I. From an Old Photograph

Starting with the occupation of the Khanate of Kazan in the middle of the sixteenth century, the Russian Empire expanded eastward toward Asia. Throughout this process, the Russian Empire absorbed many ethnic groups of non-Russian origin. Under these circumstances, in the beginning of the nineteenth century, in addition to the principal estates (soslovie) of the empire (nobility, clergy, merchants and krest’yane, or peasants), a new estate of inorodtsy (aliens) was established. This mainly comprised non-Russian and non-Orthodox native peoples of Siberia, Caucasus and Central Asia. Although inorodtsy who converted to Orthodox Christianity or transitioned to the settled way of life could be excluded from this estate, throughout Russian rule, they never escaped their “alien” status. In the context of Central Asia, the Russian Empire may have intended to “Russify” the local populations, which is clearly evidenced by the fact that Russian colonial officers were used to refer to sblizhenie (accommodation, rapprochement) and sliyanie (merging). However, in practice the Russian Empire was unable to make substantial progress. In his essay on Russia’s propagation of Orthodox Christianity and the introduction of conscription in Central Asia, Tomohiko Uyama makes the following assertion: “Russian military and civil officials were fundamentally skeptical about the population of Central Asia. Therefore, rather than advancing a policy of Russification unreasonably, they attempted...
to maintain a passive stability.”

However, looking at official documents and journals written in the early twentieth century a word appears. Its usage seemingly contradicts the above explanation, even though it only used sparingly—*kirgizy-krest’yanе* (peasants-*Kirgiz*). Figure 1 is a photograph taken in the early twentieth century in Przheval’sk *Uezd* (district), in southern part of Semirech’e *Oblast* (region), at that time under the jurisdiction of the Governor-Generalship of Turkestan. A house possibly made with mud bricks, surrounded by a wooden fence; some people who appear to be residents. On the right side, there is a man who seems to be the head of the household, and on the left we can make out three women. The caption is written largely and clearly, “Kamenka Village. *Kirgizy-krest’yane.*” Speaking of *Kirgiz* (Kyrgyz and Kazakhs), the image is generally that of nomads (*kochevniki*) who live in tents, and in practice they belonged to the estate of *kochevye inorodtsy* (nomadic aliens). However, this photograph suggests the existence of *Kirgiz* who had settled into farming, cast off the status of *inorodtsy*, and registered as belonging to the *krest’yane* (peasants) estate.

The assimilation policies of the Russian Empire in Central Asia, besides the studies on issues with conversion to Russian Orthodox Christianity, military conscription and education policies, there are still many issues yet to be studied. Taking into account this research landscape, this paper aims to consider the development of *kirgizy-krest’yane*. This paper is divided into two parts. The first will survey the historical background for the formation of *kirgizy-krest’yane*, from the late 1860s, when the Russian Empire expanded its direct rule throughout Central Asia to the early twentieth century. The second part will examine the actual circumstances of *kirgizy-krest’yane* with a focus on *smeshannye poseleniya* (mixed settlements), in which *kirgizy-krest’yane* and Russian peasant settlers formed in villages that were under joint administration. What comes to mind in relation to this is an article that a Russian colonial officer, on-duty in Semirech’e *Oblast* in the early twentieth century, contributed to *Turkestanskie Vedomosti* (*Turkestan Gazette*). According to him, “it is possible for Russians to move next to and settle adjacent to *Kirgiz* land through *zemleustroistvo* (land re-organization). Through this, it is possible to bring *Kirgiz* closer to Russians in both physical and mental aspects. This would mutually benefit both ethnic groups, and perhaps they would blend into one united community and be integrated.” In other words, *smeshannye poseleniya* can be understood as something that concretely achieves the two ideals of *sblizhenie* and *sliyanie*.

To the best of my knowledge *smeshannye poseleniya* did not establish more than two villages, including the previously mentioned Kamenka and Tarkhan during the early 1910s. Both of them were located in Przheval’sk *Uezd* (known today as Issyk-Kul’ *Oblast* of Kyrgyz Republic) in the southern part of Semirech’e *Oblast* (see Map 2). In this paper, I will focus on these two *smeshannye poseleniya* and examine the background in which they were founded. Through these tasks it will be possible to vividly present the *sblizhenie* and *sliyanie* in practice from a unique point of view.

The principal materials used for this article include the official documents of the Russian colonial authorities currently stored in the National Archives of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Russia. At the same time, I will also refer to records of interviews transcribed during the Soviet era. From the 1950s to the 1960s, in Kyrgyz SSR local ethnologists conducted interviews at former mixed settlements, which became *kolkhozes* (collective farms) under the Soviet rule. Despite their ideological biases such studies can be said to be extremely valuable since they include the opinions of elders who have memories of the Russian rule that this paper discusses.
II. The Process of Creating Kirgizy-Krest’yane (Peasants-Kirgiz) Discovered

From the mid-nineteenth century, as it was increasing its military expansion into Central Asia, the Russian Empire was accumulating information about the lands it was subjugating. With regard to Semirech’e, they had been gathering a great deal of information on its topography, as well as ethnographic information on the local people, including Kirgiz (Kyrgyz and Kazakhs), through expeditions and academic surveys. In this process, they came to develop an interest in their way of life. Above all, the Russian colonial officers were aware at an early stage that these people specialized not only in pasturage and animal husbandry. Thus, they were not “pure” nomads, but were conducting pasturing operations combined with farming around the area of their zimovki (winter camps). In truth, some Russian colonial officers took note of the agricultural elements of Kirgiz nomadic communities and perceived of them as kirgizy-zemledelitsy (farmers-Kirgiz).  

