

THE TURKS





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GÖKTÜRK

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The history of the Göktürks, who gave their name to the Turkish nation, continued for approximately four centuries, two centuries as an independent state, and two further centuries after their collapse. The Turkish nation and culture emerged in all its aspects during the Göktürk era, and in a sense, the Göktürks have directed the course of history until the present day. Actually, the Turkish nation already existed before the Göktürks. On two continents, Turkish societies had formed states and similar political organizations under different names. However, it is thanks to the Göktürks that the name "Turk", Turkish language and culture were recognized by foreign states. Furthermore, almost all Turkish tribes were united together as a state.

All the states founded after their collapse bore traces of the Göktürks. Indeed, names such as Turk, Turkmen, Tork, and Turkey survived until today. Therefore, Göktürk history gained importance in the western scientific world 250 years ago, and much research has been carried out. As a majority of the Turkish World has gained independence, its history has increased in significance, too, and Turkish identity has become an issue of discussion. Therefore, a discussion of Göktürk history is warranted.

THEIR ORIGINS

As the origins of the Göktürks are often conflated with legends, it is difficult to reach a definite conclusion. However, it is possible to clarify certain points within legendary texts. With the help of archaeological facts and definite historical data, we can conclude that, before 542, the Göktürks were living on the southern skirts of the Altai Mountains and that they were descendants from the northern tribes of the Huns.¹

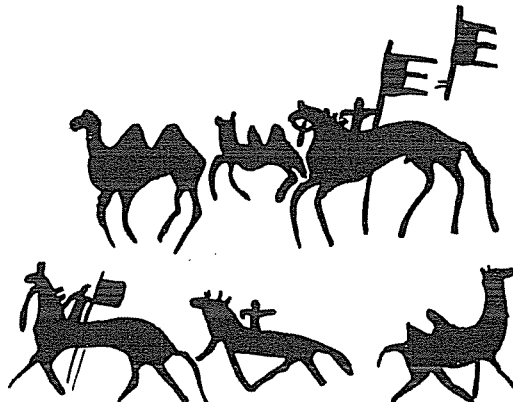
When we consider the data on origins in general, the Hun descent is noteworthy; the place of origin is recorded as the northwest of Turfan, the southern skirts of the Altai. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that, as the first location of their ancestors, a place approximately 250 km west of Ötüken is recorded.

As a result, the first Göktürks lived to the north of the Altai Mountains. They later moved to the southern skirts of these mountains. The eastern border of the region where they settled is formed by the Turfan and Etsin Swamps. In other words, the basin of the Yenisei River was the first homeland of the Göktürks.²

In the source texts, there are two legends concerning the origins of Göktürks. Although garnished with unreal stories, these texts have great historical significance. One is the story of descent from a wolf, the other is the story of the migration from the Suo country towards the north of Huns.

Another tale concerning the origins of Göktürks is related to the South Liang state, one of the states established by the Huns who went to the north of China after the collapse of the Great Hun Empire. Accordingly, Ashih-na, the chieftain of the above-mentioned state, which was destroyed in 439 by T'ai-wu, the Tabgaç emperor, had taken refuge with five hundred families with the Juan-juans. Later on, these five hundred families settled in the Altai Mountains, forming the Göktürks.³

During the era when the Göktürks appeared in history, the Juan-juans of Mongol origin, whose vassals the Göktürks were, ruled the east of Central Asia, mainly Mongolia. The Tabgach State founded in China in 386 by Turkish tribes became Chinese over time, under the influence of Buddhism, and continued its existence under the name Wei. Finally, in 534 it separated itself into Eastern Wei and Western Wei. Eastern Wei



Göktürk flags figured on petroglyph



collapsed in 550, and was followed by the Northern Ch'i dynasty. West Wei became the Chou dynasty in 557. In Western Turkestan, the Akhuns, who gained independence from the Juan-juans in the 350s and founded a state based in Transoxiana—and Samarkand, had established a large state extending to Iran and Afghanistan. In Iran, there was the Sassanid State. The definite appearance of the Göktürks, whose origins I briefly discussed above, on the stage of history is in 542.⁴

This shows us that in 542, they were strong enough to send envoys to China. Indeed, later on, they started trading silk in the northern Chinese markets. Their military power increased and the population grew. Consequently, their chieftain Bumin initiated official foreign relations. In other words, he wanted to take major steps towards independence. When he took action to this end, the state of Western Wei in China responded immediately. The head of this state sent a Sogdian who knew the Turks closely as an envoy to the Göktürks (545). The Chinese head of the state had invested in the future of his country; when he ascended the throne in 557, and founded the Chou dynasty, he received much help from the Göktürks in return. The Göktürks who were delighted to see an official envoy being sent to them by a state for the first time were very enthusiastic.⁵

INDEPENDENCE AND THE FIRST GÖKTÜRK STATE

Despite this recognition, they still continued to be vassals of the Juan-juans. Through the titles of *shad* and *yabghu*, which appear in the legendary texts, we can conclude that they maintained their loyalty to the federation. In the meantime, the Töles were becoming restless; they were to attack to Juan-juans, under whose authority they were. However, Bumin acted first, attacked the Töles, and brought them under his rule. In the historical sources, the number of people under him was reported as fifty thousand families. During the period when the Göktürks emerged, the Töles tribes lived scattered from the east to the west of Central Asia, meaning that all the Turkish tribes lived in this region at the time, except for Southern Siberia.⁶ Two sections of SS 84 and PS 99, is state that they were Turks as well and mention where they lived.⁷

When a large group of the Töles tribes joined them, the strength of Bumin increased significantly. The Göktürk leader, who achieved major accomplishments for several years, gaining independence through foreign contacts, took one further step. He requested the hand of the daughter of the emperor of the Juan-juan State, of which he was a vassal. However, he became furious when he was rejected, and his envoy was humiliated.⁸

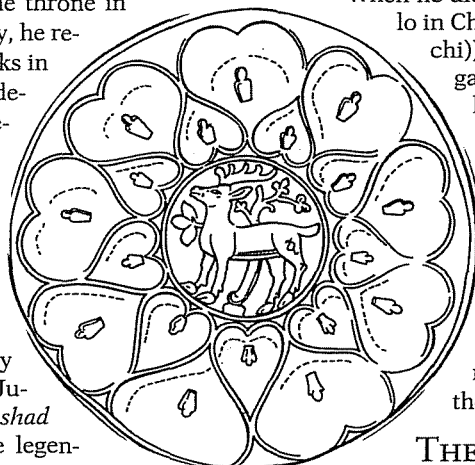
For Bumin, there was no return. He sent an envoy to West Wei, which he had official relations with previously, and requested to marry a girl from their dynasty; upon which he married Ch'ang-lo, one of their princesses. Western Wei in China had to struggle with the Eastern Wei; the Juan-juan allied forces against him for several years then. Hence, it was in their best interest to form an alliance with the fast-growing forces of the Göktürks.⁹

Bumin, convinced that the time had arrived, raided the Juan-juans in the spring of 552. A-na-kuei, the Juan-juan emperor, who saw a major defeat in Southern Mongolia, in the north of Huai-huang,¹⁰ committed suicide. Part of the survivors took refuge with the state of Northern Ch'i in China; and others with the Kitans. After this great victory, Bumin was called Il Khagan and, in 552, the independence of the Göktürk State was officially declared. Bumin's wife acquired the title Khatun.¹¹

After the independence that Bumin gained for his nation after laborious struggles, he did not live long.

When he died the same year, his son Kara (K'o-lo in Chinese, his other name was Ilci (i-hsi-chi)) became the Khagan.¹² Kara Khagan continued where his father had left. He defeated a group, the remainders of Juan-juan, in Jehol, in present day Ordos.

He then sent an envoy to West Wei, and presented fifty thousand horses as a gift (May 553).¹³ Kara, Ilci with his other name, died the same year. Upon Kara Khagans death from an illness, his brother Mukan ascended the Göktürk throne.



Seal with animal figure, Göktürk

THE RISE OF THE STATE

Mukan also continued attacking the remainders of Juan-juan, the enemy of his state. In order for the Göktürk State to have firm foundations, it was necessary that the traces of this Mongol tribe, which had been the biggest power of Central Asia for almost two centuries, be erased completely. Finally, the survivors of the Juan-juans, who were severely defeated for the third time, took refuge with Northern Ch'i. The Göktürks pursued them to the border of that state, and consented to their living in China, in return for a favorable trade agreement.¹⁴

The Göktürks' close relations with North Ch'i started worrying West Wei, the rival of this state. Consequently, a struggle began between the eastern and western dynasties of China to befriend the Göktürks.¹⁵ However, Mukan preferred West Wei, the old ally of his state. Yet, he still maintained his relations with North Ch'i. While these relations were continuing with the Chinese states, Mukan did not tire of his pursuit of Juan-juans, and he made a fourth strike on another group of theirs in the year 555. The emperor of West Ch'i, who saw that the



Göktürks were now a stable state, started taking defensive measures against them, despite their peace agreement. He assigned one million eight hundred thousand people to repair the approximately 510-km long Chinese Wall, and to build new walls.¹⁶

Indeed, the year 555 was a year of conquest for the Göktürks. The Kyrgyz on the north and west of Lake Baikal surrendered¹⁷ to Mukan who raided the Kutans and brought them under his rule¹⁸ as well. In the meantime, Istemi Yabghu defeated and destroyed the Akhun State (Eftalit, Ye-ta) in Western Turkestan and North Afghanistan.¹⁹ The K'u-mo-hsi²⁰ and Shih-wei tribes in the north adhered to the Göktürks as well. While the expansion in the east and west was continuing, there were numerous raids to the lands of West Wei. In return, the empire of the aforementioned stated who preferred to be on good terms with the Göktürks, sent Yüan Huei, an envoy, together with hundred thousand bales of silk and asked for the hand of a Göktürk princess, thus offering an alliance through kinship.²¹ Mukan Khagan who agreed to peace by accepting the one hundred thousand bales of silk from West Wei, send his daughter as the bride. In short, peace was established in return for a hundred thousand bales of silk.²²

West Ch'i in the east continued with the repair and construction of the wall in the meantime. In 556, castles walls in a length of approximately 1700 km were repaired, and twenty new garrisons were established.²³ However, Mukan's new target was T'u-yü-hun's.

T'u-yü-hun's, who was living in the northeast of Tibet, had actually come from the east of Mongolia to this region to form a state. This tribe, which is known as a tribe akin to Turks, was to appear later in history as Tanguts. The Göktürks passed through the lands of West Wei and attacked them. The Chinese had also contributed with assisting forces. The Göktürks who did not know the region well, complied with the advice of the Chinese commander, and attacked the two strategic castles. Mukan who captured the wife, the son, the commanders and all the treasures of the chief, then returned to Kukunor (Ch'ing-hai) (558).²⁴

Although Mukan Khagan supported Chou's and raided the Ch'i's, when the desired result was not achieved due to the unwillingness and failures of the Chou's, he became angry at them, and decided to not send his daughter as bride until 568. However, that year he decided to send his daughter, as he was affected by a natural disaster. Mukan, who had attained the desired economic level, sent approximately one thousand Göktürks to live in the capital of Chou, according to the agreement made. They were living comfortably in the Chinese capital. Actually, those people served as the military base of the Göktürks in the Chinese capital. Another sign which

showed his power over the Chou was the annual tax of hundred thousand bales of silk sent to him. Mukan who made his country the greatest power of Central Asia, and of the world during his time, died of an illness in 572.

The sources give a lot of information about the personality of Mukan. He is reported to have been clever, educated, and of a tough nature; and fierce in battles. The breadth of his face was more than 30 cm, his eyes were like ice (gray), and his face was very red. Mukan, who was reported to be extraordinarily courageous, also knew military techniques very well. The neighboring states were afraid of his superior qualities. Both states in North China were under his rule, and all the tribes and states in the Central Asia as well. The historical Silk Road was well protected in the Göktürk lands; and the connection between the Far East and the Middle East was very stable.²⁵

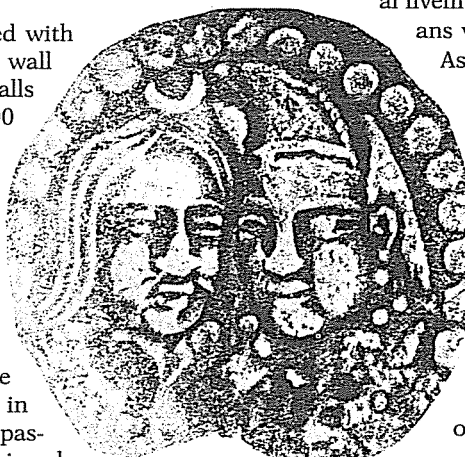
What needs to be emphasized here is that all the Turkish tribes under the name of Tölens living scattered from the River Kerulen to Ural Mountains surrendered to Mukan. However, another cause ensuring commercial liveliness was the protection of the Sogdians who dominated the trade in Central Asia.

Before Mukan died, he wished that his brother Taspar (T'a-po) would ascend the throne instead of his son Ta-lo. The first record in the sources concerning Taspar, who ascended the throne of a state strong in every aspect, was that "he pushed and troubled China."²⁶ The two states in North China who closely followed the change of power in the Göktürk State tried to establish close relations with the new khagan.

The Chou presented hundred thousand rolls of processed and raw silk and the Ch'i's urgently dispatched an envoy carrying many gifts. Taspar Khagan benefited from this status, just like his brother Mukan had.

He was convinced that he had all his southern neighbors under his rule, and, therefore, he kept asking, "why do my two loyal sons in the south keep fighting for no reason?"²⁷

As the Göktürk country expanded quickly in the meantime, Taspar Khagan attempted to re-organize the east of the country. He appointed She-tu, his nephew, and his brother Kara's son, to the east of the country, and Börü, his nephew and his brother Ju-tan's son, to the west of the country as small khagans. Thus, he acquired the status of khagan of khagans. His uncle Istemi Yabghu, who lived in the Tanrı Mountains, was already governing Western Turkestan since the foundation of the state in 552. The army of Taspar who chose this method to be able to better govern the vast state, numbered hundreds of thousands.



A coin with the illustration of Göktürk Khagan and his wife, Syr-Darya, Göktürk



Taspar Khagan changed the policy of this strong and developed country; he stopped supporting the Chou's, and shifted to the Ch'i's. This was the right move for the interests of the country. However, Khagan's inexplicable tendencies towards Buddhism changed the state of the country. He first stated communicating with the Ch'i's through envoys; and then asked for the hand of their princess. In the meantime, in the belief that his country will prosper like China, he had a Buddhist Pagoda built, and he had the sacred books of the religion, such as the *Nirvana Sutra*, translated in to Turkish (575).²⁸

Although Ch'i's had established good relations with the Göktürks, they could not withstand the Chou's. In 577 they lost their country to them.²⁹ Kao Chao-i, one of their princes, fled and took refuge with the Göktürks. Taspar supported and protected him and raided the Chou's several times. However, although the Ch'i prince received military support from the Göktürks, he could not succeed. Still, the Göktürk raids destroyed all the borders of the Chou's. However, Taspar who had lost all hopes that Ch'i's would get their throne again, became an ally to the Chou's and married their princess. Consequently, he handed Kao Chao-i and his men over to them.³⁰

Taspar who was the head of such a big state for a decade, fell ill towards the end of 581. After lying ill for some time, he died. He made one further mistake before dying. He willed that Mukan's son Ta-lo-pien ascend the throne instead of his son.³¹ Although Taspar Khagan was the head of a strong state, he had inclinations towards Buddhism, which did not fit the character of the Turkish nation at all. Actually, his state, which was the biggest in the Central Asia during his reign, had nothing to acquire through Buddhism. He was not able to benefit sufficiently from the prince who took refuge with them after fleeing from the Chou's when the Ch'i state was overthrown. Besides, for the throne he willed Ta-lo-pien, whose mother was not Turkish and who was not even named for the throne by his brother; which was a violation of the Göktürk tradition. Thus shook the very foundations of the state.

Following his death, the authorities of the state wanted Ta-lo-pien to ascend the throne in line with the will. However the public did not accept him as the khagan, and they insisted that Taspar's son An-lo ascend the throne. Nevertheless, when he ascended the throne, he could not maintain control and arguments began once more. After long discussions in the state council, Kara Khagan's son She-t'u was elected emperor under the title Ishbara Khagan (581). His full title was Il Küllüg Shad Baga Ishbara Khagan. An-lo who could not beco-

me the khagan accepted the situation without any objections. Then he went to the River Tola and resided there as the Second Khagan. The other person who could not ascend the throne was Ta-lo-pien; he went to the north. He was cast down, titling himself Apa (A-p'o) Khagan. He continuously sent envoys to Ishbara Khagan telling that "they were both sons of khagans, but he was without a throne", thus disturbing him.³² Also, he was acting on his own, sending envoys to China, attempting to act independently.

