

In memory of Omar Dalbaev (1931-1999)

CHIEF GEOLOGIST

When looking for information about famous people in the region, usually the first thing we do is the Internet search. Saying it openly, I also began my search from this process when it was required to find information about Omar Dalbaev, who devoted his entire conscious life to geology. However, I could not find anything worthwhile. Only the website of Kek Zhyloi newspaper last year published an article "Testing the Deepest Well in the USSR" by the journalist Aituar Otegenov and the regional newspaper "Prikaspiyskaya Kommuna" had an article about Makash Rakhmetov, the Honorary Oilman and exploration geologist of Kazakhstan. The article mentions the name of Omar Dalbaev several times. First, we read that our hero in January 1974, occupying the position of chief geologist of the South Emba Oil and Gas Exploration Expedition, whose fame resounded throughout the Soviet Union, went to a major test at the SG-2 well during the exploration expedition. A small essay about Makash stipulates that Omar had spent his youth with him, when in 1951 he arrived in the city of his dreams - Almaty, where both became friends with Myrzabai Tleubekov, with whom they later became colleagues, working in the oil and gas drilling industry. Therefore, when we were looking for information about the honorable geologist, the labor veteran Omar Dalbaev, first of all, we had to turn to the stories of witnesses with whom he worked and was on friendly terms. One of them is Makash Rakhmetov.

This patriarch, who turned 90 years, but is still in a vigorous spirit, recently received the title of Honorary Citizen of the Atyrau region by the decision of the 8th session of the regional municipal administration. A student friend and colleague, holder of "Honorary Explorer of the Subsoil" tells us about our hero as follows:

- In 1951, I, in fact, had to submit documents to the Faculty of Journalism of the Kazakh State University named after M. Kirov (now KazNU named after Al-Farabi) in Almaty. But after meeting with the guys from Dossor, including Omar and Myrzabai, my plans changed and I decided to submit documents with them to the Faculty of Geology & Geography, which was founded by the academic "Kanysh Satpayev". Omar and I lived in the same dorm room, we went through all the student challenges together. Later he could not continue his studies for health reasons and he graduated after a 1-year delay. After graduating from the university, we received a degree in Geological Engineering and we returned to our native region. My friend Omar began his career in 1957 as an operator in the village of Kulsary, then moved on as a senior geologist to the Kushkimbet and Tazhigali fields. His further life and professional activities took place in close work with the geological industry of the region.



According to Makash Rakhmetov, Omar Dalbaev was only 37 years old when he was appointed as “Chief Geologist” of the South Emba Oil and Gas Exploration Expedition. Striving to fulfill his duties impeccably, he held this position until he retired. First of all, the young manager, who at that time was the head of the geological department of the Kulsary Oil and Gas Exploration Expedition, over the years turned into an excellent specialist with extensive experience. With the direct participation of Omar Dalbaev, many oil and gas fields were discovered on the territory of the region. In particular, according to Makash, he initiated the discovery of such fields as Prorva, Karassor, Kara-Arna, Tortay, Shynkara, Kisimbai, as well as several promising areas near Ulkentobe. These are only those oil fields that his friend Makash remembered.

- He was directly involved in starting the activities at Prorva, which paved the way for the discovery of the giant “Tengiz” in the early 1960s. I am pretty sure that he wrote the geological justification of the prospective and general characteristics of the oilfield. In addition, after calculating the reserves of the Kara-Arna, examining the salted layers of Tortay, Shushkary, Ulkentobe and the surrounding area, he discovered the oil accumulations. He discovered Karasory in the mid-70s, and it still produces oil. In general,

many oil fields such as Tortai, Kisimbai and many others that were explored and discovered by Omeken, have been used for the benefit of the present-day generation for more than half a century. In general, today the large and small deposits of oil that are being developed on Zhylyoi land are exactly the ones that Omeken discovered during the Soviet times, says Makash Rakhmetov.

According to available information, the future geologist was born in 1931 in the village of Dossor in the family of an ordinary worker. Omar, whose childhood coincided with the harsh years of the Second World War/Great Patriotic War, grew up knowing the value of black gold from his childhood. The historical sources stipulate that during the war time, the Dossor oil was sent to the battlefield without refining. Therefore, from childhood, he dreamed of becoming an oil worker, and after graduating from school, the young boy aspired to go to Almaty, the city of dreams, that captured the imagination of the youth of that period. But the young graduate who had the honors, had to first get a job as an instructor in the Makat regional party committee for a decade and later he took care of his parents and brothers. In 1951, he entered the Faculty of Geology and Geography at the Kazakh State University named after Kirov and then he returned to work to his home land as a petroleum engineer & geologist.