Semirech’e Oblast’ was a region that was actively settled in by Russian settlers from the beginning of its establishment in 1867, under the leadership of the first Governor-General of Turkestan, K.P. Von Kaufman, and the first Military Governor (Voennyi Gubernator) of Semirech’e Oblast’, G.A. Kolpakovskii. Thus, in combination with the affinity for agriculture mentioned above, it was by no means an unusual occurrence that among the Russian colonial officers, there were those who tried to advocate for civilizing nomads and to have them settled into farming, with Russian settlers as intermediaries. To substantiate that, in a supplementary explanation to the “Regulations for the Establishment of Villages in Semirech’e Oblast’,” Kolpakovskii indicated that, “through everyday contact with Russian settlers and the advantages of civilization, Kirgiz will surely transition to a settled lifestyle.”

However, the scheme that Kolpakovskii indicated was not necessarily dominant at that time. Indeed, when Governor-General Kaufman read this section, he determined the settling of nomads into farming through the intermediation of Russian settlers.
to be a “utopia,” and considered that the “Russian rule will no more than a certain degree dissolve the essence of the nomads.”12 From this it is clear that Kaufman did not intend to make the nomads the target of assimilation. Certainly, in transitioning to direct rule by the Russian Empire, Kirgiz were organized into the volost’ system, which was modeled after the government structure of the peasants, starting with the Great Reforms.13 However, if we set aside this sort of ceremonial reshuffling of administrative organizations, the Russian colonial authorities avoided intervening inside the nomadic community. On the contrary, they managed to preserve it.14

The following two cases offer an important point in which to highlight what was precisely discussed at the government office of Semirech’e Oblast’ in 1876. The first concerns the collection of land taxes from nomads. A Russian officer, Reintal claimed that the government office should take into account the development of agriculture among Kirgiz. It could then be possible to distribute their cultivated lands among each household (kibitka) and collect land taxes from them. This was rejected since the agriculture was carried out by iginchi, or a unique cultivation element.15 That same year, another Russian officer, Lyubavskii sent a letter to Kolpakovskii on the following matters entitled, “Legal Issues on the Elimination of the Nomadic Lifestyles of Kirgiz, Kalmyk and All Inorodtsy in Semirech’e Oblast’.” Within that document, he writes, “even now, in the nineteenth century, the age of the railroad and the telegram, Kirgiz lead the same kind of nomadic lifestyle as in the age of Herodotus, and we must put an end this situation. Railroads and nomadism are incompatible. Russia’s mission in Asia is to civilize. Kirgiz must settle down, and receive all of the benefits of Russian culture and civilization.” He also asserted that they should force all nomads to settle within one to two years, and have several Russian peasants migrate to each settlement village for examples of how to operate a farm.16 In this way, Lyubavskii presented a radical policy plan that went so far as to include an outlook for establishing mixed settlements in which settled nomads and Russians would live together. However, there is no evidence that this proposal was discussed by the government office of oblast’.

In this way, made clear by the inquiry in this section, in the early stages of the Russian rule, although the colonial authorities had a concept of assimilation intermediated by Russian settlers, they never put it into effect. They did not take kirgizy-zemledelitsy (farmers-Kirgiz), including iginchi, separate them from the nomadic community as potential element for assimilation, and redivide their social estate to that of peasant, creating kirgizy-krest’yane (peasants-Kirgiz). Rather, emphasizing that they maintained and preserved the existing nomadic community is significant.

(2) From Kirgizy-Zemledelitsy to Kirgizy-Krest’yane

However, by the end of the nineteenth century, the government office of Semirech’e Oblast’ began to undertake settlement policies of nomads, intermediated by Russian settlers, though partially. The direct impetus for this was that a plan to promote the domiciliation and farming of nomads was broached at a cabinet meeting of Siberian Railroad Committee in St. Petersburg in March 1897.17 Taking this into consideration, the government office of Semirech’e Oblast’ planned a policy to promote the settlement of nomads. The policy would allocate ten desyatina (one desyatina equals 1.09 hectares) to every man, establish the same administrative and court system as Russian villages, loan seeds and agricultural equipment, give exemptions on land tax for three years, and exempt from military service.18 From this, we can see that the government office of Semirech’e Oblast’ used Russian settlers as models, and attempted to organize the local nomads based on the same conditions in matters such as land, justice, administration and taxes. This also vividly reflects that the nomads who followed this policy and settled down would no longer be the usual kirgizy-zemledelitsy (farmers-Kirgiz), but deemed as kirgizy-krest’yane (peasants-Kirgiz).19 This
type of expression, not seen in previous periods and the category of kirgizy-krest'yane seems to be created along with this policy. In the following year of 1898, in line with these developments, the government office of Semirech’e Oblast’ established the first settlement village, called Tash-Döbö, originating from thirty households of Kirgiz (Kyrgyz) of Solto tribe, living on the outskirts of Pishpek (known today as Bishkek, the capital of Kyrgyz Republic) city.

However, the attitude of the government office of Semirech’e Oblast’ towards Tash-Döbö Village strikingly reveals a tendency to protect the kirgizy-krest’yane from the influence of the surrounding Russian settlers. Indeed, the government office of Semirech’e Oblast’ did not let Tash-Döbö Village incorporate into the neighboring Russian volost’. This in part was due to concerns that “difficulties will arise because of differences in all sorts of customs, such as administration and justice.”20 Then in 1899, in response to a petition by the Kirgiz (Kyrgyz) asking for the admission of ten Russian households for one year for the sake of farming, the government office of Semirech’e Oblast’ rejected the request, indicating the following concerns: “If Russian peasants rent land from Kirgiz and live there for a fixed period, they will have a habit of settling indefinitely and starting to manage the land without permission.”21 In short, it could be said that the government office of Semirech’e Oblast’ was avoiding letting Tash-Döbö Village turn into a mixed settlement.