ISTEMI YABGHU AND THE WEST

Bumin Khagan who had founded the Göktürk State by dethroning the Juan-juans in 552, had given the rule of the western sections of the country to his brother Istemi.³³ Istemi governed the western wing of the country under the title yabghu between 552-576, under the Big Khagan in the east. Therefore, we need to discuss the activities of Istemi Yabghu and his son Tardu until the year 582, when they officially split into two, within the Göktürk State. According to the sources, the area, which extended from Hami on the eastern border of present day East Turkestan to the Black Sea was under Istemi Yabghu. He had two headquarters, one for the summer and one for the winter. The southern center was at seven day's distance to the north from the present city of Karashar (Yen-ch'i).³⁴ As can be seen, while his brother

Bumin and his sons were expanding the borders of the country to the east, Istemi Yabghu started a series of major conquests in the western regions. He first took on the Töles and On Ogur tribes who were scattered in the area from the west of the Altai Mountains to the Caspian Sea.³⁵ With the majority of the Western Turkestan cities, which were known to be inhabited by Sogdians, being taken by Istemi Yabghu, the Göktürks possessed the entire Silk Road from China to the Mediterranean. In the meantime, they became neighbors with another Turkish state. This

state which is referred to in the sources as Akhun and Eftalit (Chinese Ye-ta) was ruling the North Afghanistan and Transoxiana area since 350 AD, and controlled the Silk Road trade.³⁶

The Göktürks appeared as a rival, and within a short time the two Turkish states started to fight with each other. In 556, the Akhuns who were raided by the Göktürk armies led by Istemi, had sent in 555 and 558 envoys to the emperor of West Wei in China, whom they had contacted earlier in 545. The last two envoys sent to China wanted to discuss the raids of Istemi. However, soon the Akhun State, which was defeated by the powers controlled by Mukan, was destroyed in 557. It is very probable that Istemi was accompanying the Göktürk army commander, which the Chinese sources call



The "Yug" (Mourning) ceremony, Göktürk



Mukan. Istemi who was active politically as well made an agreement with Anushirvan, the Sassanid shah, and gave his daughter to the Iranian emperor, thus establishing an alliance through marriage. Istemi's daughter's name was Fakim according to the Islamic sources (Taberi, Mesudi etc.). This woman became the Sassanid empress.³⁷ While the Göktürk armies were attacking from northeast, Sassanid forces attacked from the west and easily defeated the Akhuns.³⁸ The lands of the defeated Akhun State were shared between the Göktürks and the Sassanids, with the Arax River as the border.³⁹ As a result, Transoxiana, a part of Fergana, Kashgar, Hoten and important cities of Western Turkestan came under Göktürk rule. Thus, the famous Silk Road, and the Sogdians dealing with trade on this road came under the control of Istemi Yabghu.

With the Akhuns disappearing, the Göktürk State shared borders with the Sassanid in the west, and also had contacts with the two biggest empires of the world then, the Byzantines and the Sassanids. Soon the Sassanid Emperor Anushirvan started paying taxes to the Western Göktürks. Consequently, new political developments took place. The Sassanid Empire wanted to have full control of the Transoxianan trade route.

To that end, the emperor stopped the silk trade from his country to Mediterranean and Byzantine ports. Thus, he imposed economic hardships on the trading tribe of the Sogdians who had surrendered to the Göktürks, and deprived the Göktürks of the silk transit tax. He also had the envoys sent by Istemi killed. In the meantime, Istemi, who was continuing his military actions in the west, expanded his borders all the way to the Caspian Sea.⁴⁰

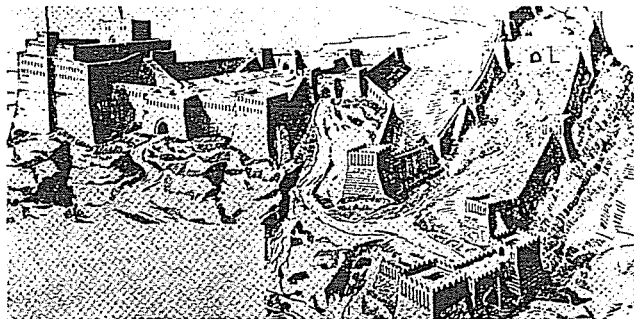
Anushirvan who had maltreated the two envoys sent previously, immediately purchased the silk the first envoy brought, and burned them before his eyes. The envoys returned, humiliated. He had the second envoy poisoned, spreading the news that he died because he could not tolerate the heat in Iran. Although Istemi did not believe these lies, he did not cut his relations with the Sassanids immediately.

Upon the recommendations of Maniakh of Sogd, he started looking for new allies. In 576, he sent a group of envoys led by Maniakh of Sogd to Constantinople, the capital of Byzantium, by way of the north of the Caspian Sea and the Caucasus. Sogdians knew from the beginning that the Sassanids and Byzantines were not on good terms. As a result of the Byzantine-Göktürk agreement, the Sassanids would be in difficulty. The Göktürk envoys were welcomed in Constantinople where they arrived with a Turkish (Scythian) letter. Byzantium received an envoy from an unknown country for the first time. The envoys were carrying very precious gifts.

The letter sent by Istemi was read to Emperor Justin II. The success of this first envoy sent from Central Asia to Byzantium can be understood clearly from the fact that Emperor Justin felt the need to immediately reply. At the beginning of August 569, a Byzantine envoy set off to Göktürk country to make an alliance agreement.⁴¹ The Byzantine envoys were led by Zemarchos.

The Byzantines set off together with the Turkish envoys, going by way of the Black Sea, the Caucasus, the Caspian Sea and the Aral Sea, the Talas river; and the Ak-dağ (Ek-tag in Byzantine, Altun Dağ in Turkish and Pai-shan in Chinese)⁴² of the Tanrı mountains. Istemi Yabghu and Byzantium had a firm agreement for all-ying their forces against the Sassanids. They did not even accept a Sassanid envoy, who came to visit Istemi. The memoirs of the Byzantine envoy written upon his return contain valuable information on Göktürk life.⁴³

As a result of the successful policies of Istemi, the Byzantine-Sassanid battles started in 571. In the meantime, the Göktürk march towards to west was continuing; the Kuban River basin on the north of the Caucasus Mountains, and then Azerbaijan became Göktürk territory.⁴⁴ However, when they realized that the Byzantines did not comply with the alliance agreement, they stopped the march. We understand that the Byzantines violated the agreement by accusing Turk-Shad who met the envoy Valentinos sent by the Emperor Tiberius II in 576 around the time Istemi died.⁴⁵



Reconstruction of Kashan fortress, Fergana

Actually, the envoys were sent with the purpose of renewing the military alliance. The Byzantine envoy was extremely polite to Turk Shad (Turxanthos); however, Shad said, "Byzantines are liars and they dance on the same rope with the emperor, you have ten tongues, but your treachery is one", and he put his finger

in his mouth.

He then said that the Byzantines granted refuge to the Avars (Varhonitas) who had fled from them, and settled them in Pannonia; he asked how they could be talking of a new alliance now, and said that their horses would run over the Avars sooner or later. Turk Shad also asked why the Göktürk envoys were taken through the difficult and dangerous roads of the Caucasus when they actually knew easier routes along the Dnieper, Danube and Maritsa Rivers.

He told the Byzantines not to forget that the Alans and Utigurs were under Göktürk control now, and that the Göktürks were the governors of all the tribes from the east to the west.

Furthermore, the Byzantine envoys disturbed the Göktürks during their biggest mourning, when Istemi



Yabghu died. Besides, they had not cut their faces with knives in compliance with the mourning ceremony. The envoys had put up with all these insults in order not attract more of Turk Shad's fury.

After the mourning ceremony, Turk Shad's threats against the Byzantine envoys continued. He said that the Kerch (Bosforos) castle on the Crimea would be conquered. Another occurrence that made Turk Shad angry was that groups of Sabar Turks were slain by the Byzantines in order to stop the Turkish march on Azerbaijan. Then, the Byzantine envoy went to Tardu who was in Ak-Dağ. On the way back, Bukan (Bukhanus, Bohan), one of Turk Shad's commanders, got hold of the Kerch castle in the Crimea, which belonged to the Byzantines. This was the farthest point the Göktürks reached in the west.

After Istemi died, his son Tardu ascended the throne. We have information about him only after 581.

THE EASTERN GÖKTÜRK STATE

Ishbara, who became khagan after long discussions, was as brave as his name implied, and all the tribes under the control of the state adored him. Even the Mongol tribes outside the eastern borders surrendered to him. The same Ishbara kept sending envoys to China, showing his good intentions.⁴⁶

In the meantime, a diplomat called Ch'ang Sun-sheng started to dominate Göktürk-Chinese relations. He had come in 580 together with the group that accompanied Princess Ch'ien-chin who was brought as bride. Although Ishbara was very distant to that group, he kept Ch'ang Sun-sheng with him because he was a very good shooter, and they went hunting together.

Thus, Ch'ang Sun-sheng also knew all the authorities of the state, and learned about all the relations between them. Besides, the Chinese envoy had learnt about all the mountains, rivers, hunts, how many tribes there were, the number of their soldiers, thanks to the hunting trips they made; and as claimed by the sources, there was nothing he did not learn or hear. Upon returning to his country, he immediately prepared a report and told everything to the emperor.⁴⁷ The emperor was very much impressed by what he read in the report. He had the envoy brought to the palace immediately, and listened to him closely. Ch'ang Sun-sheng knew the Göktürks very well. As a result, the emperor decided to implement policies against the Göktürks based on the strategies suggested by him.

Starting with the issues that Ch'ang Sun-sheng underlined, the emperor Wen sent an envoy called Yüan

Huei to the city of Hami with a flag displaying a wolf's head to Tardu, the governor of the Western Göktürks.⁴⁸ Tardu who was already opposing Ishbara, the khagan of the state, declared his independence as soon as he received the flag with the wolf's head, and thus the Western Göktürk State was formed. When Tardu initiated diplomatic relations with China, the Sui emperor showed more respect to his envoy.⁴⁹

After the western plan of the strategy was implemented successfully, Ch'ang Sun-sheng went to the tribes of hsi, K'u-mo-hsi and Kitans (Ch'i-tan) of Mongol origin under the Eastern Göktürk rule, gave them presents, and encouraged them to rebel against Ishbara Khagan. As third part of the strategy, Ch'u-lo-hou, the brother of the khagan, was selected. He was sent as an envoy secretly, and the deepest respects and regards of the Sui emperor were sent; he was offered to surrender to China.⁵⁰

Despite all these intrigues in his country, Ishbara did not lose control immediately. When the Chou dynasty in China collapsed under the influence of his wife Princess Ch'ien-chin, he attacked the newly founded Sui dynasty, which united entire China after 350 years (the year 582). Although they were actually opponents,

the forces of Tardu, T'an-han, Ch'u-lo-hou and Apa had joined the army led by Ishbara.

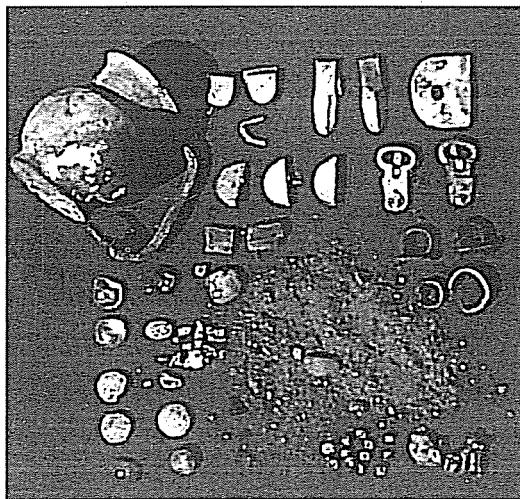
The number of the soldiers in the Göktürk army was 400 000 cavalries. Although he had several means of defense, the Emperor Wen could not prevent Göktürk attacks. Cities such as Mu-hsia, Shih-men Wu-wei, T'ien-shuei, An-ting, Shang-chün, Hun-hua were invaded.

The Chinese commanders did not dare to fight with the Göktürk army and retreated with various excuses.⁵¹ Tardu betrayed the Göktürk armies, which got hold of seven

major centers in China. He retreated, taking his own armies. Then he returned to his country.⁵²

The Chinese emperor who was helpless in view of all these attacks issued a long declaration to boost the spirits of the commanders of his army. In this declaration, he analyzed why the Göktürks were successful, and the measures that needed to be taken were emphasized.

This declaration encouraged the Chinese commanders, and they started to win some small battles against the Göktürks. Still, they did not have any major accomplishments. The victories they had were due to the Göktürks not taking the battle seriously anymore. As they were continually winning, they were caught unawares.⁵³



Findings from excavations of 2001, Bilge Khagan Complex



However, soon the Göktürks faced a major disaster. As the food was scarce in the army, they had to eat ground bones. An epidemic emerged, and a significant number of soldiers died. While Ishbara Khagan was preoccupied with these problems, the Chinese attacked and defeated some of the Göktürk armies. They even persuaded Apa Khagan to rebel against Ishbara. Ishbara did not want to allow Apa to leave him. He attacked Apa and defeated him. However, Apa fled and took shelter with Tardu. Apa who gathered an army of one hundred thousand people with Tardu's support fought with Ishbara again, just to be defeated once more.

T'an-han Khagan also joined those who rebelled against Ishbara. Ishbara defeated him as well, but he could not prevent him from fleeing to Tardu. Even his brother Ti-chin-ch'a rebelled. He surrendered to Apa Khagan with the tribes under him, and joined his military forces with Apa's army.

The Ishbara opponents who joined Apa followed the relations of Tardu with China, and sent envoys, asking for support against Ishbara Khagan. However, the Chinese Emperor Wen did not consider assisting them, in case a greater force would emerge after Ishbara was destroyed; this would have been more dangerous for China. Therefore, he preferred that the chaotic situation in the Göktürk country continue.⁵⁴ Despite the chaos in the Göktürk country, the Göktürks did not fail to raid China.

When the year 584 arrived, the number of Göktürk soldiers speedily declined further due to internal turmoil and famine. Particularly, the tribes under state rule were leaving. The Su-ni tribe with over ten thousand people went to China and surrendered to the Sui Empire. In the meantime, Tardu was supporting the opponents of Ishbara.

Ishbara, the emperor of the Göktürk State, was exhausted from the internal turmoil of several years. His wife sent an envoy to China towards the end of 584 and offered Emperor Wen to give her the surname of the Sui dynasty, as Princess Ch'ien-chin was actually a daughter of the Chou dynasty. Thus, the two dynasties would acquire an alliance through kinship. The emperor accepted this immediately and changed the title of the princess as Ta-i (Affectionate). Then he sent an envoy to Ishbara, telling him that because his wife, who is now considered the emperor's daughter, adopted the surname of the Sui dynasty, he himself is considered the emperor's son. He emphasized that they were relatives and that their friendship shall continue for generations to come. And the Sui Emperor also sent an envoy, expressing that he shared the same feelings.⁵⁵

With the ceremony that followed, Ishbara accepted that he was the vassal and the son of the Chinese emperor (585).⁵⁶

While Ishbara Khagan was struggling to deal with his difficulties by approaching China, his opponents in his country were gaining strength speedily. Apa Khagan's power had grown to immense dimensions with T'an-han and Ti-chin-ch'a joining. His borders that extended to Ötüken had exceeded the Altai Mountains in the west; and the Sogdians of the Kuca, Hami and the western countries and the Töles tribes had surrendered to him. Their fast growth alerted China. In 585 Tardu attacked and defeated Ishbara. However, Wen, the emperor of the Sui dynasty in China, decided to help Ishbara who was facing difficulties. With his support, Ishbara was able to overthrow Apa Khagan and his allies; he secured his position and took back all the places he had lost previously.⁵⁷ In return, Ishbara sent letters to China expressing his feelings of gratitude. However, in 586 the Sui Emperor presented him with the calendar of the

Chinese domination's periods, demonstrating their further supremacy. In the meantime, the Chinese prevented a battle between the Kitan, who had gained power in the east, and the Göktürks.

When he went hunting in May 587 in the states of Heng and Tai, in the north of China, he shot several deer. He presented some of these to the Sui emperor. Ishbara who lost his health after the hunt while resting at a Chinese garrison called Tsu-ho, died after lying sick for one month. Upon his death, the Sui Emperor declared mourning for

three days; he donated five thousand bales of silk and offered sacrifices during the burial ceremony.⁵⁸

Before Ishbara died, he wished for his brother Ch'u-lo-hou, who was a yabghu, to ascend the throne, instead of his son, as was the tradition before him. His justification was that his son Yung-yü-lü was weak and timid. When Ch'u-lo-hou ascended the throne with the title Baga Khagan, his nephew did not object at all. However, he was promoted to the high position of yabghu. The new khagan immediately sent envoys to China to declare his loyalty. Thereupon, he asked for support to eliminate Apa Khagan who was trouble for the state since 582. When Apa Khagan was caught, the Chinese intervened, so that he was not killed, but the continuation of his political existence was ensured.

When Baga Khagan went on an excursion to a western country the name of which is not found in the sources, he was killed by a shot in the forehead.⁵⁹

In the sources, Baga (Ch'u-lo-hou) Khagan's wit and courage were emphasized; and it was also said that physically he was unlike the other khagans, with long cheeks, a hunchback, and a fair complexion.⁶⁰

Upon the unexpected death of Baga, Ishbara's son Yung-yü-lü was appointed khagan by the state authorities. His title was Tou-lan Khagan. In the first years of his sovereignty, Tou-lan Khagan was sending an annual tax to China.

