



The "Geoparks" as a way to raise geoconservation in Kazakhstan

Ilya Fishman, Julia Kazakova, and Nurlan Abdov

Academy of Mineral Resources of Republic of Kazakhstan, Kazakhstan

Kazakhstan is one of the nine largest countries of the world and not only has significant mineral resources but rich geological heritage. However, to date geology is considered only as a way to search for minerals due to the established traditions. Faced with a geologist, we usually ask: "What are you looking for?". But the man with the hammer must answer the more important question - about the future of the Planet and Humanity. But it is necessary to save and to study the stone chronicle page for this. Only history of the Earth, recorded in the annals of rock sheets, gives a scientific answer on the fate of Planet and Mankind, and allows realistically assess the risk of disasters, floods, global warming, etc.

During 20 years we are trying to give a push to protection and use of geological heritage of Kazakhstan. In our country this new direction gets accustomed with large labor. The spread of the world experience on geoconservation, the databases created of the geological heritage of Kazakhstan, numerous performances in the scientific press and the media has not lead to real steps to preserve and use geodiversity in our country. Today we are trying to raise the idea of geoconservation in Kazakhstan based on Geoparks. A project "Geological study of the geoparks development in Kazakhstan" is developed. 12 representative areas were selected on a background of the database that includes 500 sites of geological heritage, embracing a large variety of geological processes in all regions of Kazakhstan.

On October 31st, 2012 in Astana the "Kazakh Geographical Society" held an international conference including "Geoparks" section. At the conference reports of all the regions of Kazakhstan representatives were presented, as well as European countries with extensive experience in geoconservation and geoparks creation (Portugal, Bulgaria, Turkey). The conference was supported by UNESCO.

Album "Millions of years before the Silk Road", which represents the future Kazakhstan Geoparks, was published. Geoparks of Kazakhstan extremely visually represent global geological processes. Ustyurt plateau is a part of a tectonic system Caspian-Aral-Ustyurt. The study of the plateau as part of a tectonic megasystem Caspian-Aral Ustyurt allows us to understand the nature of largest intercontinental hollow of the world (the "country-crater" by Alexander von Humboldt). As a result, the Caspian Sea is considered today as a "window into the mantle". Paleovolcanic area Shuyldak is relict of Devonian Ural Ocean World standard of volcanic structures of ancient mid-ocean type. It is an illustrative base of plate tectonics. At the Kokshetau National Park the world's largest diamond deposit is explored. 2.5 billion carats is more than in all the deposits in Yakutia. This technical micro-diamonds that are not mined. The field is interesting not only for geologists, but for mass tourism too. National Park Burabaj linked to the ancient granite-metamorphic dome. For nearly a billion years (from Proterozoic to Mesozoic) metamorphic complexes and granite melts had been formed which compose the foundation of modern scenic lake and forest landscape.