The Governor-General of Turkestan never sanctioned this policy; though, they approved of the settlement of nomads. However, to license the kirgizy-krest’yane (peasants-Kirgiz), it was necessary to change the existing regulations and he thought that it would be premature. Based on this conclusion, in 1903 the Governor-General of Turkestan did not recognize Tash-Döbö Village.22

(3) Kirgizy-Krest’yane as a Means of Land Expropriation

The situation surrounding kirgizy-krest’yane reached a turning point at the start of the twentieth century. After the 1905 Russian Revolution, under the strong leadership of the Stolypin government, they began to be officially recognized. The direct impetus was the “Instructions of the Definition of National Available Land for Settlement and Other National Necessities in Akomolinsk, Semipalatinsk, Turgai and Ural’sk Oblasiti” (Instruktsiya o poryadke opredeleniya gosudarstvennogo zemel’nogo fonda v oblastyakh Akmolinskoi, Semipalatinskoi, Turgaiko i Ural’skoi dlya pereveleniya, a ravno inykh gosudarstvennykh nadovnostei), that was approved by the Council of ministers (Sovet Ministrov) in 9 June 1909 (below, “1909 Instructions”).23

The 1909 Instructions was a set of complicated regulations consisting of twenty-one articles. It presented Kirgiz with two distinct choices. The first was to receive a relatively vast amount of land and continue nomadic way of life. The alternative was to accept land in the same way as other Russian settlers (not more than 15 desyatins for each adult male). It was decided that those who transitioned to settlement, in accordance with the latter condition, would be under the jurisdiction of the “Common Provisions for the Government of Peasants” (Obshchie polozheniya ob upravlenii krest’yan), the same as krest’yane of the interior region of the Russian Empire, for administrative and judicial aspects, just like Russian settlers.24 On this point, we can see P.A. Stolypin, who was a Prime Minister at the time, and A.V. Krivoshein, a secretary of the Central Administration for Land Re-organization and Agriculture (Glavnoe Upravenie Zemleustroistvo i Zemledeliya), who had largely created the 1909 Instructions, declaring the following in the record of their inspection of Asiatic Russia: “The fundamental concept of the policies toward inorodtsy in the Steppe region is in the constant effort to bring them into the common regulations of administration and justice. At the same time, we must gradually abolish the peculiarities and disparities recognized at the victim of the interests of Kirgiz public and the evolution of the Russian
However, there were more than a few voices calling for a cautious response to this policy. One of those critics was Count K.K. Palen, who carried out the inspection of the Governor-Generalship of Turkestan by imperial command and observed the settlement project up close in Semirech’e Oblast’. When he was invited as a participant to the Council of Ministers (held on 25 November 1909) at which the application of the 1909 Instructions in Semirech’e Oblast’ was discussed, Count Palen gave the following opinion: “Even though they may become settled, if they are to be put under the jurisdiction of the Common Provisions for the Government of Peasants, because of the distinctiveness of their lifestyle, it seems that they would certainly encounter serious hardship.” His measured response took into account the distinctiveness of the nomads, not a uniform policy with the same common provisions for the government of peasants that applied to Russian settlers. In response to this, the Council of Ministers stated, “Of course, there may be some hardships accompanying this at first. However, it wouldn’t do for us to stop it.” Implied in this statement they pushed past Palen’s assertion of seeking a cautious response. They firmly approved the application of the Common Provisions for the Government of Peasants in Semirech’e Oblast’. The stance of the Stolypin government was unyielding. Land expropriation from nomads was becoming a pressing issue in the pivotal task of the settlement policy towards the frontier of the empire, including the Kazakh Steppe and in Turkestan. Having nomads settle down was convenient for achieving this goal. This is because, by distributing a certain limited amount of land of no more than 15 desyatin, and having them settle, it would be possible to expropriate the vast territory that they had traditionally used as izlishnye zemli (surplus land). In this way, the settlements of nomads were recognized as being a means of seizing more land from them. This distinctly shows that Stolypin was eager to reduce the standard of land distribution for nomads who transitioned to a settled life. For example, in the original draft of the 1909 Instructions, it was a uniform fifteen desyatin. In contrast, Stolypin pushed for a downward adjustment to “no more than fifteen desyatin.”

As is clear from the above, the 1909 Instructions was not aiming for the creation of kirgizy-krest’yane itself, but its focus, above all, was on expropriation of land from Kirgiz. In short, kirgizy-krest’yane were positioned as a means of land expropriation to achieve the settlement of Russian peasants. After confirming this point, in the second half of the paper, I would like to elucidate the actual conditions of the formation of kirgizy-krest’yane, based on the case study of the mixed settlements that were actually established.

III. Kirgizy-Krest’yane in Practice Seen from the Case Study of Mixed Settlements

In 1905, in order to execute the resettlement policy in Semirech’e Oblast’, the branch office of the Resettlement Administration (Pereselencheskoe Upravlenie) was set up in Vernyi (the capital of the oblast’, known today as Almaty) and placed under the jurisdiction of the Central Administration for Land Re-Organization and Agriculture. The Resettlement Administration of Semirech’e Oblast’ was divided into a few branches (podraiony). It was the officials of the branches who were practically engaged in the land re-organization of nomads.