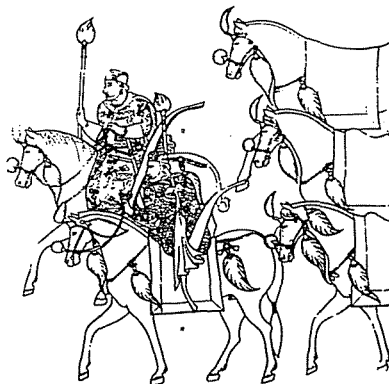


Illustration of an envoy, Göktürk



In the meantime, some important event had taken place in China in 589, and there was political unity 360 years later. It was the Sui dynasty, the neighbor of the Göktürks who accomplished this. While the Ch'en dynasty was being eliminated, they had not accepted the offer of help from the Göktürks, for the fear that they could learn about inner China.⁶¹ Some of the people who fled from the defeated Ch'en dynasty took refuge with the Göktürks. Ch'ien-chin (her latter title is Ta-i) who was the princess of the previous Chou dynasty, co-operated with them, and another Chinese statesmen, Yang Ch'in joined them as well.⁶²

Tou-lan Khagan had gained strength over time and had stopped sending taxes (593). That was the sign that he regarded himself to be on the same level with the Sui Emperor. Thus, the Eastern Göktürk-Sui struggle started again. When the Sui Emperor learned the secret alliance against him, he sent Ch'ang Sun-sheng to Tou-lan Khagan and offered to eliminate his opposition. However, the Eastern Göktürk Khagan said that the opposition is no different from the Sui's, and, thus, did not treat the Chinese envoy with courtesy. In the meantime, the Göktürk raids to the Sui lands had started again. However, the Chinese envoy knew the Göktürks well. He secretly bribed a member of the assembly (Toygun/Ta-kuan), and barged in onto the princess and other opposition members at night during a meeting. Before, Tou-lan had not believed that secret affairs were carried out. When these were revealed, all the other members of the state ridiculed the khagan for not noticing this. Afterwards, Tou-lan started sending envoys to China, and attempted to establish good relations. However, he did not accept the request of the Sui emperor to have the mentioned princess killed, despite the fact that he was sent four beautiful maidens.

The strengthening of the Eastern Göktürk State caused the Chinese to start plotting again. Although at first the Chinese had supported Ch'in-yü Shad, the brother of the khagan, Tou-lan killed him. The same year, he sent Ju-tan Tegin, his mother's brother, as an envoy to China, and offered a cane from Hoten, made of jade. A majority of the tribes under the Eastern Göktürk state sent thousands of horses, camels, and calves to China; thus establishing relations. While all these continued until 593, the Eastern Göktürk country was again heading for disaster. Thereupon the khagan's nephew Jan-kan sent news to China from around Lake Baikal, where he was living, in order to establish relations.⁶³

The statesmen of the Sui Empire benefited from this situation as much as possible. When Jan-kan (T'u-li Khagan shall be referred to with this name) started to be favored, Tou-lan, who was obliged to kill the Ta-i (Ch'ien-chin) princess, still could not establish good relations with the Chinese, as now the Sui dynasty entirely supported Jan-kan of the Eastern Göktürk country. They even wed him with a Chinese princess. In the meantime, Tou-lan and Tardu who had left the east of the co-

untry in 582 and declared the Western Göktürk State, had attacked each other several times, but it was to no avail. Thus, they made peace.⁶⁴

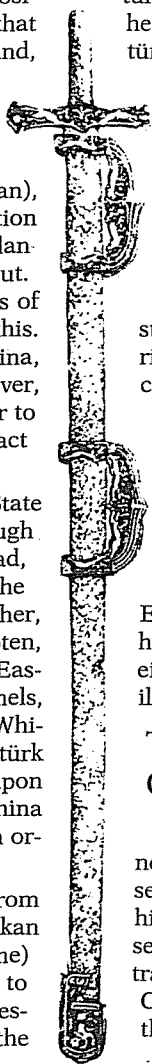
When T'u-li Khagan (Jan-kan) took steps to gain independence with the support of China (597), a battle started between him and Tou-lan. Despite the entire Chinese support, T'u-li could not succeed and fled to China to take refuge with the Sui dynasty. Consequently, the long Tou-lan-Chinese battle started. Tou-lan Khagan, who won all the struggles in the battlefield, could not prevent the espionage and conspiracy activities of the Chinese. Particularly, the tribes known under the name of Töles, which consist of almost the entire populace of the country, rebelled with the encouragement of the Chinese and shook the foundations of the state. He died in one of the riots. Actually, he had had great victories before, defeating large Chinese armies. The Khagan of the Western Göktürks supported the Eastern Göktürks against China. Furthermore, when Tou-lan died, he declared himself the khagan of the Eastern Göktürk with the title Bilge. Tardu, who defeated the big armies sent to him, was destroyed by the famous spy diplomat with a very simple trick. Tardu had fought long battles with the Chinese armies, and caused them major losses. Ch'ang Sun-sheng who understood that he could not win on the battlefield, secretly had poison poured into the water sources of the Göktürk army and livestock, thus causing a major disaster. Tardu who lost a majority of his soldiers and livestock still did not give up on the battlefield. However, the riot of the Töles tribes caused control to be lost completely. He took refuge with the T'u-yü-hun's in the northeast of Tibet in 603.⁶⁵

Thus T'u-li, who had taken refuge in China with the Sui dynasty and was declared khagan there, was sent to the Eastern Göktürk throne that was now empty, with the title Ch'i-min Khagan. He maintained an administration until 609, with the title Ch'i-min, entirely under the Chinese Emperor. He fought with the Koreans on their behalf, and he showed his submission to Yang, the Sui Emperor, by embracing his feet. In 609 he died of illness.⁶⁶

THE RISE OF THE EASTERN GÖKTÜRK STATE

Tuo-chih, Ch'i-min's son who ascended the throne and received the title Shih-pi, did not at all resemble his father in terms of character. He married his widowed stepmother, Princess I-ch'eng of Chinese origin. Thus, Shih-pi Khagan, who did what the traditions required, stopped the annual taxes sent to Chin, and announced that he would not recognize their supremacy.

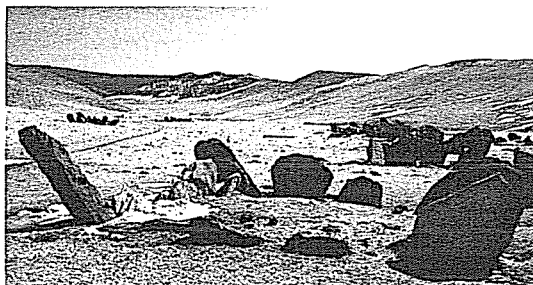
The Chinese who could not prevent his gaining strength started conspiracy activities again. According to the plan made, Ch'i-chi Shad, the brother of the khagan, would be offe-



Sword from the graves in the Kern region, (6-10th centuries)



red the throne, and he would be declared the khagan of the southern part, thus, the Eastern Göktürk country would be divided into two. However, Ch'i-chi Şad did not betray his brother like others did. Upon the failure of this plan, the Chinese started to incite the Sogdians living in the Göktürk country, as they were preventing the Göktürks from being cheated with Chinese tricks. However, the Sogdians who knew the Chinese well and who warned the Göktürks were deceived themselves. The Sogdians were invited to China with the promises of making business and were slain in a trap in the city of Ma-i (615). Shih-pi Khagan was furious that his brother was offered to be the khagan and that then the Sogds with whom he had good relations were killed through deceit. He attacked the Chinese territories immediately, and in the Yen-men castle beleaguered the Emperor Yang who set out for an inspection towards the northern states. Despite summons for help, none of the states sent help to the emperor who was in difficulty. The Emperor Yang started weeping out of terror. The Göktürks took 39 of the 41 towers in the Yen-men tower-city. Upon the recommendations of P'ei Chü, one of the state authorities, Shih-pi Khagan's Chinese wife I-ch'eng helped the helpless emperor. She told the Khagan that the Töles tribes in the north of the Göktürk country were rebelling again, thus making him lift the siege and return home. Thus, the emperor saved himself, but he could not prevent his state from collapsing. Afterwards, all the authorities in his state rebelled one after the other. Thereupon, the Sui Empire collapsed, and the T'ang dynasty which witnessed one of the most prosperous eras of Chinese history was founded (617-905).



Kurgan, Övörhangay, Mongolia

After the great glories he had attained, Shih-pi Khagan's fame grew together with his power. In addition to the raids he made to China every year, he was collecting yearly taxes from them. He was declaring some of the Chinese *beys* who took refuge with him the Chinese khagan, thus emphasizing his supremacy everywhere. He had enabled the T'ang dynasty to be founded with a group of cavalry soldiers trained entirely in the Turkish way.

Shih-pi Khagan launched a major march upon China in February 619. After passing the Yellow River without any resistance, he died while he was about to attack the city of T'ai-yüan.⁶⁷

Upon the sudden death of Shih-pi, his brother Ilteber Shad ascended the Eastern Göktürk throne with the title Ch'u-lo Khagan, as his son was too young. The T'ang dynasty which was founded in 617 in China had several oppositions. The Göktürks did not miss this opportunity, and started supporting this opposition, thus preventing the T'ang dynasty from getting stronger. They had even declared one of these opponents an emperor in their own lands. In the meantime, the cities in

northern China were constantly plundered. The T'ang opposition convinced Ch'u-lo Khagan in 620 to launch a big march against the Göktürks. A strong army was prepared. The Göktürk army was to attack from four main directions. Kao-tsu, the emperor of the T'ang dynasty was afraid and sent the envoy Cheang Yüan-shou to persuade the khagan not to attack. However, the envoy could not dissuade Ch'u-lo Khagan. However, he poisoned the khagan with the help of men he had bribed. Ch'u-lo, who imprisoned those that poisoned him, died a short while later (621). Some of the Chinese adversaries whom the khagan had supported betrayed him, and took sides with the T'ang emperor.⁶⁸

Ch'u-lo's brother Bagatur Shad ascended the Eastern Göktürk throne, with the title Il Khagan (Chie-li/hsie-li) with the support of his step mother, princess I-ch'eng. Il Khagan who started leading a country, which had a very strong military force, was quite successful in the first years of his reign. In 621, he had marched all the way to Ch'ang-an, the Chinese capital, and seized significant quantities of silk for his country. All the cities in the north of China were under siege. However, Cheng Yüan-shou, the envoy sent to the Khagan told him that even if he got hold of entire China, he could not keep it; however, in case he made peace with the T'ang dynasty, he would not need to leave the nation, but would remain in the treasury of the khagan; thus, he convinced Il Khagan and Khagan returned with his army (622).⁶⁹

The peace that ensued was broken by the Chinese. They attacked the Göktürks in certain locations. Thereupon, Göktürk armies headed for China again. The raids that started in 623 continued until 625 without interruption. T'u-li, his nephew with the title the "Young Khagan" made a peace agree-

ment with China secretly, and this upset Il Khagan. Thereupon, he made a peace agreement with the T'ang on the coast of the Wei River in 626, and ended his raids, despite the fact that until now none of the large Chinese armies could beat the Göktürks. Thus, the military and political pressure that the Göktürks exerted on the Chinese ended for no reason.⁷⁰

Il Khagan made major mistakes in spite of the great power he possessed. The Göktürk traditions and laws were violated by the Chinese and Sogdian viziers to whom he had assigned important seats in the state. Thereupon, the nation lost confidence in its khagan and the state. Also, in 627 there was a very hard winter, and a famine started as most of the animals had died. Il Khagan, who wanted to relieve himself of these economic troubles by increasing the taxes, faced a great riot, and lost most of the tribes under him. The leaders of these tribes were Sir Tardushes. With the support of China, they declared their own khaganate in 627. Now the Chinese were watching the Göktürks closely, expecting them to collapse any time.⁷¹



Because of the famine and the cold, Il Khagan had moved towards the south and went hunting in the mountains of northern China. In 630, he was caught in a trap that the Chinese had set, and lost his last men who were with him. Then he was also captured and taken to China (630). Hence, the Eastern Göktürk State came to an end. He died there of a broken heart in 624.⁷²

THE WESTERN GÖKTÜRK STATE

As mentioned above, upon the Chinese sending him the flag with the wolf in 582, and declaring their acknowledgement of his independence, Tardu had left the east, and started moving independently. That is, he founded the Western Göktürk State. Afterwards, because he intervened in the internal struggles of the Eastern Göktürk State, hostility grew between Tardu and Ishbara, and they fought several inconclusive battles.

However, the same Tardu was very successful in his relations with the western world. The Western Göktürk armies who had beleaguered the Kerch Castles of the Byzantines in the Crimea as early as 576, appeared before Kersonesos Castle five years later. In the meantime, another army of theirs beleaguered Derbend in the Caucasus.⁷³ Almost all the Sogdian kingdoms living in the Western Turkestan area recognized Tardu's sovereignty. In 591, Kao-ch'ang (Turfan), the most famous and the strongest kingdom in Eastern Turkestan was seized. Whenever the Sogdian merchants passed through this region, they had to pay taxes. The king of Samarkand married Tardu's daughter, and the Kashgar were to pay taxes on the products they grew every summer. During 588-89, the Sassanids were attacked, Bactria and Toharistan were occupied, and the region all the way to Herat was taken. Even Bagdis belonged to the Göktürks.⁷⁴

In the meantime in Iran, on the throne of the Sassanid Empire was Hürmüz, Anushirvan's son, born from Fakim, Istemi Yabghu's daughter. Since he looked like a Turk, he was known under the name *Turkzade* (son of a Turk).⁷⁵ During the reign of Hüsrev Perviz, son of Hürmüz, we see that the Western Göktürk soldiers were intervening in the internal struggles of the Sassanids. The Turkish soldiers, who had a major role particularly in the battles between Perviz and Behram Chupin, enabled Behram Chupin to gain victory. In the battles by the River Nehravan, they fought on the side of Behram Chupin against Perviz.⁷⁶ In fact, during the reign of Anushirvan, the Sassanid armies included Turkish soldiers under Commander Vahriz while Yemen was conquered (520).⁷⁷ Then, Behram Çupin was defeated again and he took refuge with Tardu Khagan.

In the meantime, countries such as Toharistan, Kunduz, and Belh were conquered by the Western Göktürks, and Bir Tegin, Tardu's son, was sent as the governor to this region.⁷⁸

Tardu, who achieved great accomplishments in the Western world, intervened in the internal affairs of the Eastern Göktürk State after 599, and as we saw above, he was in agreement with Tou-lan. Upon his death, he declared himself the khagan of all the Göktürks with the title Pu-chia (Bilge). Still he could not escape Chinese conspiracies. When his army was disbanded because of the riot of the Töles tribes, he took refuge with the T'u-yü-hun's. What happened to him next can not be found in any of the sources. Therefore, we can accept the year 603 as his end.

Upon Tardu's death in 603, Ch'u-lo, the son of Tu-lu, one of his sons, ascended the throne. However, the generation of Apa, of the Eastern Göktürks is referred to as the Western Göktürk dynasty in the sources. Accordingly, when Apa was caught in 587 by Baga Khagan, the leaders of tribes under him brought Ying-su Tegin's son to the throne with the title Ni-li Khagan. However, they could not maintain their accomplishments and they surrendered to China in 600.

Ni-li's son Ta-man Tegin, with the title Ch'u-lo Khagan, tried to fill the gap that appeared with Tardu taking refuge with the T'u-yü-hun's in 603. Ch'u-lo who did not reside continuously in one single location founded two capitals. From the center he founded on the north of Tashkent, he was governing the Sogdian country, and with the center on the north of Kuca, he governed the eastern area. However, when he wanted to



Monument of Çor, Töv Köl, Mongolia

collect more tax from the Töles tribes under him, he damaged his own rule fundamentally. The leader of the Sir Tardushes rebelled due to the pressure and he defeated Ch'u-lo. Ch'u-lo tried to save himself with the help of the Chinese. But when he wanted to attack the T'u-yü-hun's unjustifiably on behalf of the Chinese, the tribes under his rule objected; so he fled and took refuge with the Sui dynasty (612). In 613, he defeated the Koreans on behalf of the Chinese. Shih-pi, the Eastern Göktürk Khagan, seized this *bey* who was later called Ho-sa-na Ch'u-lo from the T'ang dynasty and killed him. Of the *beys* who came with him, his brother Köl Tardu Shad and Ta-nai Tegin had significant accomplishments as well. They contributed significantly to the foundation of the T'ang dynasty.

Tardu's grandson (Tu-lu's son) She-kuei declared himself the khagan in the Western Göktürk area which he was governing under the title shad. Ch'u-lo was deserted when he took refuge in China.⁷⁹



THE COLLAPSE OF THE WESTERN GÖKTÜRK STATE (SHE-KUI AND T'UNG YABGHU)

When Ch'u-lo Khagan went to China in 611 and surrendered to Yang, the Sui emperor, the dominion in the Western Göktürks shifted to She-kui, one of the grandsons of Tardu. She-kui,⁸⁰ who was the son of Na-tou-lu, the grandson of Tardu's grandson, had united the scattered tribes in a short time. The nation itself chose him as the leader anyway.⁸¹ He established his capital in San-mi-shan, to the north of Kuca. As before, the Altai Mountains in the east were the border with the Eastern Göktürks. Except for the location called the Jade Gate Passage, on the west of Tun-huang, entire Eastern Turkestan was under his control. In the west, the Caspian Sea was the farthest point he reached.