At that time, there was an unwritten law: no matter how highly educated you are, you have to start work from the lowest position, learning from your own experience the hardships and joys of the production process! Being a young specialist, Omar Dalbaev also had to pass this test. He began his career in the oil and gas industry as an ordinary well operator at Kulsary oilfield. Through dirty and hard work in the field, by overcoming the hardship, he gradually reached higher and higher positions in this complex and responsible field work. Therefore, the labor activities of a young man gradually led him to his main specialty.

- He was appointed as the Chief Geologist of Kulsary Oil and Gas Exploration Expedition in 1969. Later, the South Emba Deep Oil and Gas Exploration and Drilling Expedition was created by joining the North Ustyurt Oil and Gas Exploration Expedition. Its first managers were Bergen Zholamanov and Bolat Utebayev. I got a job as a geologist at this expedition in 1973, and Omar became my immediate line manager. All of us, the young geologists Khalel Shnashev, Baltabay Karzhaubaev, Malik Koptileuov, Keltir Shanenov, Akhmet Sakhiev, got their jobs at about the same time. Omar Dalbaev became our leader as chief geologist, but also our teacher at the production facility. Thanks to his

guidance, we received a large portion of knowledge and practical skills that we could not get while studying at the university. Under his supervision, we carried out geological and technical activities, learned how to make the necessary calculations, analysis and acquired the ability to take responsibility, as well as many other useful skills. At that time there was a very strict requirement that all papers shall be filled out in Russian. Therefore, while ensuring the production processes, controlling and defending his projects, our mentor was able to express thoughts in Russian, writing them down and avoiding any mistakes. In brief, Dalbaev was the whole world for us. We underwent the mentoring of a great teacher at that production facility, we matured and became qualified professionals. Later I applied for another job. But in 1991, after retirement, I was invited to the expedition and appointed as Chief Geologist. I worked there until the expedition was closed” - says Yesbergen Aimagambetov, a veteran of the region's geological industry, holder of the title “Honorary exploration geologist”.



Akkuan Kemelov, Director, - Omar Dalbayev Chief Geologist, - Myrzabai Tleubekov, head of geology department on Arystanovskaya exploration well in the year 1967

In 1959-1965 exploration works took place in the areas of Kyrykmylytk, Aktobe, Ulkentobe, Morskaya, Kamennaya, Arystanovskaya and the Prorva and Aktobe fields were discovered. Then exploration work turned towards the areas between the Volga and the Urals, and all prospecting and exploration work on them was supervised by Omar

Dalbaev, the chief geologist of the expedition. The exploration and drilling works were carried out in such areas as Martyshi, Kamysbi, Zhanatalap, Aimambet, Kebir, Zhayilgan, which were subsequently commissioned the new fields. In brief, Omar Dalbaev, the chief geologist of the then South-Emba Oil and Gas Exploration and Drilling Expedition, left his impact on each of the developed oil fields, operated by the production departments of Zhylyoimunaygaz and Zhaiykmunaigas.

According to Yesbergen, after that, or rather in 1987, the deepest well in the Zhosaly-say valley was drilled. Its depth reached 6200 meters. In 1989-1991 oil production works were carried out under the supervision of Omeken in such areas as Maten, Karashungyl, Emba, Shygys, Tabynai, Kumshety, Ushmola.

The young geologists from the past, taught by Omar Dalbaev himself, have now crossed the 70-year mark and have become the patriarchs. All of them worked in the oil and gas exploration of the region, reaching Chief Geologist positions and held higher management roles. Many of them worked together with Omar as his associates and colleagues. One of them is Baltabay Karzhaubaev, who recently turned 70 years:

- I have known our dear Omar since 1973. At that time, I had a pre-graduation practical internship at the South Emba Oil and Gas Exploration Expedition. During these years, I've spent most of my time in the geological department. I would go to the oilfield and collect the materials there. We were sitting in the same room with Omar Dalbaev, Myrzabai Tleubekov and other geologists. After graduation, I got a job at this expedition as a driller's assistant and worked there for nine months. When I was invited by the chief geologist Omar Dalbaev, I was transferred to work as an operator to conduct the well survey. I worked at Burankul field. If I were not an operator, I would be performing the duties of a geologist. Later our work collaboration turned into a close friendship. At that time, I noted that he had a colleague and friend Myrzabay Tleubekov. Both studied together at the university, one was the chief geologist of the North Ustyurt Oil and Gas Exploration Expedition and Dalbaev was the chief geologist of Kulsary Oil and Gas Exploration Expedition. When two expeditions merged, Omeken was appointed as a chief geologist and Myrzeken was appointed as the head of the geological department. It is no coincidence that the colleagues and friends who went together in life and on the professional path have simultaneously passed away. Apparently, inseparable friends with similar fates have a similar end. Despite the fact that Omar was a demanding and strict person at work, he never practiced reprimands or punishments with his subordinates. He

did not like those who told lies. As the saying goes, "the tail of a lie is short," - if anyone tried to lie, it quickly became clear to him. As a chief geologist, he knew what was happening at work, and he was also a good psychologist who read the thoughts of other people. Therefore, everyone was frank with him, - recalls the veteran geologist.