In Semirech’e Oblast’ the 1909 Instructions was announced as an order from the Military Governor in March 1910. In this chapter, I would like to focus on Tarkhan Village and Kamenka Village. These both were mixed settlements (smeshannye poseleniya) that were established. I will consider the actual conditions of these villages based on petitions that the inhabitants of these villages submitted.
The Case of Tarkhan Village

Tarkhan Village was established in 1911, on the occasion of land re-organization (zemleustroistvo) in Zauka Volost’ of Przheval’sk Uezd. It was located in the southwestern bank of the lake Issyk-Kul. As for concrete details about how this land re-organization was carried out, there remains virtually nothing in the historical records. However, according to an interview with an elder that was conducted during the Soviet era, “Bogusevich, the Chief (Zaveduyushchii) of the Resettlement Administration of Przheval’sk Branch, came through the area. His explanations to the residents were accompanied by threats. He said that if we didn’t become krest’yane, Russians might come in, and maybe all of the land would be distributed to them.”

This suggests that the land re-organization was implemented by force. In relation to this, we must remind the order of the Military Governor of Semirech’e Oblast’, that was mentioned above. In the preface, M. Fol’baum, who was the Military Governor of the oblast’ at the time, persistently emphasized that this policy was not compulsory, and that it would be enforced, based on the applying of Kirgiz themselves. Although it is unclear whether this type of “explanation” to residents was also carried out in areas other than Przheval’sk Uezd, it is evident that Fol’baum’s declaration was not being adhered to onsite.

In any case, in Zauka Volost’ the land re-organization progressed without any obvious trouble. As a result, from the Kirgiz (Kyrgyz) who transitioned to a settled life, Tarkhan Village was established. It is noteworthy that at the time of its establishment they accepted the households of Russian settlers. In the petition that Musa Myrzakhodzhin, the representative of the village, submitted to M. Fol’baum in 1912 reads as follows:

When Tarkhan Village was established, surplus land (izlishnye zemli) was created. For this reason, the Resettlement Administration (Pereselencheskoe Upravlenie) registered sixty households of Russian
settlers in our village. The residences of the settled *Kirgiz* (Kyrgyz) were placed on the east bank of the Teltoo river, and the residences of the Russian settlers on the west bank. There have been no disputes between us Muslims and the Russian settlers. On the contrary, the two groups with different religions respect each other, and always help each other. From this passage, we can see that in Tarkhan Village at least at the time of the establishment, the settled Kyrgyz and the Russian settlers built a symbiotic relationship. As ethnological studies conducted in this village during the Soviet era relate, the Kyrgyz and Russians in the same village had a close relationship centered on farm management. Furthermore, there were apparently cases of inviting one another to weddings and they even formed personal relationships (*tamir*). These kinds of relationships, in no small way, seem to have been due to maintaining a suitable distance between the Kyrgyz and the Russians. As can be understood from the petition, although the Kyrgyz and the Russians had formed the same village administration, it was not, in fact mixed, as the precise natural border of a river physically segregated it.

However, as I will clarify below, due to the “takeover maneuvering” by the Russians, the symbiotic relationship between the two groups became strained. When Tarkhan Village was established, another Russian village called Prival was established directly to the north. It was located downstream, on the east bank of the Teltoo River, and consisted of eighty-five households. The Kyrgyz of Tarkhan Village and the Russian settlers of Prival Village engaged in violent opposition with one another over the use of irrigation channels for a while. This was clear from the explanation made by Bogusevich: “The people of Prival Village are completely dependent on the people of Tarkhan Village on the point of water use. All of the water passes through the hands of the *Kirgiz* (Kyrgyz) of Tarkhan Village before being sent to the residential lots and fields of Prival Village. This has caused endless disputes, and has even reached the point of brawling. The relationship between the two communities is strained, and when they tried to harm one another, they destroyed the waterways.” Then, when the Russian settlers of Prival Village appealed to immigrate to a different location because of a water shortage in the spring of 1912, Bogusevich tried to
deal with the situation by merging (слияние) the two villages into “Tarkhan Village.” That is, he thought that if the Kyrgyz and Russians could use the water equally through merging the villages, their quarrels would end. Thus, it would be possible to improve the livelihoods of the Russian settlers of Prival Village.

However, the Kyrgyz of Tarkhan Village did not agree with this request. Nevertheless, they had no choice since they were under pressure from the clerk (pisar’) of the Russian volost’ of Pokrovka, into which Tarkhan Village had been incorporated. On this point, Myrzakhodzhin made the following appeal:

Since we already knew that the people of Prival Village were dangerous, we refused to accept them at the assembly (skhod) of the volost’. [Despite our refusal] the seven to nine of us who remained after the assembly were made to compose the written resolution [in agreement] under pressure from the clerk of the volost.’

Perhaps this pressure did not emanate from the clerk of the volost’ alone. If we consider that S. Veletskii, Chief of the Resettlement Administration of Semirech’e District, instructed Bogusevich to “urgently [resolve this issue].” He made this statement regarding the complaint of the Russian settlers of Prival Village, so we can surmise that strong pressure from the Resettlement Administration was also at work. In addition to that, we must not forget that the concern over sblizhenie (rapprochement) of various Muslim people, in the context of so-called “Pan-Islamism,” was widely shared among Russian officers in Turkestan at the time. Indeed, Fol’baum was taking precautions against the influence of “Pan-Islamism” on kirgizy-krest’yane, which can be seen in his report to the Governor-General of Turkestan in 1910 as following: “Kirgiz who have transitioned to settled life are culturally delayed, uneducated, and filled with a certain religious fanaticism in spite of having transitioned to a settled lifestyle. If we let Russians settle in their villages, not only will the small number of Russians in those villages not be able to carry out their lofty mission, there is a risk that they will lose the fortitude to preserve their own traditions and will fall prey to “kirgization” (окиргизиться)… When registering, the number of Russians must be fifty percent or greater of the total number of settled Kirgiz.” Taking this into account, it is possible that Fol’baum managed to prevent Tarkhan Village from becoming the base of “Pan-Islamism” by improving the percentage of Russian population.