She-kui who was very hostile against the Eastern Göktürk State, died soon. His younger brother T'ung Yabghu became khagan. He was brave, clever, and a man of strategy. T'ung Yabghu Khagan, who was particularly excellent in battles, first brought all the Töles tribes living in the northern regions under his control. He emerged as a major rival to Po-ssu (Iran). In the south, all the regions down to Kashmir were under his rule. He shifted the capital from San-mi-shan to the north of Kuca to Bin-pinar (Ch'ien-ch'üan), to the north of Tashkent. Then he brought all the small Sogdian states in Western Turkestan under his control. While he governed them with an *ilteber*, he collected the taxes with a *tudun*. Therefore, the taxes sent to China were no longer plentiful. He sent an envoy in 620 to present caviar to China.

In 622, the Eastern Göktürks under Il Khagan put the T'ang Empire under great pressure. In the meantime, T'ung Yabghu was planning to attack Il Khagan during the winter with a strong army. Il Khagan who was afraid sent an envoy and made peace with him. T'ung Yabghu who later sent an envoy to China wanted to establish an alliance through marriage.⁸² However, due to the objections of the Eastern Göktürks, the marriage could not take place. Although his country was very strong, most of the Qarluq tribes rebelled.⁸³ Il Khagan, who attacked China constantly, did not want T'ung Yabghu to get closer with China. He sent him an envoy and threatened him by saying that in case he married the daughter of the T'ang dynasty, the bride had to pass through his lands, and that he would capture her then. T'ung Yabghu was worried and thus he abandoned plans of a marriage.

T'ung Yabghu, whose country became more and more unstable, was killed in 630 by his uncle Bagatur. He declared himself Bagatur Hou-ch'u-li-pi Khagan. The Chi-

nese Emperor T'ai-tsung who was very sad about the death of T'ung Yabghu sent jeweled silk dresses to be burnt during his funeral ceremony.

Thereupon, the Western Göktürk country, which was very chaotic, could not revive itself again. The *beys* from the dynasty maintained their existence in their regions, under the rule of the T'ang dynasty.

T'ung Yabghu's relations with the western world were better. In 619, the Western Göktürk armies defeated the Sassanids under his command and got hold of Rey and Isfahan.⁸⁴ In the meantime he sent his son, who was a shad, to the Bab-as-sulu region.⁸⁵ In 623, Heraklius, the Byzantine emperor and the Hazars and the Western Göktürks defeated the Sassanid armies again. The defeat of the Sassanid Emperor Hüsrev Perviz by the Göktürks had big effects on the Islamic world. The Sassanid Empire which was weakened as a result was easily captured by the Islamic forces.⁸⁶

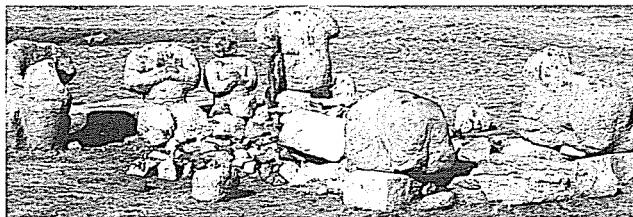
Hsüan-tsang, the famous Buddhist priest visited T'ung Yabghu at the end of 629 or the beginning of 630. T'ung Yabghu, who welcomed the priest in his tent in Tokmak, had also accepted the Indian priest Prebhakarmitra in 626. Thanks to his acceptance of Hsüan-tsang, some very vivid descriptions of this priest on Göktürk life have survived until the present. T'ung Yabghu administered the Kunduz region in Northern Afghanistan with the help of his son Tardu Shad.⁸⁷

THE INTERREGNUM PERIOD

The Göktürks' loss of independence between 630 and 681 was told in the most famous Göktürk inscriptions on the Tonyukuk, Köl Tegin and Bilge Khagan monuments. The reasons for the collapse can be grouped under three main points.⁸⁸ The first responsibility for the collapse of the state was the khagans' who ascended the throne after earlier successful khagans. Second responsibility belonged to the nation. The nation could not carry out its responsibilities against the state. The third factor was the constant conspiracies and the strategic policies of the Chinese.

When telling of the khagans' unsuccessful rule, it was emphasized that after the magnificent era of the First Göktürk State, the brothers that ascended the throne were not as clever as their elder brothers, the sons were not as clever as their fathers; in short, incapable khagans ascended the throne. It is also said that the commanders were not clever either.⁸⁹

When saying that the nation did not carry out its responsibilities towards the state, it is pointed out that the state was weakened because the *beys* and the nation were not obedient but rebellious.⁹⁰ As for the Chinese conspiracies and the strategic policies, it has been emphasized that they attracted foreign tribes with



Monuments on Ongin River, Mongolia



skillful talk and silk clothes; then the Chinese cheated them and created hostility between brothers, and between the nation and the khagan, thus leading to the collapse of the state.⁹¹ Furthermore, the sources claim that God sent the Turkish nation death because they left their own khagan, and submitted themselves to Chinese rule.⁹²

The Göktürk inscriptions, while explaining these three main factors, actually want to advise the Turkish nation about this stage of Göktürk history, so that they would not repeat the same mistakes in the future. It was also mentioned that during this era the Turk *beys* left their Turkish name and acquired Chinese names and titles, thus submitting to them, and served the T'ang Empire for fifty years.⁹³ According to the sources, the Turks do not think of starvation when full, and therefore, did not pay attention to the khagan and left their countries; they got tired and weary. They left Ötüken, their sacred land, to see blood flowing like water, bones piled up like mountains; thus, they erred against the state.⁹⁴ It is also said that the Chinese could not bear good and wise people and that several Turks who were fooled by their words died in the end; that the Chinese were impostors and deceivers, and that they created hostility between brothers, between *beys* and the nation, and that they caused the destruction of the Turkish State. Although the Turkish nation served them many times, they always followed the purpose of killing and destroying Turks.⁹⁵

In 627, in the Eastern Göktürk country, it snowed during summer, causing a great famine. During that year, all the other Turkish tribes⁹⁶ under the general name of Töles rioted. Thus, in the Eastern Göktürk State, which was in a state of chaos, people were suffering. Because of the previous attempts of Sogdian viziers to change the laws, the nation had lost confidence in the khaganate. The tribes of Mongol origin living in the east of the state rebelled because of T'u-li increasing the taxes, and as they succeeded in this attempt, they had come under Chinese control. The Töles tribes who remained in the Western Göktürk country were under T'ung Yabghu's rule. However, the country went into a state of chaos upon his death, and this disturbed the tribes in the west as well.

After Il Khagan was captured, the people who were left without a leader split into three groups. The first group came under the protection of Sir Tardushes who had controlled the Ötüken region for the last few years. I-nan, the leader of Sir Tardushes had contacted China in 627, and had declared his independence with the flag and aigrettes sent to him. Upon Il Khagan being captured in China and being joined by a part of the Göktürk people who were left without a leader, the power and the influence of Sir Tardushes increased.⁹⁷

The second group of Göktürks went to the cities of Turkestan, which were called the Western Lands. With the western countries, the Chinese sources mean the city-states that began in the west of Tun-huang and extended to Western Turkestan and northeast Iran. These small city-states were sometimes independent. However, most of the time, they were the vassals of the big states that ruled Central Asia. Istemi Yabghu, who had started ruling the western wing of the state after the First Göktürk State was founded, had brought all of these under his control. His son Tardu, who succeeded him in 576 upon his death, declared the independence of the Western Göktürk State after 582. Tardu was governing the Turkestan cities with a *tegin*, and in the meantime, he ensured that the Göktürk people settled in the cities. By mixing with some of the Turkish tribes who were left without leaders settling in these cities, they became Turkified. However, in the meantime, some people who had left the Eastern Göktürk State were settling in cities on the southern skirts of the Tanrı Mountains, from Hami to Kashgar, Kuca, Aksu, Karashar etc. As the Western Göktürk *beys* were active in other regions, this region was rather independent.

As will be explained below, the third group went to China. This group numbered around one hundred thousand. The large group of migrants in northern China worried all Chinese statesmen, mainly T'ai-tsung, the Emperor of the T'ang dynasty.⁹⁸



Turkish Monuments, Mongolia

There were long discussions on the settlement of the Göktürk people who came to China to surrender.

As a result of these discussions in the Chinese palace, in the presence of the Emperor T'ai-tsung, the recommendations of Wen Yen-po were found appropriate. The surrendered Göktürk group of around one hundred thousand started to be settled in China in accordance with the

plan he prepared. The lands of Shou-fang were chosen for them. The eastern border was You-chou.⁹⁹ The last western point was Ling-chou.¹⁰⁰ The lands ruled by Il Khagan were first split into two. These lands covered the vast area between the north of the Great Wall of China and the Gobi Dessert. The land in the east was called the Ting-hsiang military government, and the one in the west was called the Yün-chung military government. Both garrisons were divided again into three. Thus, there were six more military garrisons. In the meantime, all the leaders of the Göktürk tribes who arrived at capital Ch'ang-an were given the titles Chung-lang (fourth degree second class) generals and the like. The emperor assigned them several duties in the palace. During those times, several Turkish families went to the Chinese capital and the number of Turks residing there had reached ten thousand. However, the reason for these families going to the T'ang capital was that the Turkish tribe



leaders were assigned tasks in the Chinese palace. Their families followed them, and they started to live in Ch'ang-an.

In spring of 639, one of the Turk *beys* took refuge in China because of the Göktürks' attempted a rebellion. Chie-shih-shuai, T'u-li Khagan's brother, had gone to China in 629 with his brother. While other Göktürk leaders were given Chinese titles, Chie-shih-shuai was given the title of chung-lang general. Then he was promoted to the palace guardian general. The Chinese sources state that he had an amorous character, and therefore, he was scolded by his brother.¹⁰¹

Chie-shih-shuai who secretly contacted those of his lineage accomplished to make secret agreements with over forty Göktürk tribe leaders. He convinced his nephew Ho-lo-hu to work with him as well. Ho-lo-hu was T'u-li Khagan's son and he had also been given a position and title by the Chinese. According to the plan, the following was to take place: The Ching prince Li Chih would go for a stroll at night. They would capture him. Chiou-ch'eng-kung was to leave the palace towards morning, in the meanwhile, the palace gates would be open and the guardians would step back. Chie-shih-shuai and his fellows would enter the palace at this opportunity, go to the Emperor T'ai-tsung and take him captive. If they were to succeed, Ho-lo-hu would be the leader (khagan).

That night Chie-shih-shuai's men hid around the palace and waited. However, a big storm began. Prince Li Chih did not leave the palace. Fearing that their plans would be discovered, Chie-shih-shuai decided to attack the palace and kidnap T'ai-tsung. They fought with the palace guardians and went through four lines of defense. They even reached the central military barracks and attacked them. Just when the guardians were disbanded, Sun Wu-k'ai whose title was Ch'e-tsung (the one that attacks everywhere) came to the palace to help. Chie-shih-shuai and his men took horses from the palace stable and fled. They wanted to cross the Wei River and to reach their old lands. However, they were killed by the patrolmen at the border.¹⁰²

Although this rebellion was suppressed, all the administrators of the T'ang dynasty, particularly the Emperor T'ai-tsung, were scared. All the viziers told the emperor that it was not possible for the Göktürks to live in China, for the sake of their country's safety. It was thought that the Göktürks, who had been living in northern China and the capital Ch'ang-an for nine years, were a danger for the T'ang Empire. Immediately, preparations started to expel the Göktürks from China.

To this end, they appointed A-shih-na Ssu-mo of the Göktürk dynasty the khagan. They sent him to the north with a big army. But I-nan, the Emperor of the Sir Tardushes, fought with Ssu-mo Khagan for several years

and did not allow them to stay in his country. All the support of the Chinese proved to be of no avail. As a result, Ssu-mo and his people returned, and they settled in Northern China, in the states of Sheng and Hsia.¹⁰³

The Sir Tardushes, who were the strongest of the Töles tribes in the 600s, had declared their independence after 628. When the Eastern Göktürk State collapsed in 630, they were the most important forces in the Ötüken region. During the battles against the Göktürks who went to China and were to be sent back after 639, they protected their lands successfully. However, when their khagan Bilge I-nan died (645) their sons had disagreements, and the Sir Tardush force collapsed around 646-647.¹⁰⁴

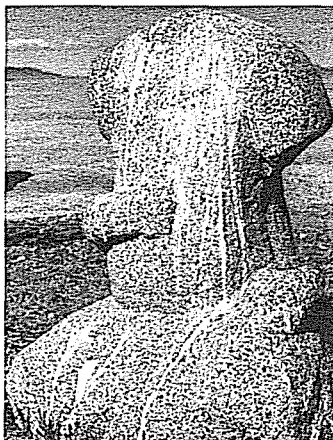
CH'E-PI KHAGAN AND THE ATTEMPT FOR INDEPENDENCE

Another *bey* of the Göktürk dynasty was controlling the surroundings of the Altai Mountains since 638. In fact, although some statesmen had tried to convince him to declare himself the khagan after the collapse of the Eastern Göktürk State in 630, he did not have the courage. Thereafter, he fled from them and came to the

Altai Mountains; the pursuing Sir Tardush cavalry group of two to three thousand people could not catch him. He took refuge in a flat and vast area which was covered on three sides by high cliffs and which was accessible for chariots and cavalymen only from one side. This place was his old land. When the number of his military powers reached thirty thousand, he declared himself khagan. When the Qarluqs on the west and the Kyrgyzs in Yenisei surrendered to him, he grew stronger. When the Chinese noticed this, he wanted to establish good relations. However, the Chinese wanted him to be their vassal. Although he defeated the first forces that were sent to him, when tribes such as Qar-

luq, Uygurs, and Bugu supported the Chinese, he was defeated, caught and taken to Ch'ang-an, the capital of the T'ang dynasty.¹⁰⁵

With the collapse of the Sir Tardushes in 646, and Ch'e-pi Khagan in 650, there was a big political gap in the Eastern Göktürk country. The small Turkish tribes such as Bugu (Bugut), T'ung-lo (Tongra), Tu-po, Bayırku, To-lan-ko, Hu-hsie, Ediz (A-tie), Ch'i-pi, Basmil Kurikan, Kyrgyz, Huns, Qarluqs, and Uygurs, who wanted to gain advantage of this gap, sent envoys to China in 647 and established diplomatic relations. Kao-tsung, the emperor of the T'ang dynasty in China, welcomed this with pleasure. All the tribe leaders were given various Chinese titles, and the lands of the tribes were given military government names in Chinese.¹⁰⁶ Thereafter, the remaining Göktürks in northern China were separated into big military governments. Thus, the Eastern Göktürk country came under full Chinese control. In the



Statue Hentiy Mongolia



meantime, some of the Göktürk *beys* who had taken refuge in China previously were promoted within the Chinese State, and they held important positions. Most of these were serving in the army as generals.

After T'ung Yabghu was killed by his uncle, the Western Göktürks were in a state of chaos. No one recognized Bagatur as the khagan. As a result, Hsi-li, T'ung Yabghu's son, ascended the throne. But when the chaos did not come to an end, they asked for assistance from the T'ang dynasty. Even the Töles tribes rebelled. Bagatur was defeated and he fled to the Altai Mountains. The new Khagan was defeated by the Sir Tardushes, and he could not make the Töles tribes obey him either. Thereafter, upon the emergence of several opponents within the country, he fled to Transoxiana. In the meantime, Ishbara, who was the son of Ni-shu Baga Shad from the Western Göktürk dynasty, divided his country into ten tribes. He gave one arrow each to the leader of each tribe. They were grouped in five Tuo-lu and five Nu-shih-pi tribes. The Tuo-lu's were living in the east of Tokmak and they were organized as five *chors*. The Nu-shih-pi's who were living in the west had formed five major *erkins*. All the new tribes that were established thus were called the Ten Arrows.¹⁰⁷ However, peace could not be established. In the Western Göktürk country, which was split into two in 638 with the River Ili as the border, unity could not be maintained. Conspiracies kept creating turmoil. In 648, he rebelled near the River Talas, and got hold of all political and military power. For approximately ten years, he maintained his independence in the Western Göktürk country. When he suppressed several riots directed against him, the Chinese themselves sent an army. The majority of this army was made up of other tribes of Turkish origin. A-shih-na Holu who got weary of the constant fighting and who was finally caught, was taken to China; in 659, he died of natural causes.¹⁰⁸

Afterwards, the Chinese also separated the Western Göktürk country into administrative sections like the Eastern Göktürk country. The *beys* of the Göktürk dynasty who were in charge then were the appointed officers of China.¹⁰⁹

THE INDEPENDENCE WAR IN THE EAST

As the Chinese divided the Göktürk countries into small parts, this prevented them for a long time from joining to fight for their independence. This situation, which did not conform to the structure of Turkish societies living in the steppes, ended with the first riot of 679. Two leaders called A-shih-te Wen-fu and A-shih-te Feng-chih, who were the governors of the military governments that the Chinese had founded in order to ma-

nage the captive Göktürks, convinced A-shih-na Ni-shu-fu, a member of the Göktürk dynasty, to become khagan; then, the independence war began. Almost all of the leaders of the 24 states of this military government joined them. Kao-tsung, the emperor of the T'ang dynasty immediately wanted to prepare a big army in order to suppress the Göktürk riot. However, the Chinese soldiers who were not accustomed to the cold northern climate were suffering much hardship. The Göktürks destroyed this army with a sudden attack, and they started marching further. Upon this, P'ei Hsing-chien marched upon them with an army of three hundred thousand people, and he defeated and caught A-shih-te Feng-chih. When A-shih-na Ni-shu-fu was killed by his own people, the first riot ended with a failure. However the Göktürks who could survive managed to flee to the Kurt Mountain (Lang-shan) to the east of the Altai Mountains.¹¹⁰



Balbal, Altai, Mongolia

In 681, A-shih-te Wen-fu started looking for a new khagan. Before long, A-shih-na Fu-nien was elected the khagan. The Chinese armies sent upon them following the riot were defeated one after the other. However, a big famine brought them much hardship. Still, other Göktürk tribes had heard of their independence attempts, and started to join them. The Chinese armies were defeated. Just when everything was so favorable, the strategic plans of P'ei Hsing-chien, the Chinese commander, caused hostility between the two Göktürk leaders. The Chinese commander who could not take control of the chaos convinced 54 Göktürk *beys* to surrender, promising that they would not be killed in case they surrendered.