New exploration zone being discussed

An educated and competent geologist spoke both Russian and Kazakh languages very well. He checked the reports of young geologists who were under his supervision with great rigor. Such moments were recalled by his apprentice Baltabay Karzhaubaev:

- We prepared for the meeting with Omeke in the same way as students prepare for an exam. After reading the document and finding mistakes there, he never tried to poke a subordinate with them, but underlined them with a red pencil. Presumably, he wanted a person to see the mistake himself and to learn to find the omissions independently. "You look at your notes, think again and again and inevitably learn to write correctly in Russian, correctly fill out your reports and documents," he says.

As I learned from the colleagues and apprentices who knew Omar Dalbayuly, despite the fact that he worked as a chief geologist, held a superior position for many years, he remained the same modest person. He was so humble and simple that, despite the fact that he managed the expedition for so many years, he did not pursue popularity and great awards. For almost half a century of the expedition's existence, four employees became Heroes of Socialist Labor and honorary exploration geologists. But all these titles were given to geologists and drillers who stood at the origins of production. Many were recommended by Omeken himself and received their awards from his hands. Even after our country gained sovereignty, many geologists received the badge "Honorary explorer of the subsoils". Unfortunately, none of them was purposed for the chief geologist Omar Dalbaev. Moreover, he did not crave to shine as brightly as others. While the names and photographs of the Heroes of Labor, presented by him for the award, appeared on the pages of the district and regional periodicals, they were widely promoted to the general public, the chief geologist Dalbaev himself did not seek the praise and approval of others. Therefore, there are not many details about his life and work that you can find in the mass media and in the encyclopedias. During his lifetime, Omar Dalbaev received several certificates of honor and he was awarded with the medals "100 years since the birth of V.I. Lenin", "Veteran of Labor", "For Services in Exploration of Subsoil", became the "Honorary Veteran" of the association "Guryev Oil and Gas Exploration", which shows the enormous contribution he made to the benefit of the younger generation.

The majority of the developed fields owned currently by the domestic and foreign companies were discovered and put on hold by Omar Dalbaev. Most of them are located in the Mangistau region. For example, there is a gas processing plant built at Shagyrlly-Shomyshy gas field. Tortay is owned by a Kazakh company, and Arystanovskaya is being developed by the Korean "KNOC"/KenSary. There are many such fields to count. Unfortunately, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Ministry of Geology had also closed and subsequently such a ministry was not created in Kazakhstan. In the absence of geology as a science and industry, no significant exploration work was carried out to discover new petroleum accumulations. The current oil fields are a legacy (amanat) left to the descendants by Omar Dalbaev and other experienced geologists of his generation.

According to his sister, a veteran of the oil and gas industry, Zhumazila Dalbaeva, their parents, Dalbay Kulniyazov and Akkenzhe Uteulikyzy, were simple peasants. Two boys and four girls were born in their family. Omar was looked after and supported by his elder brother, Munal Dalbaev. Munal and Omar studied independently, held responsible

positions and moved to Kulsary for work. In 1959, Omar Dalbaev married Kilash Zhumagazykyzy, who lived with him in love and harmony for 40 years. As people say, "an apple falls not far from an apple tree." Their daughter, Galiya Omarovna, also followed her father's footsteps and became a highly educated geologist. Now she lives in Aktobe, but continues to work even after her retirement.

- When I went to their home, my co-father-in-law Omar brought me a dombra, asking me to perform Maktymkul's song and Kasym Amanzholov's poem "About myself". The poem contains the following lines:

Oh the mountains, don't boast of your height,
If you fall down, you will become just a plain
And the seas, don't be proud to be deep,
You dry up as a desert, your waters will seep.

He always listened with excitement to these philosophical lines, prompting him to deep thoughts - recalls the singer and composer Kuanysh Bekenov.

Yes, a human life, if filled with deep philosophy and morality, will certainly become a role model for other people. This year, the labor veteran, geologist Omar Dalbaev would have celebrated his 90th birthday anniversary. However, he did not even reach the seventy-year milestone. Now our goal is to immortalize the memory about the hero who worked in the name of our future, thereby illuminating his good deeds in the eyes of the younger generation.

Erbol Koshakanov

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