In any event, the Russians of Prival moved into Tarkhan Village without the official approval of the government office of Semirech’e Oblast’. This can be verified in the Registration List of Settlers in the Tarkhan District, created by the Resettlement Administration of Przheval’sk Branch, which recorded that sixty-seven families immigrated from April to May 1912. Furthermore, according to the petition of Kyrgyz, on the 24 July of the same year, “the headman of Prival Village visited Tarkhan Village, accompanied by Russian settlers from that village, inspected plots of land for the church, the bazaar, and for residences, and declared to the people of Tarkhan Village, “if you disobey orders we’ll chase you out of this village.” Then, on the following day, the headman of Prival Village sent a telegram to Veletskii, asking him to hurry with an official decision. Several days after that, on the 31 of July, the merging (слияние) of the two villages was formally approved at the government office of Semirech’e Oblast’.

It goes without saying that this forcible immigration upset the Kyrgyz of Tarkhan Village. In October of the same year, the representative of Tarkhan Village, Myrzakhodzhin, directly submitted a petition to the Resettlement Administration and the government office in Vernyi, addressed to Veletskii and Fol’baum. This reflects that the immigration of Russian settlers of Prival Village was a tense situation for the Kyrgyz. The complaint of the Kyrgyz of Tarkhan Village can be summarized by the two points indicated below. First, due to the chaotic immigration that gave maximum priority to improving the conditions of the agricultural
The management of the Russian settlers of former Prival Village, the segregation between the Kyrgyz and the Russians, which had been maintained through the existing natural border of the river, was destroyed.

The chief of the Resettlement Administration of Przheval’sk Branch allotted land for the residences of [the Russian settlers of] the former Prival Village upstream from our residences on the east bank, rather than putting them together with the Russians on the western bank of the [Teltoo] river. This land had been the gravesite of our relatives and esteemed people. In spite of our requests that they not touch the graves, they destroyed nearly all of them, carried away bricks, wood, and stones from the graves, and have even built houses on top of the graves. They also threaten us, saying they will chase the Kirgiz (Kyrgyz) out of this land. We have also been oppressed by having the estates established upstream from us. The Russian settlers engage in pig raising, and they let their pigs drink water at the river. Being downstream, we have no choice but to drink this polluted river water in violation of sharia. In the petition illustrates that the Russian settlers of Prival Village immigrated to the upstream section of the east bank of the Teltoo River. They seized the initiative pertaining to water usage by gaining control of this section of the irrigation channels that the Kyrgyz of Tarkhan Village controlled. However, this time, not only did this come with the physical destruction of the daily existence of the Kyrgyz, it is noteworthy that they assert that it harmed them emotionally as Muslims.

Also on the occasion of Russians’ immigration into the village, the Kirgiz were excluded from its management. When the Tarkhan Village was first established, it was a Kyrgyz who served as a headman in the village, but after the siyanie (merging), a new individual assumed the role. There are no records on this selection. What we do know is based on Myrzakhodzhin’s claim that “even though there are eighty-two Russian households to the one-hundred-twenty-four Muslim households, the chief of the Resettlement Administration of Przheval’sk Branch [Bogusevich] selected a Russian for headman.” Thus, it is highly likely that Bogusevich selected the village headman arbitrarily. Furthermore, from the petition, we can see that the Kyrgyz were excluded from the assembly of the village.

In the assembly of the village, issues are not decided by majority rule, but by giving preference to the Russians. We have no idea what has been decided or what the main points of discussion were. The reason is that they speak entirely in Russian. There is no one among us who can recite [the contents of the subjects] in Russian. Therefore, all issues that have to do with us are decided without our consent. In the context of grasping control of the village by Russians and excluding the Kyrgyz, as they pointed out themselves, there was certainly a language barrier. Even though it is possible that the petition contains some exaggerations, in any event, the Kirgiz thought that coexisting with the Russians was troublesome. In fact, as they stated at the end of the petition, they asked to have the village segregated. We hope that your Excellency will understand the difficulty of governing the Russians and the Kirgiz, who are completely different races that do not understand one another, in the same community. However, the government of the Semirech’e Oblast’ did not try to deal with the complaint of the Kyrgyz in a sincere fashion. Fol’baum read the petition and instructed Veletskii, “Residential lots of the Russian settlers must be positioned so as not to offend the religious sensibilities of the Kirgiz (Kyrgyz). Inspire the Russian settlers (muzhik) to get along as good neighbours.” On the other hand, he gave the instruction to “keep the village in its present state.” Upon receiving this instruction, Veletskii simply repeated the instruction of Fol’baum to Bogusevich and did not confer any detailed measures.
As I have clarified above, in the establishment of Tarkhan Village and in its subsequent merger with Prival Village, for the officials of the Resettlement Administration, who were actually supervising the settlement policy on the ground, improving the management and life conditions of the Russian settlers took maximum priority. Mixed settlements were an expedient means for achieving that. This is because they made it easy to justify Russian settlers entering water channels and land that Kyrgyz had, until then, been using monopolistically. On the other hand, the officials gave little consideration to the evolution of the Russian statist principle (Russkaya gosudarstvennost’) among the settled Kyrgyz, to say nothing of giving farming support to them. On the contrary, they tacitly consented to the Russian settlers excluding them from the operation of the village.