In the end, all the Göktürk *beys* who surrendered were executed in the east market of Ch'ang-an, the Chinese capital. Thus, their second attempt to gain independence resulted in a failure (681).¹¹¹

THE SECOND GÖKTÜRK STATE

The struggle of the Göktürks to found their second state, which acquired independence under the leader of Kutlug after a captivity of fifty years, took place in three stages. The first riot which started in 678 in the region close to China, to the east of the Gobi Desert, spread to a very vast area in a short time, and the Turkish *beys* at different locations joined it immediately. However, the Göktürk leader A-shih-na Ni-shu-fu who could not defeat the Chinese army sent to them was killed. A-shih-te feng-chih was held captive. Wen-fu who managed to survive chose a new person, A-shih-na Fu-nien, from the Göktürk dynasty as the leader. They could not gain a victory in the long struggles either. But after they had been defeated, while being taken to China, Kutlug fled and took shelter in the Chogay-kuzi Mountain. He gathered people around him, raided the livestock of the Nine Oghuzes, and obtained food and similar necessities.



He then declared himself khagan and officially founded the Second Göktürk State. Now it was time to strike against China. Until his death at the end of 691, he raided entire northern China from one end to the other. With Tonyukuk acting on time and destroying the secret alliance that the Nine Oghuzes made with the Chings and the Kitans, he was saved from a great danger. Then he brought under his control all the other Turkish tribes in and around the Ötüken region, and in the area that extended to the Altai Mountains. In 689, Tonyukuk had even launched an attack on the Turgishes to the west.

As the sources clearly state, Kutlug Khagan was from the lineage of the Eastern Göktürk Khagan II. The previous failed attempts to gain independence despite fierce battles did not cause Kutlug to give up. He moved in a more planned manner, away from the Chinese border (Chogay Kuzi). He then went to the Karakum castle and raided the livestock of the Nine Oghuzes. When he had gathered some military power, he declared the independence of the Second Göktürk State. He appointed his brothers Beg-Chor as a shad and Tuo-hsi-fu as a yabghu, thus organizing his state. After Tonyukuk had fled from prison in China and taken refuge with the Göktürk State and had been appointed to Apa Tarkhan by Kutlug, he truly grew stronger. With the plans made and strategies implemented by Tonyukuk, the state was based on firm foundations.¹¹²

QAPGHAN AND THE EXPANSION OF THE STATE

Qapghan who ascended the throne of the second Göktürk State upon the death of his brother Kutlug in 629, continued to improve the fast growing state. The activities of Qapghan who was khagan for 24 years in the two-hundred-year history of the independent Göktürk State, are explained in detail in the Orkhun Inscriptions. Qapghan was recognized by the sources as the most glorious khagan who scared Ching the most, who ruled almost all the Turkish tribes of the era, who made his state the strongest among his contemporaries. The name of Qapghan, which is also referred to as Bogu in the Tonyukuk Inscriptions, means conqueror.

Qapghan, who raided the Ling State in 693 defeated the Chinese general Li To-tsu who tried to oppose him. Thereupon, Wu, the empress of the T'ang dynasty in China, prepared a big army with 18 generals. However, that army returned without daring to fight with the Göktürks. In the following years, upon the Kitans occupying the lands of the T'ang empire, Qapghan offered assistance, and said he would defeat the Kitans, but that he had certain demands in return. His demand was to have the Turkish families, who had been taken captive between 630 and

681 and abducted to China, returned. The T'ang Palace accepted this offer immediately.

In the meantime, Qapghan launched an attack on the Kyrgyz who were marching upon them, in agreement with China. Tonyukuk participated in the raid as well. They defeated the Kyrgyz on the Ani River, near the source of the Yenisei. Immediately afterwards, they attacked the On-Ok's (Turgishes), as they were about to attack the Göktürks in alliance with tribes such as Kyrgyz, Ching, etc. When Qapghan returned upon the death of his wife, the armies commanded by Tonyukuk and Bilge defeated the Turgishes.

The suppression of the Kitan riot with the help of the Göktürk army and the subsequent dispatch of the captive Turks from China increased the prestige and power of Qapghan. In the battles afterwards, all the Chinese armies were defeated. Then, Qapghan started to interfere with the internal affairs of the T'ang Empire. He attempted to receive certain privileges for the benefit of his country. He planned to have a say in the future of the dynasty by giving his daughter's hand to a T'ang prince. He also asked for the Sogdians who were the Göktürks' friends, and one hundred thousand scales of millet, three thousand sets of agricultural tools, and a few ten thousand iron chains for their fields.

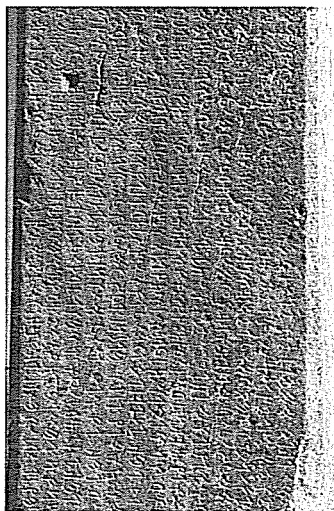
The T'ang palace first wanted to gain time against the Göktürks. Then they sent a fake prince. Also, the grain sent were cooked, and the silver and gold given as gifts were of very little value. Qapghan understood this and declared Yen Chih-wei of the group of envoys sent

to his country the Chinese Khagan. In 698, he launched a big raid. Until 703, the northern states of China were raided constantly. Their armies of 300-400 000 people were being defeated by Turkish armies of 40-50 000 people. None of the Chinese commanders could escape defeat.

QAPGHAN'S NEW ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION

Qapghan who was now the strongest emperor of Central Asia made some administrative changes in the Göktürk country. This was required by the fast development and growth of the state. The Göktürk State which had been freed from Chinese captivity sixteen

years ago under Elterish Kutlug soon became a major state. Upon these changes, Qapghan Khagan, appointed his brother Tu-hsi-fu, the Shad of Left Wing (east), Bilge (Mo-chü), the son of his brother Kutlug the Shad of Right Wing. He also appointed his son the "Young Khagan" over the shads of the two sides (the other name is Bögü; Fu-chü in Chinese). Thus, he was the khagan of khagans. The Young Khagan was also the leader of the On-Ok (Ten Arrows) tribes like Ch'u-mi-k'un. He also



A detail from Kök Tigin inscriptions



had another title the Chinese version of which was T'ohsi (Wide West) (699).

MILITARY ACTION

While the victories of the Göktürk State against China, its biggest enemy, were continuing in the east, they launched attacks on the Turgishes rebelling in the west. The Göktürk army under the command of the Young Khagan (Inel, Böğü), Bilge Shad and Tonyukuk passed the Altai mountains, reached Cungarya (Yarish Valley) and at Bolchu, (the southwest coast of Lake Urungu) the Turgishes were defeated.¹¹³ After the Bolchu victory, all the Nu-shih-pi and To-lu tribes of the Turgishes, that is, the Turks in the Balkash, Ili, Lake Isik and Talas regions accepted Qapghan's dominion once more.¹¹⁴ Then the Göktürk raids reached Transoxiana (Kengu Tarban), the city of Otrar, and the Aris River.¹¹⁵

In the meantime, Bilge had attacked the Tanguts in 700, and captured their children, women, horses, and all their treasures (BKD, 24).

In the meantime, the Göktürk raids in the west were continuing. The city-states in Western Turkestan that were governed by Turks for approximately 25 years were able to withstand the Arab attacks.¹¹⁶ The western armies which were commanded again by Tonyukuk, Inel and Bilge reached the banks of the Syr Darya River (Yincü Ögüz), crossed the river and entered the Kızıl-kum desert of Transoxiana. While some of the forces under Inel Khagan stayed here, Tonyukuk moved to the south and captured the Sogdians under the rule of So-ke, the Turgish leader.¹¹⁷ Then, the Göktürk army which crossed the Ek-Tag as well reached the Iron Gate (701).¹¹⁸

Qapghan who afterwards went to China again, attacked the states of Yen and Hsia in spring 702, and seized 100 000 horses and sheep. In the year 703, the Göktürk khagan made changes in his policy. He stopped his attacks, sent Baga Tarkhan as an envoy, and offered a new marriage alliance. However, this time he wanted that the groom should not only be a member of the T'ang dynasty, but also the son of one of the princes. Qapghan's intention was of course to be more influential in the affairs of the T'ang dynasty. Because of the unpleasant previous experiences, the empress tried to be more careful this time.¹¹⁹ She immediately called the princes and convened a meeting in the palace. As a result, the offer of Qapghan Khagan was accepted.

RIOTS OF TRIBES SHAKING THE STATE

In the meantime, the Basmils who rebelled against the Göktürk State were suppressed again.¹²⁰

In 705, the Empress Wu left the throne to Chung Tsung, the real successor to the throne. The new emperor made some reforms and expelled all the unsuccessful commanders. He started implementing new policies

against the Göktürks. He ordered all the statesmen to make plans in order to defeat and capture the Göktürks. The statesmen recommended the emperor to build three main castles, to expel the commanders and the governors, to punish those who were defeated, and to send the necessary soldiers and equipment to the borders. Thereafter, the Chinese started major espionage activities in the Göktürk country. Most of the Turkish tribes who did not belong to the dynasty rebelled. Actually, Qapghan had just had a Chinese spy, Ts'ang Ssu-yen, killed. Despite this, there were several riots against the rule of Qapghan Khagan after 708. His cruel and tough character played a part here to some extent. Afterwards, the riots followed one another, and he lost control.¹²¹ Finally, Hsüan-tsung, the Chinese Emperor, provoked the Turkish tribes in three different regions with gifts and titles to capture Qapghan and to defeat the Göktürks. Qapghan who had acted immediately when the Bayirkus had rebelled before, defeated them by the River Tola. However, he was not cautious enough and while he was returning with a few of soldiers, he was attacked in the Sogdian forest by the leader of the Bayirkus, who had survived the battle, and he was killed. His cut head was taken to China by Ho Ling-ch'üan, the Chinese envoy, who was with the Bayirkus at the time.¹²²

Qapghan who had reigned as a khagan for twenty-four years of glory and victory, thus met a very sad end. Although his son Inel, whom he had appointed as the Young Khagan replaced him, Kutlug's son Köl Tegin raised a rebellion, killing him and all his family. Then he enthroned his brother Bilge Shad as the khagan.

BILGE KHAGAN AND THE REVIVAL OF THE STATE

Bilge Khagan was described by the sources as humanitarian, and friendly, unlike other Göktürk Khagans. Köl Tegin, who made his brother khagan, became the Left Bilge Prince and started to take care of the administration of military affairs. In the meantime, most of the statesmen of the Qapghan reign were killed during the rebellion; only Tonyukuk, the father-in-law of Bilge, who was older than seventy and very much respected by the public, was allowed to live. Tonyukuk was assigned again due to his great experiences in state matters.¹²³ Indeed, it was useful that Tonyukuk took on administrative duties when the state was going through such a difficult period.

Bilge who was born in 683 was lucky that he had never been captive in China like the statesmen before him. When his father died in 691/692, he could not be the khagan as he was very young. However, in 697, he was appointed the Shad of the people of Tardush. His region was around the Irtish River, to the west of the southern skirts of the Altai Mountains. Until 716, he had been in a total of twenty five battles, to the Sari River in



Illustration of a Göktürk Khagan



the east, in the Shan-tung Valley, in the west to the Iron Gate, to the Kyrgyz in the north of the Kögmen Mountains, and he had gained victories in all of these.¹²⁴

In spite of the changes in the state management, the tribal riots did not stop. In 716, the Uygurs were defeated close to the River Selenga.¹²⁵ In 717, a group of Og-huz Turks fled to China. While Kitans and Tatabis were making alliances with the T'ang dynasty in China, the Turgishes announced their independence in the west, under Su-lo. Also, they stopped the Arab forces that wanted to move from Transoxiana to the east.

Most of the tribes were fighting with the state for a decade. The long duration of the fights and the continuing problems caused even the loyal people to lose their confidence in the state. In such a chaotic state, Bilge called Tonyukuk to work for the state, and his task was to plan strategies.¹²⁶

During the summer of 717, Bilge, who marched on the Tatabis that surrendered to China, punished them. He captured their horses and all their property. The Tatabis who fled settled in the Kadirkan Mountains. In the meantime, some of the *beys* who had surrendered to China returned. Again, some of the people, who were forced to go to China, refused to assimilate to the Chinese and rebelled; After some struggles, they returned to the Göktürk country. In 718, the Qarluqs were defeated and their people surrendered to the state; their governors being killed. As a result, the Qarluq problem was solved as well.

Bilge who established peace within his country, now turned to China. He planned major raids and attacks. Furthermore, with the return of his people who had gone there years ago, his power increased. However, Tonyukuk with his vast experience advised him. Tonyukuk explained to him that that people prosper not with battles but with peace, that the Göktürks were only getting united, that they were still weak, and that they needed at least three years to become stronger. Tonyukuk also prevented Bilge Khagan's request to surround the city with walls and thick castle walls, and to build Buddhist temples and to spread Buddhism, because the Turks were very few. To be exact, they constituted not even one per cent of the population. Despite this, they defeated the Chinese in the battlefields. They were going wherever there was water and pastures and they did not settle anywhere for a long period of time. Hunting was an important profession, indirectly practicing for battles. If they were strong, they attacked and raided, if they were weak, they ran to the forest and the mountains. Although the soldiers of the Chinese were a large in number, they were useless. They did not have the training, or the practice; they were not able to dominate on the battlefield. The power of the Göktürk soldier was based on his life style. If they were to build cities with walls around, and live inside them, their traditions wo-

uld change. As a result, in the first battle, they would be defeated, and captured by the T'ang dynasty. As for allowing Buddhist propaganda and the practice of this religion in the country, it was thought that this religion weakened people. One needed to be strong during battles and Buddhism would prevent Turks from being strong fighters. Thus, Buddhism could not have been spread in the country. Bilge Khagan listened to this advice and he was very much influenced by it; he accepted all the strategic suggestions.¹²⁷ After Bilge Khagan listened to and accepted the recommendations of Tonyukuk, he changed his mind about attacking China. He even sent an envoy and offered to make peace. However, Hsüan-tsung, the emperor of the T'ang dynasty did not accept.¹²⁸ Emperor Hsüan-tsung, who saw that the Göktürks had attained their old strength, made plans to eliminate them (winter of 720). The emperor's absolute decision was to fight. Wang Chün, the commander of the Shou-fang region was to control all the armies. From the west, the Basmils would attack; Tatabis and Kitans from the east, and with the Chinese armies from the south, the Göktürk armies would be entirely surrounded.¹²⁹ However, the experienced statesman Tonyukuk

intervened and said: "Basmils are in Pei-t'ing (Beshbalik) now. Tatabis and Kitans are on the east, the distance between them is too big. They cannot combine their forces and act together. There is hostility between Huei and Chang Chia-chen. They would not act together. If they do come, we can retreat towards the north three days in advance. Their food would finish and they would go back. The Basmils are not strong enough. If they come first, we will fight."¹³⁰ Tonyukuk's predictions turned out to be true. The Basmils attempted to attack the Göktürk centers by themselves in the fall of 721. The Chinese, Tatabis, and the Kitans had not arrived yet. Then they became afraid, and they retreated.¹³¹ Thus, the plans of Hsüan-tsung, the T'ang Emperor, failed right from the beginning. When Bilge wanted to pursue those who were retreating, Tonyukuk prevented the Göktürk armies from going fast.

