) that describe the level and breadth of performance expected of anyone working in the industry or sector that this qualification covers. VEP is based on the standards developed by European Network of Training Organisations (ENTO), Offshore Petroleum Institute Training Organisation (OPITO) and National Examination Board in Occupational Safety and Health (NEBOSH).

ENTO is the UK government approved body that sets the national occupational standards (NOS) for the health and safety sector.

## Discussing social infrastructure projects in Aksai

On 8 February, General Director of KPO Giuseppe Pasi met with the Akim of Burlin district Bolat Shakimov to discuss some issues on further cooperation regarding the realisation of social projects in Aksai and the villages of Burlin district.

During the meeting Giuseppe Pasi pointed out that KPO would continue to work on social infrastructure projects in Aksai.

The meeting was also attended by Government Relations Director Nurzhan Kamalov and other officials representing the city administration.



## LUKOIL OVERSEAS PRESIDENT ANDREY KUZYAEV IS AWARDED AN HONORARY TITLE

By Decree of President of Russian Federation, Mr. Andrey Kuzyaev, President of LUKOIL Overseas, has been awarded the title of the «Honored worker of the oil and gas industry of the Russian Federation» for his substantial contribution to interstate negotiations and implementation of strategic projects in the sphere of economics.

According to the statute of the award, this title is bestowed on highly qualified employees of petroleum industry organizations for merits in their professional activity and who work in this industry for 15 and more years.

Andrey Kuzyaev has been in the oil industry since 1992, when oil-trading company NeftSynthetMarket has been established under his management.

In 1995 Andrey Kuzyaev became head of a major oil producing company LUKOIL-Perm, in 2000 he became President of LUKOIL Overseas, operator of international upstream projects of LUKOIL, and alongside with that in 2005 – Vice President of LUKOIL.



In February this year KPO team of skiers again successfully took part in the traditional ski contest Trofeo Neve 2010 which took place in Moena (Trento) from 6 to 13 February. As usual KPO team consisting of 10 sportsmen was led by its unchallenged leader Oleg Popov.

The high-quality event is organized by Eni each year and the Trofeo Neve has always been a time for healthy competition among the companies, as well as being an important opportunity for bringing together colleagues who work in different geographical and organizational areas.

The Trofeo Neve is an historic event for Eni, a tradition which is going back to the 70s.



KPO team at Trofeo Neve 2010