At a meeting of the related agencies in the central Tsarist government that was held in 1907 on the issue of settlement, an official cited the “cruelty” of the policies of the United States of America towards the indigenous people (so-called “Indians”), assessing the policy of the Russian Empire by saying that “in general, the Russian people have not destroyed the tribes that live in its territory. On the contrary, we have managed to instil them with culture, and improve their welfare.” At the same time, it was confirmed that “it will not do for indigenous peoples to consider themselves as alienated. They must understand the generally impartial considerations of the government in the benefits of a culture that is advanced and developed.” However, as can be seen from the case study of Tarkhan Village, it is clear that at the local level such an official announcement ended in failure. Next, I would like to consider the case of Kamenka Village, established in the same Przheval’sk Uezd.

(2) The Case of Kamenka Village

Many aspects are unclear in the chronology and context of the establishment of Kamenka Village. It was located in the northeastern bank of the lake Issyk-Kul. According to ethnological studies based on interviews taken with elders in the former Kamenka Village during the Soviet era, the description goes no further than this: “Once, Russian settlers came from various places and settled on this land. Following them, poor Kyrgyz built houses. Eventually the Russians and Kyrgyz on this land became one group (birigip), and selected one headman (bir starchin bolduk).” There are no references to the participation of the Russian colonial authority.

According to the record of the Resettlement Administration of Semirech’e District, Kamenka Village was established in 1911. The village was settled by ten Russian households and forty Kyrgyz ones that had separated from Kungei-Aksu Volost’. It belonged to the adjacent Russian volost’ of Sazanovka. Compared with the case of Tarkhan Village, this locale was small in terms of numbers. Yet, the ratio of Kyrgyz to Russians was 4:1 and the former were an overwhelming majority in this village. In fact, the Kyrgyz selected from their lot a headman and his assistant, and it seems that they controlled the management of the village. That said, in the context of dominating by population ratio, it was not the case that the Kyrgyz excluded the Russians. In a petition signed by Kyrgyz they addressed to the government office of Semirech’e Oblast’ in 1913 that, “We were ordered by the government to select five [candidates of] judges to participate in the assembly of Sazanovka Volost’. In response, we selected one Russian and four Kirgiz (Kyrgyz).” In this way, the Kyrgyz of that village can be seen as giving consideration to the Russians as well; not monopolizing the operations of the village.

However, while the Kyrgyz held a majority at the village level, Russians were in a position of influence and strength in the volost’. In reality, the operations of the assemblies in the volost’ marginalized the Kyrgyz. We can see from the following petition that candidates for judgships were excluded.

Kirgiz (Kyrgyz) were excluded in the assembly
of the volost', and all of the judges were selected from the Russians, which had an extremely disadvantageous effect for kirgizy-krest’yan.

For example, because we Kirgiz (Kyrgyz) don’t know Russian, we can’t converse in Russian. On the other hand, the selected judges of the volost’ cannot explain the main points of the matters in Kirgiz (Kyrgyz) language. This is why so many disagreements arose.99

In this point we must remind the case of Tarkhan Village. Both villages were common in belonging to Russian volost’, which had a great impact on kirgizy-krest’yan, because they were obliged to obey directly the Russians. In fact, according to ethnological studies based on interviews taken with elders in the former Kamenka Village during the Soviet era, the Kyrgyz of Kungei-Aksu Volost’ were used to cast ridicule on kirgizy-krest’yan of Kamenka Village as following:

You say, “I become krest’yan” (Keresiyan bolom dep)
You say, “I live along the big lake” (Kengiri sazga konom dep)
You live along the main road (Kara jol boldi konushung)
The administrator of your volost’ is a Russian (Orustan boldi bolushung)...99

The government of Semirech’e Oblast’ was unwilling to hear the complaint from the Kyrgyz and ignored it. Nevertheless, even as they harbored dissatisfaction with this situation, the Kyrgyz never requested the segregation of the village. Instead, it was the Russians who requested that the village be segregated. In 1914, the Russian settlers of Kamenka Village made the following complaint to the Military Governor of Semirech’e Oblast’.

Even though the government [of Semirech’e Oblast’] has repeatedly instructed that land be given to the Russian settlers, the Kirgiz (Kyrgyz) won’t give land for plots or residences. … They have initiative [over the village], and are in charge of state-owned land. We Orthodox-following Russians have for a full two years now suffered starvation, and even in spring we have no seeds [to plant]. … Until [the Russians and the Kyrgyz] are segregated, we will have to endure abuse from the Muslims in this prison, with our small children in our arms.61

It is not certain how much this “oppression” from the Kyrgyz side towards the Russian settlers, as written in this petition, was reflected in the actual conditions. In any event, the government of Semirech’e Oblast’ responded sensitively to this petition put forth by the Russians, and decided to segregate Kamenka Village into two distinctive sections.

At the time, convenient regulations were being enacted to smoothly promote such a segregation. According to Article 6 of the “Regulations for Distributing Land to Kirgiz Transitioning to Settlement,” which was announced in May 1913, “If Kirgiz who have transitioned to settlement have renounced settlement, their districts will be set aside for Russian settlers or for the colonization of other nomads who wish to transition to settled life. If possible, those districts will be segregated, and separate Russian villages will be established.”62

In May 1912, when a draft of the regulations was shown at a special assembly, headed by Fol’baum and Veletskii, nothing was recorded about the segregation of Russian villages.63 Taking this into consideration, it can be assumed that the case of Tarkhan Village had a considerable influence on the Russian authorities.