Bilge Khagan was relieved about this victory and he turned to China, where he raided the Kansu region. He defeated the Chinese armies sent to him, but he did not advance much, as he had understood, particularly from the recommendations of Tonyukuk that it was useless to enter into China too far. As can be understood from his words in the inscription, his main objective was to ensure peace and well being in his country.¹³² Therefore, he sent a group of envoys and offered peace.¹³³

Finally, Hsüan-tsung, the T'ang Emperor of China had to accept Bilge Khagan's power. On one hand, he started developing peaceful relations, on the other hand, he started to increase defense measures on the borders. In the meantime, during the discussions in the palace with his own men, the view was expressed that Bilge



Head of Bilge Khagan, Mongolia (Ulan-Batoor Museum of History)



Khagan was a good administrator; that he managed people well, that he was friendly, that his brother Köl Tegin was an excellent fighter, and a good commander, and that Tonyukuk was very brave, knowledgeable, and experienced, thus dangerous for China.¹³⁴

KÖL TEGIN'S DEATH AND FUNERAL CEREMONY

In 731, the Second Göktürk State lost a great hero. Bilge's brother Köl Tegin died.¹³⁵ His death affected his brother Bilge deeply. In order to express his feelings, he wrote the following in his inscription: "My brother Köl Tegin died. I mourned. My eyes that see almost do not see; my mind that flows almost does not flow anymore. I meditated. When the God of Time wishes, man must die. I thought so, and I mourned fighting back my tears, fighting back my cries from the bottom of my heart. I mourned a lot. I thought that the two shads, my brothers, my sons, my *beys* and my people would cry their eyes out."¹³⁶

All the neighboring states of the Göktürks had participated in Köl Tegin's funeral ceremony. The Kitans and Tatabis from the east sent representatives. Uder was leading them. The Chinese emperor had sent Ishiyi Likeng together with thousands of bales of silk fabric, golden and silver goods.¹³⁷ The Tatabis came with Bökün, the representatives of their emperors. Of the far neighbors to the west, Sogdians, Persians and General Nek and Oghul Tarkhan from Bukhara came.¹³⁸ Tamgaci (seal holder) Makarach and Oghuz Bilge who was also Bilge's son-in-law were representing the Turgish, and Tardush Inanchu Chor was representing the Kyrgyz Khagan.¹³⁹ A big funeral ceremony was organized for Köl Tegin, similar to the one for Mukan Khagan in 582 (November 1, 731).

A monument was to be erected for Köl Tegin. Bilge's words were carved on the monument by Yollug Tegin. The best artists and craftsmen were brought from China, and a beautiful grave was built. The interior was decorated by artists and sculptors, and they placed many statues in the tomb.¹⁴⁰

Bilge placed the inscription close to the Göktürk center, where it was easily accessible.¹⁴¹

The Chinese emperor sent six skilled workers to carve the inscriptions, to build the grave, and so forth. The inscriptions, the grave and the statues were very elegant. According to the sources, Bilge was sad to see them, as there had never been before such beautiful inscriptions and works in the Göktürk country.¹⁴²

Bilge Khagan was now alone. He could not rely on Köl Tegin and Tonyukuk any more for matters of state affairs and with whom he had fought on the battlefields 697. However, there were no powers to oppose him in Central Asia. Only in 733, the Tatabis left the Kitans.

Most probably they were planning to rebel. Bilge Khagan defeated their army of forty thousand people under the command of General Ku at the Tongker Mountain and killed thirty thousand people. In the meantime when, his older son died of a disease, he had a balbal (funeral monument) erected.¹⁴³

The second Göktürk State had been living in peace with China for a long time now. Bilge repeatedly stated his wish to marry a Chinese princess. When the Emperor Hsüang-tsung accepted, he sent Ko-chie-li-pi to thank, and offered to begin the marriage preparations.¹⁴⁴

Afterwards, Bilge was poisoned unexpectedly by Buyruk Chor.¹⁴⁵ There are no records in the sources as to why he poisoned Bilge. However, Buyruk Chor had gone to China a few times as an envoy. He could have acted under the influence of the Chinese. However, we cannot name a certain reason. After Bilge was poisoned, he did not die immediately, and he understood that he had been poisoned by Buyruk Chor. He had him, his family and all his co-conspirators killed. He died on November 25, 731.¹⁴⁶ His funeral ceremony was held on June 22, 735.¹⁴⁷ His son (I-jan Khagan) organized a big funeral ceremony for him. Five hundred people under the command of Lisün Tay Sengün came. They brought plenty of gold and silver, and also sandalwood. Everyone cut hair and ears during the funeral ceremony, and gave as gifts their best horses and furs.¹⁴⁸ The inscription

was carved by Yollug Tegin within one month and four days.¹⁴⁹ He also designed the decoration. The Chinese Emperor sent Li Ch'üan to attend the funeral ceremony of Bilge. Li Jung was assigned to write the Chinese text on Bilge's inscription.¹⁵⁰

THE COLLAPSE OF THE STATE

Upon Bilge's death, the statesmen convened a meeting, and enthroned his son as the khagan of the Second Göktürk State. The title of the new Khagan was I-jan. However, I-jan Khagan did not live long; he died of an illness. His brother replaced him and was called Tengri Khagan.¹⁵¹ Tengri Khagan was not capable to conduct state matters due to his young age, thus, his mother governed for him. His mother cooperated

with Yü-ssu Tarkhan, one of the viziers, and took most of the statesmen with her. His uncles, the shads who were governing the eastern and western wings of the state, were well liked by the tribes and the public. Their increased affluence caused the mother of the khagan and the tarkhan to be envious. The western wing shad was killed, but the eastern wing shad managed to survive. He even attacked and killed Tengri Khagan. The state was dragged into a state of chaos without any reason. P'an Köl Tegin, the eastern shad, had enthroned another son of Bilge. However, no one supported him.



Monument of Köl Tegin, Orkhun



When the Basmils attacked, taking advantage of the situation, he lost all his forces, and fled alone. In the meantime, the khagan whom he had enthroned was killed by Kutlug Yabghu, with the aim to enthrone yet another son of Bilge Khagan. A short while later, yabghu killed him as well, and declared himself the khagan.¹⁵²

The Göktürk country reached this state just when it was at the summit of its power. The Chinese appointed Sun Lao-nu, a special envoy, to encourage the rebellions of Uygurs, Basmils and Qarluqs. The rebels killed Kutlug Yabghu and appointed the Basmil leader the khagan. The Qarluqs and the Uygurs took the right and left yabghu positions.

The Göktürks managed to survive the raids of these tribes and enthroned as the khagan, Ozmish (Wu-su-mishih), the son of the previous eastern wing shad P'an Köl Tegin.¹⁵³

Ozmish knew that the state lost its power. Therefore, he said that he would go to China and declare his loyalty to the T'ang Emperor. But when he changed his mind, the Chinese had the Uygurs, Qarluqs and Basmils attack and kill him. Ozmish's cut head was taken to the Chinese capital.¹⁵⁴ Although several khagans were eliminated, the remaining Göktürks did not give up. In fact, their population decreased a lot. Ozmish's son Pai-mei was made the new khagan (744). In the meantime, the three rebellious tribes created much hostility. The leader of the Basmils, who had been the khagan, was killed by the Uygurs and Qarluqs; and the Uygurs announced their own khagan and founded a state. Kutlug Boyla Köl Khagan, the leader of the Uygurs, attacked Pai-mei Khagan and defeated him; and his cut head, like his father's, was sent to the Chinese capital.¹⁵⁵

When the Göktürks collapsed, the *beys* of the dynasty and some people surrendered to China. Because of the civil war continuing for several years, they were very few in numbers. The *beys* were given various Chinese titles and the Göktürk people were sent to settle in the northern states. The name Göktürk continued to be mentioned in the Chinese sources until 941. In the brief records concerning the Göktürks, we see that these groups frequently rebelled against the T'ang dynasty in China, but could not succeed due to their small forces.¹⁵⁶

THE SOCIAL STRUCTURE OF THE GÖKTÜRKs

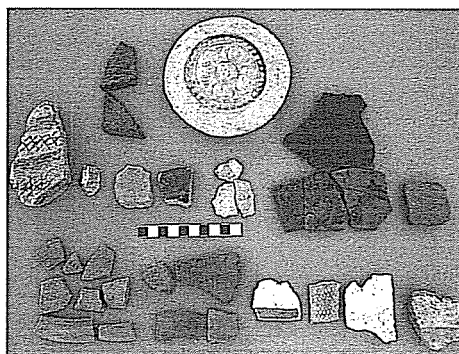
It is very clear from the historical sources of the Göktürk State, Chinese almanacs, and Turkish Orkhun monuments, that the highest political organization in the Göktürks was the *il* (state). *Il*, which is the equivalent of the state in its present sense, started first to be used with the meaning of "family" (*ogush*), then it was

used to define the unity of families (*urugh*), and the most developed and final form of people constituted the tribes.

Chinese historical source which talk of the foundation of the Göktürk State (Chou Shu Section 50) mention the following: Bumin, the khagan of the state defeated the Juan-juans (Mongols) under whose rule he lived; then the word *il*, which means state and *khagan*, the title of the emperor, were used together as Il Khagan, emperor of the state. In other words, now the Göktürks were independent and had become an *il* (state). After this event, which took place in 552, a Göktürk state can be considered to exist.¹⁵⁷ Of course, a state needs a system, an organization, institutions, and law.

As in the other Turkish states, which were established in the Central Asian steppes before and after the arrival of Islam, the Göktürk state also consisted of several levels, as far as social structure is concerned.¹⁵⁸ The family was the core of the social structure. Although the unity of families was called *urugh*, their full function has not been understood yet. The next level, the tribe, was the unity of families and *urughs*; the tribes were led by *beys*. The tribes who were politically involved were called arrows. The unity of tribes was called *boduns*; depending on the size of the land, they were governed by yabghus, shads, or iltebers.

For a state to be independent, certain conditions need to be met. These are political independence, a country, people and law.¹⁵⁹



Findings from the excavation of year 2001,
Bilge Khagan Complex

How the Göktürks attained independence has been explained above. However, we learn from Chinese sources that before defeating the Juan-juan's of Mongol origin, they had already taken important steps to gain independence. Bumin Khagan, who started the silk trade before 545 in the markets to the north of the Chinese wall and outside the Chinese borders, wanted to establish relations with China. The West Wei emperor sent an envoy to the Göktürks in 545. According to the source, the Göktürks were happy when the envoy arrived, and they congratulated each other, saying, "Now the envoy of the big country has arrived, therefore, our country will rise as well."¹⁶⁰ The reason for Göktürks to be cheerful was that fact that they were recognized as a political entity for the first time.

The attainment and loss independence of the Göktürks is explained in detail in the Orkhun monuments; losing independence is almost a death for the nation, and gaining it is like a rebirth; the nation should take a lesson from this.¹⁶¹ Between 630 and 680 when the state was under Chinese rule, there were several attempts to gain independence, and, finally, the riots which began in 679 ensured that the state gained independence

The attainment and loss independence of the Göktürks is explained in detail in the Orkhun monuments; losing independence is almost a death for the nation, and gaining it is like a rebirth; the nation should take a lesson from this.¹⁶¹ Between 630 and 680 when the state was under Chinese rule, there were several attempts to gain independence, and, finally, the riots which began in 679 ensured that the state gained independence



again in 682. When the state attained independence again, the khagans spent extraordinary efforts to rescue the Turkish tribes that were still in China. This demonstrates the importance of independence for the Göktürk state.¹⁶²

Without a geographical area to live in, an independent state can not exist. However, in the old Turkish states, this geographical area was not a country, that is, an area that the emperor can use freely, as was the case in other contemporary states, but a heritage of the ancestors that the rulers were obliged to protect. This and the love for the country is explained clearly in the Orkhun Monuments. Also, Ötüken, the center, was considered sacred (Iduk Ötüken). In fact, the Orkhun inscriptions were the result of the hope that those lands would stay Turkish lands forever. The Chinese sources state that the Göktürk borders were ten thousand li (over five thousand km) from east to west, and five thousand li (over two thousand five hundred km) from south to north.¹⁶³ The country was not a dominion like the personal property of the emperor, but it was administered according to the concept of empire, the likes of which were only seen in ancient Rome.

In the Göktürk State, the people (*kün*) had individual laws, were economically free and allowed to own private possessions. For the agricultural lands, private possessions applied as well. During the second Göktürk State, in 698, Qapghan had several requests from China. Among these, there were thirty thousand scales of millets to be used as seeds. It is obvious that these would be used for the lands of the people. However, the Byzantine source *Tactica* states that the Göktürks are free people. As private possession was the guarantee of people's rights and freedom, a person is free to the extent that he or she can own and make use of private possessions. Considering how important freedom was for the Göktürks, we see that this state was quite advanced concerning human rights, compared to other contemporary states.

In earlier times and in other contemporary cultures, people sustained themselves by utilizing the labor of the weak and unskilled people among them. In settled peasant culture, there was no other means for survival.

In the Göktürk steppe culture, which economically depended on husbandry and shepherding, animal power, mainly horses, was utilized. While in forest tribes and settled communities, dominant groups were using various measures to keep the order of the society: They grouped the subordinate masses into classes and castes, which were not given any political rights or rights of possession. This can be seen in the various slavery organizations in the Mongols, the slave trade of the Slav tribes, slaves in Egypt, slaves working with chains around their necks in China, pariahs in India, people which the ancient Greek Aristotle called domestic animals and li-

ving tools, and which were considered property, and the slaves in Rome. Steppe culture does not require the muscle force of men; therefore, private possession and independent work was so important that it was provided for in the traditions and in the law.¹⁶⁴

In the Göktürk documents, the expression "servant" was used in fourteen different places. However, these do not mean people without property or rights; servants did not have certain political and civil rights, but they were not slaves. Slavery and servitude are socially and legally different. In ancient Greece, Rome, and at the Mongols, there were slaves, but these were war captives. The word slave does not appear in any text in the Göktürk language.

Generally, in any society, three factors play important roles in elites:

- 1- Possession of vast lands (economic)
- 2- Military profession (administrative-military)
- 3- Being a part of the religious group.

We see the following when we study the Göktürk State: Above all, as agriculture had very little importance for the Göktürks, there cannot be servitude related to land possession. In the steppe societies, whoever can use weapons is a soldier, therefore, soldiers cannot be regarded as a separate profession. As everyone was considered a soldier, they did not feel the need to make a distinction. Like all other ancient Turkish states founded in the steppes, the Göktürk State had a political and military character, but not a religious one.

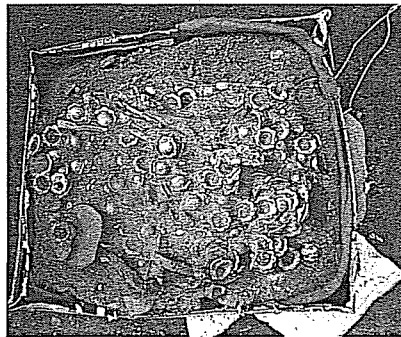
The expression *Kara-bodun* in the inscriptions means "big crowd." With this word, the inscription's writer wanted to express the existence of big masses of people without class differences.¹⁶⁵

Although it was once claimed that in the ancient Turkish states some high offices were hereditary, no proof of this can be found in the sources. Furthermore, we can see appointments being made from the

beginning to the end of Göktürk history. In brief, there is nothing in the Göktürks that would demonstrate the existence of social classes.¹⁶⁶

We can even go one step further and claim the following: it was the nation that founded and ensured the success of the state: "*Türk bodun, illedik ilin... kaganladuk kaganın yitiru idmiş* [The Turkish nation made its state the state... lost the khagan it had made the khagan]". As for the participation of the people in the foundation of the state: "my father (İlterish) started with 17 soldiers. Whoever heard it in the forest, in the valley, came together, first came 70, then 700 people... they founded the khaganate with the laws of their ancestors."¹⁶⁷

In the independent Göktürk country, there had to be a system of laws, which governed the lives of people.



Findings from the excavation of 2001,
Bilge Khagan Complex



As stated in the Orkhun inscriptions, the entire body of law in the Göktürk State was called *töre*. In the inscriptions, the word *töre* appears in eleven places, and in six of them, they are used together with the word *il* (state). In the other five places, its relation with *il* is clear. This shows how loyal the Göktürk State was to the *töre* (law). In other words, the existence of the state was closely related to the existence of the law: "They took the state and made the law..." Furthermore: "O Turkish nation! Who can destroy your state, your law? ", and: "The state we acquired and our law was thus." Further passages concerning the law are these: "he left his state, and his law..."; "O (Ilterish) organized the nation (*bodun*) according to the laws of his ancestors..."; "My uncle ascended the throne according to the law..."¹⁶⁸

The provisions of the law could change to maintain their effectiveness under different conditions. However, certain provisions of the law never changed. These were *könilik* (justice), *uzluk* (wellness, usefulness), *tüzlük* (fairness), and *kişilik* (personality). As in other ancient Turkish states, the main features that distinguished the Göktürk State from settled and tribal states were as follows: public guardianship, private possession, freedom of profession, no privileges, charismatic sovereignty, unity, military character, religious tolerance, rule according to the concept of empire, *töre* (legality), and husbandry-shepherding. However, what needs to be particularly emphasized is the main feature that distinguished the Göktürk State from other tribal states: the public law.

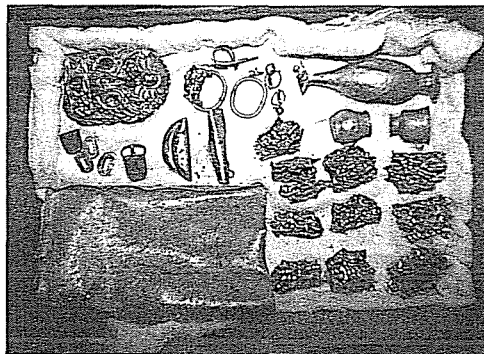
We also see that the concept of the country developed into a state philosophy. The state comes before the emperor, that is the khagan. Therefore, in all the Göktürk inscriptions the word *il* (state) is mentioned before the word *khagan*. The collapse of the state was a very big disaster for the Göktürks. The State was given by God, and the state of the khagan and the nation was appointed and determined by God: "*il berigme tengri* [God that gives the state]." God punished the bad khagans and the Turkish nation, from time to time, by taking the country away from them.¹⁶⁹

THE EMPEROR

At the Göktürks the emperor, that is, the head of the state, was represented by the khagan. As can be understood from the sources, the symbols of the emperor were the tent, *ögin* (throne), *tuğ* (flag with the wolf's head), *davul* (drum), *köbrüğe* (aigrette) and bow. Again, as in the ancient Turkish states, these symbols had the same function for the Göktürks as well. Whenever they planned a conspiracy against the Göktürk State, the Chinese sent flags with a wolf's head and aigrettes to the Göktürk princes they supported. Thus, they wanted to communicate that they recognized them as emperors. Toget-

her with the title *khagan*, the word *khan* is also used once in the Tonyukuk inscriptions.

Unlike in some ancient civilization ruled by despots, where the duty of the nation is to take care of the emperor, the Göktürks saw it the duty of the khagan to take care of the nation, to supervise it, to ensure food supply, to keep the tribes together, and to protect it against the enemy. The words below demonstrate that they are responsible for the nation, and that they have to explain their actions: "I did not sleep at night for the Turkish nation, did not rest during day... I revived the dying nation because God willed so and granted so, and because I was lucky, I dressed them, I rendered them prosperous, I increased the population. I rendered them superior among nations of other *ils*, among nations of other khagans. I forced nations in all four corners of the world to peace, I did not allow enmity."¹⁷⁰ At the Göktürks, political force was called *kut*. The khagan who did not work day and night for his nation was thought to have his *kut* taken away by God because of neglecting his duties to his nation, and to lose his throne. Inel was dethroned in 716 because of this reason.



Findings from the excavations of 2001, Bilge Khagan Complex

Sovereignty (*erklik*) was charismatic. The position of khagan was given by God. Turkish emperors applied and obeyed the laws (*töre*), but they did not make them. In short, they were not absolute emperors, as was the case in other nations.¹⁷¹ As the political power was given by God, the nation did not need to be fair. The performance of the khagan was controlled by the nation by means of the assembly. The suggestions of Bilge Khagan (716-734) to surround Göktürk cities

with walls and to adopt Buddhism was not accepted by the assembly. The assembly either approved of the khagan's decisions or refused them, giving justifications. For example, in 581, they did not recognize Ta-lo-pien as khagan, as his mother was not Turkish; instead his uncle Ishbara was elected khagan because he was brave and a hero.¹⁷²

Khagans who ran the state very strictly and who treated people badly caused people to rebel. According to Chinese sources, because the Göktürk khagan Qapghan treated people badly, there were several riots in the Göktürk country, and, finally, during the suppression of one, Qapghan was killed by the leader of the rebellious Bayırku tribe (716).¹⁷³ In a sense, this was the reaction of the Göktürks to the khagans who suppressed them.

Göktürk khagans also had titles, like the emperors of other Turkish states had. These were: "Big Khagan, Kutlug, Begchor, Coming from the Supreme Sky, Looks Like God, Created by Sky, Turk Bilge Khagan, Born in the Sky, The Sacred Emperor of the Göktürks and the World."¹⁷⁴



Another evidence proving that the khagan is responsible for the nation in the Göktürk State is the ascension ceremony recorded in Chinese sources. During the ceremony, the khagan's throat was wrapped with a silk scarf, tightened, released, and then he would be asked for how many years he would be the khagan.¹⁷⁵ The khagan would be embarrassed, and his words would be carefully listened to by the public, approved and examined. Before that part of the ceremony, the statesmen used to make them sit on a felt cloth, and turn from east to west following the direction of the sun. At every turn, the public would bow and greet him.

In order for a Turk to be a successful Khagan, he had to have three major qualifications. These were *yarlig*, *kut* and luck (*ülig*). *Yarlig* was an order given on behalf of God; later, it changed to mean "God's forgiveness": "Because God granted *yarlig* I was the shad over the Tardush nation at the age of fourteen. We made raids to Gökrmak and Şan-tung with my uncle, the khagan". The khagan, just like the *il* (state), was a position that belonged to the nation: "The Turkish nation made its state the state... lost the khagan it had made the khagan"; "those who had states were rendered without a state, and those who had khagans, without a khagan". However, the Göktürk khagans who ruled with the *kut*, *yarlig* and *ülig* given by God had a universal state view. Such a view of state and concept of emperor have a significant place in the history of law.¹⁷⁶

To summarize, the duties of the Göktürk khagan to his nation were the following:

- 1-To lead his army
- 2-To ensure the provisions of people
- 3-To ensure the accommodation of people
- 4-To make himself loved and respected by people.

Also, the person elected khagan had to be wise, brave, honest, and virtuous.

THE ASSEMBLY

The existence of an assamply with a legislative authority is very important for Göktürk history. Also, since no such assembly existed in the contemporaries of this state, this importance should be further underlined.

We conclude the existence of such a assamply in the Göktürk State from Chinese sources and from the Orkhun Inscription. This assembly was actually an entity, which had existed since before Christ. The equivalent of the word "assembly" in the Göktürk language was *toy*. In all other Turkish dialects and in the foreign languages which borrowed Turkish words, it also means assamply, gathering. The members of this assamply were called *Toygun* (Ta-guan in Chinese).¹⁷⁷

The Göktürk khagans were the natural heads of the assamply. When the khagan was not available, the

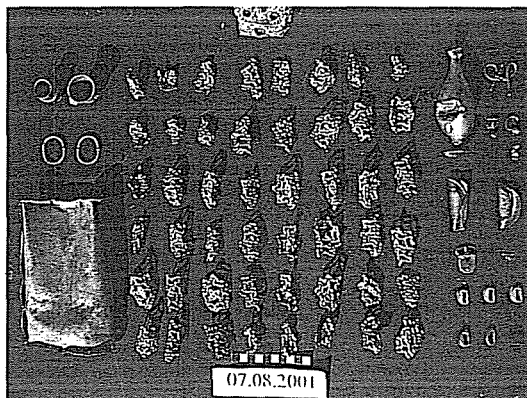
assamply was chaired by *Aygucı* and *Üges* who did not belong to the dynasty. These were also the equivalent of the present Prime Minister. We have to emphasize that the assamply (*toy*) as an important legal entity had great significance in Göktürk history, and played a major role in enthroning and dethroning the emperors. In chapter 50 of the Chou Shu, the Chinese source giving the first information on the Göktürks, some legendary information about the era when the Göktürks were not yet a state is related. In the passage where legend gives way to factual historical information, although the accuracy is not certain, a striking example is given. The Göktürks who were still a mere tribe, had a jumping contest in the woods, in order to elect their leaders. Whoever jumped the highest was elected the leader. Thus, the assamply selected the most fit. When An-nop'an-t'uo, the first Chinese, arrived in the Göktürk center in 545, the Göktürks and their leader "Bumin (T'umen) were overjoyed and they congratulated each other, saying, "Now the envoy of the big country has arrived, therefore, our country will rise as well". With these records we understand that even before they became a state, the Göktürks had an institution which served as an assamply.¹⁷⁸

The best evidence demonstrating the role of the assamply in selecting the khagans is the event occurring during the change of throne in 582: As I have mentioned above, after the death of T'a-po (Tabo) Khagan, Ta-lo-pien, who had been appointed his successor before the khagan died, was not accepted by the assamply and Ishbara was selected as the more fitting khagan.¹⁷⁹ In short, that was how the assamply used its discretion and authority. That is, this assamply had full authority in electing khagans. This assamply accepted the khagan or refused him on justified grounds.

Another event in 593 is noteworthy for demonstrating the function of the assamply. The Chinese wife

of Tou-lan (Do-lan) Khagan contacted some Chinese and Sogdians to form an alliance against the Sui dynasty that destroyed her own dynasty; and she carried out certain secret activities. When the Sui dynasty learned this, the khagan was informed. The khagan did not want to interfere at first, but the Chinese envoy bribed a *toygun* (ta-guan), one of the members of the Göktürk assamply, and revealed the secret plan of the khagan's wife; thereupon, all the members of the assamply ridiculed the khagan. The khagan, who was in difficulty, punished the rebellious Chinese and the Sogdians.¹⁸⁰ Furthermore, the suggestions of Bilge Khagan in 723 were not accepted in the Göktürk assamply.¹⁸¹

However, the ceremony of the public placing the khagan on a felt cloth and lifting him over their heads



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during the ascension signified the participation of the people in the election of the khagan. The *toyguns* had titles such as *tegin*, *kül-chor*, *apa*, *erkin*, *tudun*, *ilteber*, *tarhan*. The toys would start with religious-national ceremonies; all the state issues would be discussed, and then feasts were held.

THE GOKTÜRK GOVERNMENT

As seen in the Orkhun inscriptions, at the Göktürks, the equivalent of the government was the *ayuki*.¹⁸² As mentioned above, state issues were discussed in the *toy*, the assembly. However, due to the geographical conditions and the situation of the country, it was not always possible for the *toy* to meet. When state issues needed to be discussed, the *ayuki* (the government) intervened, and all the issues would be discussed in the *ayuki*. According to Chinese sources, the Göktürk government consisted of nine ministers. The word for ministers in the inscriptions was *buyruk*.

From the titles of the members of government, and from the terms used in the inscriptions, we can see that they were very important people (*chor*, *ilteber*, *buyruk-chor* etc.). We also know that some of the government members were military governors in further regions and some acted as *tuduns*, collecting tax.¹⁸³

The government was led by *aygucis* or *üges* who did not belong to the government. Also, in the state center, there were *tamgacis* and *bitigchis*. The *tamgacis* were scribes and seal bearers, and the *bitigchis* were responsible for communications.

In Göktürk state organization, the head of the state, the legislation body (*toy*) and the government were entirely different institutions. That is, they had distinct functions. However, as the khagan (head of the state) who represented the empire in his person had the first responsibility for the country, he had all the power. He appointed the prime ministers, he suggested changes in the laws, and he chaired the state court (*yargu*), for he was the only person God had vested with political power. As in other ancient Turkish states, the Göktürk nation expected everything from him, food provisions, peace and order which gave rise to full authority. In, the old Turkish administration mechanism of a military nature facilitated the implementation of the concept of "full authority". However, based on the sources, thanks to the provisions of the law, which was implemented strictly, this authority was never cruel and never took the form of a military dictatorship.

In the Göktürk state system, according to Chinese sources, there were over 28 titles, and it was natural that these people holding the titles held important positions. The Göktürk inscriptions give sufficient information on

the titles. According to the inscriptions, the state hierarchy was as follows: Khagan, his family, *bodun*, *shadapit beys*, *tarhanlar*, *buyruk beys*, *dokuz-oghuz beys* etc. The Chinese sources referred to the following order, after the khagan and the wife: *Yabghu*, *shad*, *tegin*, *tudun*, *ilteber*, and *erkin*.

LEGAL JUDGEMENT AND PENALTIES

The highest court in the Göktürk State was called the *yargu*. The sources show that in the Göktürk State, there is a judicial (*köni'lik*) organ. The duty of the *yargus* was to implement the constitutional law and the traditional law. The famous Göktürk statesman Tonyukuk had also served as the head of the court, that is, the *yargan*. The emperors also served as *yargans*.¹⁸⁴

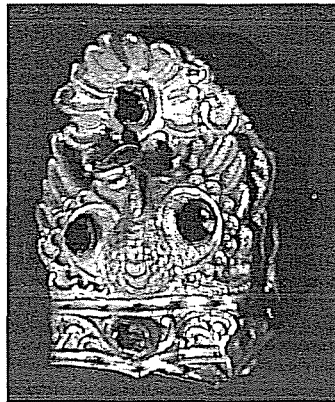
According to the sources, the prevailing judgements in the Göktürk State were the following:

- Adultery - execution
- Homicide - execution
- Robbery, stealing horses – execution
- Cheating maidens – reimbursement with goods, and obligation to marry the maiden.
- Inflicting an injury – reimbursement based on the degree of the wound.
- Stealing horses and ships –reimbursement tenfold.
- Other petty crimes required punishments not exceeding 10 days.
- Betraying the country, that is, deserting the army - execution.¹⁸⁵

Penalties were be applied to everyone, without any distinctions.

SPECIAL LAWS

As stated above, in the Göktürk State, servitude and slavery did not exist. That is, all people were free. Women had a significant role in the society. We understand from the documents of 585 and 615 that women had a say in running the state. They had important roles, for example, in affecting the khagan when the Chinese envoys were greeted in 585, thus making him accept being a Chinese vassal, and lying in 615 in Yen-men, to make the Shih-pi (ši-bi) Khagan lift the siege of the Chinese emperor.¹⁸⁶ Again in the inscriptions, the praise of Bilge Khagan's mother and her likening to a goddess show how important women were for the Göktürks. The expression, "My daughter at her wedding age has become a concubine", shows that the women had a high place, and that being a concubine was something sad and shameful. This also showed the value the Göktürks placed on women. In our cultural history, being a concubine is something humiliating. Indeed, in the inscriptions, the word *küng* (*kün*) which means concubine, is actually Chinese in origin (ch'üen).



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When a boy loved a girl, he sent one of his relatives to the girl's family to ask for her hand. There was the practice of marrying the spouse of the father, uncles or the brothers after they had died (*leviratus*). This way, the spouse left behind was saved from difficulties arising from remaining alone. In other words, the Göktürks tried to protect the integrity of the family. They also practiced exogamy.¹⁸⁷

The taxes were paid in the form of horses and sheep. Göktürks kept accounts by chiseling lines on the sides of their chariots. It is quite natural that the Göktürks who did not lead a settled life kept their accounts like this. They also dipped golden tipped arrows in wax and used them as stamps (*tamga*).

As private possession was allowed, we understand that everyone in the Göktürk state owned some land, as some of the Turkish tribes were growing plants around the eastern area of present-day Western Turkestan. Daughters had a very important role, and a daughter's inheritance rights would be transmitted to the family she had established with her husband, as her dowry.

Dying in battle was a great honor in the Göktürk State; no one wished to die of a disease.

The capital punishments were meant to prevent feuds. As a greeting, according to inscriptions, the Göktürks bowed their heads and knelt.

THE STATUS OF FOREIGN NATIONS

After the state was founded in 552, the rule of the western sections of the country was given to the brother of Istemi Yabghu, khagan Bumin. Istemi was treating the people of the cities he controlled very well, while he was conquering the entire Western Turkestan region. He had never slain the people of the cities he conquered, as Genghis Khan would do. They generally assigned Turkish governors instead of the local princess, or they sometimes allowed the local governors to stay. Tardu who did not replace the local prince of Samarkand gave his daughter's hand to him, thus establishing kinship. The Göktürks established military colonies in those locations in Western Turkestan where people were not Turkish. The Sogdians who were entirely contained within the borders of the Göktürk State spread from the west to the east of the state.¹⁸⁸ They had significant roles as a trading tribe, particularly on the Silk Road. The most important commercial activity of the world then was conducted on the lands of the Göktürk State.

The envoy that Istemi Yabghu (552-556), the ruler of the west of the Göktürk State, sent to his contemporaries, the Sassanids and Byzantines, was a Sogdian called Maniakh. This showed how much the Göktürks valued other nations, and they even vested them with the

authority to represent their own state, by appointing them as envoys.

After the Göktürk State gained independence again in 682, the main policy of the state was to recover the Turkish tribes who were forced to go to China during the interregnum period, when the country was under Chinese rule (between 630-680), and to free them.¹⁸⁹ Qapghan Khagan was very successful in his endeavors (between 696 and 698). However, what is important for us is that while Qapghan Khagan was asking for a return of the Turkish tribes from China in 694, he also asked for a return of the Sogdians who were living in six states (Six Chub Sogdak in inscriptions). That is, the Turkish emperor could not stand a foreign tribe that had lived on his lands previously to suffer captivity in China. Qapghan was successful and he saved the Sogdians.

There are two clear proofs that the Göktürks did not execute many criminals: In 593 Princess Ch'ien-chin (thousand gold), the Chinese wife of the Göktürk Emperor who was the enemy of the Sui dynasty in China, secretly cooperated with her fellow Chinese and also with the Sogdians. The Chinese spies, who noticed this, informed the khagan to prevent a conspiracy. The Chinese envoy sent by the emperor requested Tou-lan Khagan to punish them; however, the khagan rejected. Thereupon, the envoy revealed the plans of the khagan's wife through bribery. Although Tou-lan Khagan gave up his Chinese wife, despite the insistence of the Chinese, he did not have her executed. Afterwards, Ch'ang Sun-sheng, the Chinese spy sent to the Göktürk country killed the wife.¹⁹⁰

In 621, when Cheng Yüan-shou, the Chinese envoy, could not convince Ch'u-lo (Çulo) Khagan who attacked China, he had him poisoned by his men. Ch'u-lo Khagan understood that he was poisoned by the Chinese envoy, and had him imprisoned, but not executed. The envoy returned to China unharmed after the death of the khagan.¹⁹¹

The best evidence for the Göktürks honesty was the writings of P'ei Chü, the Chinese statesman, in his report to the emperor. This vizier who was the Chinese emperor's consultant about the peoples to the west and the north for 20

years had prepared a long report about all the small states of Western and Eastern Turkestan, and to this end, he had stayed in Tun-huang with the Sogdians for some time. Thus, he knew the Sogdians very well. He had planned several conspiracies for the Göktürk State already. Thus, he knew both nations very well. Therefore, the report he prepared and the comparison he made is very valuable for Turkish history. The Chinese statesman's report was as follows: "Göktürks are very honest, so it is very easy to destroy them; however, they have Sogdians among them; they are all very cruel and bru-



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tal, besides they are deceivers, and the Göktürks learn how to deceive from the Sogdians. I have heard that Shih-shu-hu-hsi, the Sogdian leader, manages to stay with Shih-pi Khagan through deception. Let us have him killed."¹⁹²

This is one of several hundred examples of the Chinese conspiracy policy, which continued in Central Asia for thousands of years. However, when the vizier was distinguishing the Göktürks from the Sogdians, he emphasized their honesty. Then, the Chinese had brought the Sogdians to the city of Ma-i with the promises to do business; however, they killed them all there. The Göktürk khagan who could not tolerate a foreign tribe under his rule being killed this way, attacked China to revenge the Sogdians. In 615, the Göktürk army passed the Chinese wall, and surrounded the Yen-men Castle with the emperor inside. The Chinese Emperor was saved from this danger through conspiracy, but he could not prevent the rapid weakening of his state. Within two years, the Sui dynasty collapsed and the T'ang dynast was founded

(617). The most important result here was that Göktürks immediately responded to an attack on people living on their lands, although not of their nation, and regarded their rights as the same as those of their own people.