In accordance with the regulations, the segregation of Kamenka Village was carried out. When a new land re-organization (zemleustroistvo) was conducted in Kungei-Aksu Volost’, seventy-five households of Kyrgyz planned to transition to settled life. However, when twenty-six of those households gave up on settlement, the Resettlement Administration of Semirech’e District had the Russians to settle in those vacant lots instead.64 In so doing, a new district in an adjacent area was created, which united them with the Russians of Kamenka Village. In the end, a new Russian village was born.65
In this way, the government of the oblast', having received a complaint that Russians were being oppressed to some extent, promptly segregated Kamenka Village. This was the exact opposite response from that of Tarkhan Village, which was not segregated, no matter how much the Kyrgyz filed complaints. However, in both villages, the principle of the Russian authority was consistent, in that they managed to protect the interests of Russian settlers. In short, what the Russian authority emphasized was not the assimilation of the Kyrgyz, but the defense of the interests of Russian settlers. Central to this was the question of maintenance of mixed settlements, which depended on the situations of Russian settlers within the village. In any event, after the case of Tarkhan Village, the Russian authority never established any new mixed settlements. For example, a land re-organization was carried out in Barskaun Volost' of Przheval'sk Uezd in 1914. In response to a request of Kyrgyz to enter a Russian village was rejected by the Resettlement Administration on the grounds that, “based on experience, this is a bad situation.”

IV. Mixed Settlements Converting to Places of Mutual Massacre

The Russian Empire had an idea of planning to "civilize" Central Asia through assimilation by sblizhenie (accommodation, rapprochement) and sliyanie (merging) of local peoples with Russians. Kirgizy-krest’yane (peasants-kirgiz) and smeshannye poseleniya (mixed settlements) studied in this paper certainly seem to literally embody the "civilizing mission" of the Russian Empire. However, it becomes clear that they exposed the bankruptcy of the assimilation policy and “civilizing mission” of the Russian Empire. As far as the cases taken up in this paper are concerned, kirgizy-krest’yane and Russian settlers did not approach one another mentally, nor did they merge into one community. In the villages of Tarkhan and Kamenka, the two groups did not cooperate. On the contrary, the result was that they were strongly aware of their differences in the oppositional configuration of Muslims against Russian Orthodox followers. They were unable to share a village administered as one unit.

As for the factors that inhibited the coexistence of Kyrgyz and Russians in mixed settlements, what can be mentioned first is that their languages were mutually unintelligible, and there were natural limits to mutual understanding in the realms of administration and justice. It goes without saying that the local languages were largely unknown to Russians, and the ability of the Russian language of Kyrgyz was not at all sufficient for the daily operations. The second, and greatest, factor was in the stance of Russian Nationalism that was observed throughout, from bureaucrats of Tsarist government to Russian settlers in single villages in the frontiers of the empire. What was most important to the Russians living in mixed settlements was that they controlled water and land by obtaining rights to leadership in the administration at the local level. Therefore, it never occurred to the Russians to share the operation of village with the Kyrgyz. On the basis of such an awareness it was utterly impossible for the Kyrgyz and the Russians to deepen mutual understanding in a relationship and to run the same village together.

The failure of the symbiotic relationship between Kyrgyz and Russians that was strikingly visible in the mixed settlements reached a critical juncture during the summer of 1916. That year, the Tsarist government suddenly started commanding a rear draft of inorodtsy (aliens) of Central Asia, including Kyrgyz, to compensate for the shortage of wartime workforce during World War I. This caused an outbreak of massive revolts in Russian Central Asia. Above all, in southern part of Semirech’e Oblast’, where Kyrgyz lived, dissatisfaction with the land expropriation also accumulated just at that moment, and the area became the site of mutual massacres between Kyrgyz and Russian settlers. The
two mixed settlements discussed in this paper were no exception. According to the Registration List of Settlers in the Tarhan District, created by the Resettlement Administration of Przheval’sk Branch, eight of the fifty-two households of Russian settlers were massacred. Even more brutal, seventy-seven of the fifty-two households of Russian settlers of the mixed settlements had a direct impact on this tragic situation. Surely, the mutual distrust created in the process of establishing the mixed settlement had a greater, or lesser, effect in this. Of course, mixed settlements never represented all Central Asia. They were no more than a small portion in an expansive region. However, they vividly depict the governance of the Russian Empire and some of its consequences.

NOTES

1 This article is an English translation, with drastic revisions, of my article “Konsei Sonraku no Sōsetsu ni Miru 20 Seiki Shotō no Kuruguzu-Roshia Kankei,” Nibon Chōsaiga Gakkai bō 8 (2012).

2 On the expansion of the territory of the Russian Empire and the rule of the non-Russian ethnic groups, see, for example, A. Kappeler, The Russian Empire: A Multiethnic History (Harlow, England: Longman, 2001) and M. Khodarkovsky, Russia’s Steppe Frontier: The Making of a Colonial Empire, 1500–1800 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002).


5 In official documents written in Russian dated to 1925, Kyrgyz (Kirghiz, Qirghiz) and Kazakhs (Qazaqs) were generically called Kirgiz. Occasionally, while Kazakhs were called Kirgiz-Kaysak or Kirgiz-Kazak, Kyrgyz were called Dikii Kirgiz (wild Kirgiz), Kamennyi Kirgiz (mountain Kirgiz), and Dikokamennyy Kirgiz or Kara-Kirgiz (black Kirgiz).


11 TsGA RUz (Tsentr’nyi Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Respubliki Uzbekistan), f.1-1 (Kantselyariya Turkestanskogo General-Gubernatora), op.16, d.2257, ll.10-100b.
12 TsGA RUz, f.1-1, op.16, d.2257, l.890b.
15 Zkurnal Obshchago Prisutstviya Semirechenskogo Oblastnogo Prawleniya po II Stolu Khozayastvennogo Osiedleniya, Novabrya 1 Dnya 1876 Gody [Copy] (Semirechenskie Oblastnye Vedomosti 37 (1884))
16 TsGA RUz, f.1-1, op.27, l.2-2ob.
18 “Osedye Poseleniya Kirgizov,” Dala Welayatïnïng Gazetí Istoriya Zavoevaniya Srednei Azii, Tom 13 (1903).
19 For example, see O.A. Shkapskii, “Kirgizy-Krest’yane: Iz Zhizni Semirech’ya,” Izvestiya Imperatorskogo Russkogo Geograficheskogo Obshchestva XLI (1905).
20 TsGA RK, f.44 (Semirechenskoe Oblastnoe Pravlenie), op.1, d.25966, l.11.
21 TsGA RK, f.44, op.1, d.25966, l.13.
22 TsGA RK, f.44, op.1, d.2220, l.6.
23 TsGA RK, f.44, op.1, d.3752, l.6.
24 TsGA RK, f.44, op.1, d.3752, l.6.
29 Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Istoricheskii Arkhiv, f.391 (Pereselencheskoe Upravlenie), op.3, d.914, l.23ob.-24.
30 Abramzon, Byt Kolkhoznikov Kirgizskikh Selennii Darkhan i Chichkan: 27.
31 TsGA RK, f.44, op.1, d.3752, l.6.
32 TsGA RK, f.19 (Zaveduyushchii pereselenchekskim delom v Semirechenskom Raione Glavnogo Upravleniia Zemleusirostva i Zemledeliia), op.1, d.1755, l.80-80ob.
33 Abramzon, Byt Kolkhoznikov Kirgizskikh Selennii Darkhan i Chichkan: 34.
34 TsGA RK, f.19, op.1, d.1544, l.6.
35 TsGA RK, f.19, op.1, d.1755, l.2.
36 TsGA RK, f.19, op.1, d.1755, l.7.
37 TsGA RK, f.19, op.1, d.1755, l.5-6.
38 TsGA RK, f.19, op.1, d.1755, l.80ob.
39 TsGA RK, f.19, op.1, d.1755, l.1.
40 TsGA RK, f.44, op.1, d.15303, l.53ob.
41 TsGA RUz, f.1-1, op.13, d.887, l.1ob.
42 TsGA KR (Tsentral’nyi Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Kyrgyzskoi Respubliki), f.1-12 (Przheval’skoe Pereselencheskoe Upravlenie), op.1, d.23, ll.80ob.-116.
43 TsGA RK, f.19, op.1, d.1755, l.74.
44 TsGA RK, f.19, op.1, d.1755, l.5-6.
45 TsGA RK, f.19, op.1, d.1755, l.112.
46 TsGA RK, f.19, op.1, d.1755, l.81-81ob.
47 TsGA RK, f.19, op.1, d.1755, l.84.
48 TsGA RK, f.19, op.1, d.1755, l.83-83ob.
49 TsGA RK, f.19, op.1, d.1755, l.74ob.
50 TsGA RK, f.19, op.1, d.1755, l.80.
51 TsGA RK, f.19, op.1, d.1755, l.85-86ob.
52 In fact, as can be seen from the petition that several Kyrgyz of Tarkhan Village addressed to the Chief of the Resettlement...
Administration of Semirech’e District in 1914, farming support was limited to Russians. The petition states “When we entered as krest’iane along with the Russians, they received monetary aid and free lumber from the national treasury for building their houses. As for us, because we received no aid whatsoever, we have had no choice but to live in shabby huts.”

(TsGA RK, f.19, op.1, d.1479, ll.154-154ob.)

53 Zhurnal Soveshchaniya o Zemleustroistve Kirgiz (St. Petersburg: 1907): 36.
54 Ustnye Materialy o Kul’ture Kirgizskogo Naroda vo Vtoroi Polovine XIX i v Nachale XX vv.: 105-106.
55 TsGA RK, f.19, op.1, d.1593, l.5.
56 TsGA RK, f.19, op.1, d.1741, ll.1-lob.; TsGA RK, f.44, op.1, d.3528, l.2.
57 TsGA RK, f.19, op.1, d.1741, l.2.
58 TsGA RK, f.44, op.1, d.4242, l.1.
59 TsGA RK, f.44, op.1, d.4242, ll.1-lob.
60 Ustnye Materialy o Kul’ture Kirgizskogo Naroda vo Vtoroi Polovine XIX i v Nachale XX vv.: 106.
61 TsGA RK, f.19, op.1, d.2254, ll.21-21lob.
62 TsGA RK, f.19, op.1, d.1853, l.30ob.
63 TsGA RK, f.19, op.1, d.288, l.27.
64 TsGA RK, f.19, op.1, d.2250, l.22.
65 TsGA RK, f.19, op.1, d.2254, ll.43-43ob.
66 TsGA RK, f.19, op.1, d.1972, l.38.
67 Abramzon, Byt Kolkhoznikov Kirgizskikh Selenii Darkhan i Chichkan: 36.
68 TsGA KR, op.1, d.22, ll.1a ob.-17.