Although the titles of the Göktürk envoys were not definite, they were generally *tegin* and *tarhan*. The envoys holding a high position in the state hierarchy showed the importance that the Göktürks placed on diplomacy and international relations. We understand from the Orkhun Inscriptions that the Göktürks wanted to have good relations with other states. Bilge Khagan expressed that he wanted to be on



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good terms even with China, the greatest enemy: "I agreed and made peace with China (*tüzültüm*), I have corrected this."¹⁹³

However, the Byzantines did not keep their agreement with the Göktürks, and they protected the Avars, the enemies of the Göktürks. In 576 Turk, one of the Western Shads, had revealed this hypocrisy to the envoy Valentinos.¹⁹⁴

ABBREVIATIONS

CS	Chou Shu.	SS	Suei Shu.
CTS	Chiou T'ang Shu.	TC	T'ung Chih.
HTS	Hsin T'ang Shu.	TCTC	Tsu-chih T'ung-chien.
Pien-cheng	Pien-cheng Yen-chiou Suo Nien-pao.	TFYK	Ts'e-fu Yüan-kuei.
PCS	Pei Ch'i Shu.	TT	T'ung Tien.
PS	Pei Shih.	WHTK	Wen-hsien T'ung-k'ao.

NOTES

(*) Translated by Şebnem Mendenez.

- 1 CS 19, p. 454.
- 2 CS 50, p. 909; PS 99, p. 3285; TT 197, 1067 c; TFYK 958, 23a; TC 636, 1c; WHTK 343, 2687 a; HTS 215 a, p. 6028.
- 3 SS 84, p. 1863; TT 197, 1067, c; TFYK 956, 30a; WHTK 343, 1a.
- 4 CS 27, p. 454.
- 5 CS 50 p. 908.
- 6 CS 50, a. y.; TFYK 978, 16 a.
- 7 On this topic see particularly Taşağıl, *Töles Boylarının Coğrafi dağılımına Bir Bakış*, p. 234-243; SS 84, p. 1879-1880; PS 99, p. 3303-3304; TT 199, 1080a, b; WHTK 344, 2698 a, b.
- 8 CS 50, p. 908; TFYK 978 978 16 a.
- 9 CS 50, p. 908.
- 10 TT 197, 1068 a; WHTK 343, 2687a.
- 11 CS 50, p. 909, TCTC 164, p. 5077; TFYK 995, 96; WHTK 343, 2687a.
- 12 CS 50, p. 909; TT 197, 1068 a; TC TC 965 ibid.
- 13 TCTC 165, ibid.; CS 50 ibid.
- 14 CS 33, p. 371.
- 15 PS 98, p. 3266-3267.
- 16 PS 94, p. 3128.
- 17 TCTC 166, p. 5140.
- 18 CS 50, p. 909.
- 19 PS 94, p. 3127.
- 20 PS 94, p. 3129.
- 21 SS 46, p. 1256.
- 22 ibid.
- 23 PCS 4, p. 63.
- 24 CS 28, p. 468.
- 25 TT 197, 1068 a; CS 50, p. 909; WHTK 343, 1687 b; TFYK 997, 2a; TCTC 165, p. 5097.
- 26 CS 50, p. 911.
- 27 CS 50, ibid.; TT 197, 1068 c; WHTK 343, 2687 c; TCTC 171, p. 5314.
- 28 TT 197, 1068b; WHTK 343, 2687 c.
- 29 PCS 8, p. 106, 107; TCTC 171, p. 5332; CS 51, p. 85; TFYK 969, 16a; SS84, p. 1865; PS 99, p. 3290; WHTK 343, 2687 c; TFYK 996, 5a A. Von Gabain, "Buddhistische Türkenmission", *Asiatica*, Leipzig 1956, p. 196.
- 30 W. Eberhard, *Çin Tarihi*, p. 175.
- 31 TCTC 173, p. 5375; PCS 12, p. 157; PCS 41, p. 548; CS 6, 50, p. 912; CS 7, p. 117, 418; SS 51 p. 1329 174, p. 5414; WHTK 343, 2687 c; SS 39, p. 1159-1160.
- 32 SS 84, p. 1865; PS 99, p. 3290; TCTC 175, p. 5449; TFYK 967, 8a, b, 9a.
- 33 The fact that *Istaemi's* name in Chinese sources is given as *Shih-tien-mi* and *Se-ti-mi* is only recorded in HTS 215B, p. 6055. In two passages of the Orkhun Inscriptions, however, *Köl Tegin* in the first line on the east wing and *Bilge Khagan* in the third line of the east



- wing are mentioned. In Byzantine sources, he is called Stembis Khagan, Sizabulos, Dizabulos; in Islamic sources, he is known under such names as Sincibu. See also Gy. Moravcsik, *Byzantino-Turcica*, II, p. 254, Chavannes, Documents, p. 38.
- 34 TT 199, 1077a; HTS 215B, 6055.
- 35 SS 84, p. 1879; PS 99, p. 3303.
- 36 B. Ögel, "İlk Töles Boyları", *Belleten* 48, 1948, p. 826-829; W. Samolin, "Hsiung-nu, Hun, Turk, ", *CAJ*, III, 2, 1956, p. 48.
- 37 CS 50 Ye-ta böl., p. 918.
- 38 On this topic see Chavannes, p. 242-266; P. Aalto, "Iranian Contacts of the Turks in Pre-Islamic Times", *Studia Turcica*, Budapest, 1971, p. 33.
- 39 L. Rasony, *Tarihte Türklük*, Ankara 1988, p. 96.
- 40 Kafesoğlu *Türk Milli Kültürü*, p. 94.
- 41 Chavannes, p. 234; Grignaschi, p. 235.
- 42 Moravcsik, II, p. 237; Grignaschi, 236.
- 43 Chavannes, p. 233-238.
- 44 H. W. Haussig, "Theophloktas Excurs Über die Skytischen Völker", *Byzantion*, XIII, 1954, p. 375.
- 45 Ligeti, *Bilinmeyen İç Asya*, Ankara 1972, p. 70-71, 73; Kafesoğlu, 96, 97; Grousset, p. 97; Chavannes, p. 226.
- 46 SS 1, p. 15; SS 84, p. 1882.
- 47 SS 51, p. 1330-1331; TCTC 175, p. 5450-5451.
- 48 SS 51, p. 1331; TCTC 175, p. 5451.
- 49 SS 84, p. 1865.
- 50 CS 51, p. 1330-1331; TCTC 175 ibid.
- 51 TCTC 175, p. 5462; TT 197, 1068 c; WHTK 343, 2688 a; SS 84, p. 1866-1867; PS 99, p. 3291-3292; SS 40, p. 1174; SS 53, p. 1350.
- 52 TCTC 175, p. 5459; SS 51, p. 1331.
- 53 SS 84, p. 1868; PS 99, p. 3292; TCTC 175, a. y.; SS 54, 1224.
- 54 SS 84, 1868; PS 99, p. 3193; TCTC 175, p. 5465.
- 55 TCTC 176 ibid.; TFFK 978, 166; SS 84, 1868; PS 99, p. 3293; TFFK 978, 17 a-b. S. Jachid, "Trade, Peace and War Between The Nomadic Altaic and Agricultural Chinese" *Pien cheng* 1, 1970, p. 75.
- 56 SS 51, p. 1332; TCTC 175, p. 5466; SS 84, 1868; PS 99, p. 3293; TFFK 978, 17a-b; SS 40, p. 1174; TCTC 176, p. 5482.
- 57 SS 84 p. 1875; PS 3299-3300; TCTC 176, p. 5482; TFFK 970, 2b.
- 58 SS 84a. y.; PS 99, ibid.
- 59 TCTC 176, p. 5490-5498; SS 84, 1870; SS 51, p. 1332; TT 197 1068 c; PS 99, p. 3295.
- 60 TFFK 997, 2a; SS 84, a. y.; PS 99 ibid.
- 61 TCTC 177, p. 5517.
- 62 TCTC 178, p. 5542; SS 84, p. 1871; PS 99, p. 3295-3296; SS 51, p. 1332.
- 63 TCTC 178, p. 5543; SS 84, 1872; PS 99, ibid.; TT 197, 1069 a, WHTK 343, 2688 b.
- 64 SS 84, ibid.; PS 99 ibid.; TCTC 178, p. 5543; SS 51, p. 1333.
- 65 TC TC 178, p. 5558, 5563, 5564, 5584; SS 84, p. 1872; PS 99 p. 3296; SS 74, p. 1697 TT 197, 1067 a; WHTK 343, 2688b; TFFK 978, 18a, b, 19a, b; SS 48a; SS 51, ibid.
- 66 SS 51, p. 1335; TCTC 179, p. 5600; TCTC 180, p. 5621, 22, 5632 SS 65; TCTC 181, p. 5641-5643; TT 197, 1069b; WHTK 343, 2688 b; TFFK 980 4b, 5a.
- 67 SS 84, p. 1876; PS 99, p. 3299; TCTC 182, p. 5567-5568; SS 4, p. 8; SS 67, p. 1582; TFFK 998, 6b, HTS 1, p. 2; TCTC 183, p. 5718, 5724, 5740, 5742, 5749; CTS 56, p. 2280; HTS 87, p. 3731; CTS 194 A, 5153; HTS 215 A, p. 6028; TFFK 974, 10 a.
- 68 TCTC 187, p. 5848; CTS 54, p. 2239; HTS 85, p. 3700; CTS 194 A, a. y.; HTS 215 A, p. 6028; CTS 62, p. 2380; HTS 100, p. 3938.
- 69 CTS 60, p. 3245; HTS 78, p. 3520; TCTC 189, p. 5920, 5911, 5912 T 5940; CTS 194 A ibid.; HTS 215 A, p. 6030; CTS 55, p. 2217; HTS 86, p. 3714.
- 70 TCTC 190, p. 5973-5975; TCTC 191 5980-5995; HTS 215 A, 6032; CTS 194 A, 5157; TFFK 998, 7 a; TFFK 985, 2b; CTS 67, p. 2478; TT 197, 1070 a; TCTC 192, p. 6021.
- 71 TCTC 192, p. 6037; CTS 194 A, p. 5158; HTS 215 A, p. 6033; TFFK.
- 72 TCTC 193, p. 6066-6067-6072-6075; CTS 67, p. 2485; HTS 93, p. 3818; CTS 58, p. 2307; HTS 89, p. 3760; TT 197, 1070b.
- 73 R. Grousset, p. 97; Chavannes, p. 233-252; Kafesoğlu, p. 103.
- 74 SS 83, p. 1848, 1853, 1854.
- 75 Chavannes, p. 242; Grousset, ibid; Kafesoğlu, ibid.
- 76 Şeşen, ibid, p. 11.
- 77 Z. V. Togan, *Umumi Türk tarihine Giriş*, İstanbul 1981, p. 72; Sa'alibi Gurur Muluk ül-acem, Şeşen, ibid.
- 78 Chavannes, p. 245 vd.; Şeşen, p. 12; Kafesoğlu, p. 103.
- 79 SS 84, p. 1876, 1880, PS 99, p. 3302, 3303; TT 199, 1077 a, b; TFFK 958, 23; TCTC 180, p. 5622; TCTC 181, p. 5636; TFFK 990, 18a.
- 80 HTS 215B West Gök. böl., p. 6056.
- 81 Sadece TT 199, 1077b.
- 82 CTS 194 West Gök. böl., p. 5181; HTS 215B West Gök. böl., p. 6057; See also Liu I-t'ang, "Hsin T'ang Shu T'u-chüe K'ao-chu", *Pien-cheng*, 14, 1983, p. 177.
- 83 See note 538 and also 541; also Chavannes, p. 340; Kafesoğlu, *Türk Milli Kültürü*, p. 104, 105; H. Salman, "VII ve XI. Asırlar Arasında Önemli Türk Boylarından Qarluqlar ve Qarluq Devleti, *Türk Dünyası Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 15, 1981, p. 170.
- 84 M. Gringnaschi, p. 238.
- 85 Gringnaschi, p. 241; Togan, p. 73; Şeşen, p. 13.
- 86 Togan, ibid.; Kafesoğlu, ibid.
- 87 Chavannes, p. 24-25, 52-53; Grousset, p. 105; Ligeti, p. 87-90; N. Togan, "Hüen-çang'a göre Peygamberin çağında Orta Asya", *İslam Tetkikleri Enstitüsü Dergisi*, IV, 1-2, 1964, p. 21-64. St Julien, *Memoires Sur les Contrees Occidentales par Hioen-Tsang*, Paris 1863; S. Beal, *The Life of Hioen-Tsiang*, London 1911.
- 88 I. Kafesoğlu, ibid, p. 105-106.
- 89 Köl tegin inscription, east wing, 4-6; Bilge Khagan inscription, east wing, lines 5, 6. See H. Namık Orkun, *Eski Türk Yazıtları*, Ankara 1987; T. Tekin, *Orhon Yazıtları*, Ankara 1988; Tunyukuk Yazıtı, Ankara 1994; M. Ergin, *Orkhun Abideleri*, İstanbul 1980.
- 90 Köl Tegin inscription, east wing, 6; Bilge Khagan inscription, east wing, 10. line.
- 91 Köl Tegin inscription, east wing, 5-7; Bilge Khagan inscription, north wing, 4-6. line.
- 92 Tonyukuk inscription, 3. line.
- 93 Köl Tegin inscription, east wing, 6, 7; Bilge Khagan inscription east wing, 6, 7. line.
- 94 Köl Tegin inscription, south wing, 5-7; Bilge Khagan inscription, north wing, 4-6. line.
- 95 Köl Tegin inscription, east wing, 10; Bilge Khagan inscription, east wing 9. line.
- 96 For more information see A. Taşağıl. "Töles Boylarının Coğrafi Dağılımına Bir Bakış", *M. S. Ü. Fen-Ed. Fak. Dergisi*, 1, 1991, p. 3342.
- 97 See below Sir Tardush.
- 98 TT 197, 1070c; CTS 194A, p. 5162; HTS 215A, p. 6037; WHTK 343, 2690b.
- 99 You-chou's center was in the city of Cho in today's province of Hopei.
- 100 Lig-chou is today's Ling-wu in the province of Ning-hsia.
- 101 TCTC 195, p. 6147; THY 94, p. 1689.
- 102 HTS 215A, p. 6039 and TCTC 195 ibid.; THY 94, 1690; TT ibid.; WHTK 2690b; Liu, I, 151 vd.; Chang Jen-t'ang, p. 106108; Liu I-t'ang, ibid., p. 149.
- 103 HTS 215 A, p. 6139; CTS 194 A, p. 5164, 5165; TT 197, 1071c; CTS 3, p. 50, 51; WHTK 2690c.
- 104 CTS 199 B, p. 5343-5345; HTS 217 B, p. 6134; CTS 3, p. 43; HTS 2, p. 41; HTS 215B, p. 6137, 6138-6146.
- 105 TT 198, 1073c; CTS 194 A, p. 5165; HTS 215 A, p. 6040-6041; TFFK 986, 1a; TCTC 198, p. 6250; WHTK 2691 a.
- 106 J. Hamilton, "Toguz Oguz et On Uigur", *Jornal Asiatique*, 1962, p. 33-54; M. Mori, "On Chi-li-fa (eltaber/eltabir) and Chi-chin (irkin) of the T'ieh-le Tribes", *Acta Asiatica*, Tokyo 1965, p. 53 vd; TT 198, 1080 c-1081 a; HTS 217 B, p. 6040-6041; WHTK 2699 a; CTS 199A, p. 5348.



- 107 HTS 215B, p. 6060-62.
108 CTS 194 B, p. 5187; HTS 215B, p. 6062-63.
109 HTS 215B, p. 6063, 6064; Chavannes p. 27-41, 57-76.
110 CTS 64, p. 2801; HTS 108, p. 4086.; CTS 83, p. 2784-2785.
111 CTS 194 A, p. 5166; HTS 215 A, p. 6042; TCTC 202, p. 6392; TT 198, 1073b CTS 63, p. 2405; HTS 101, p. 3952; CTS 64, p. 2801; HTS 108, p. 4086; CTS 83, p. 2784-2785.
112 CTS 194 A, p. 5167; HTS 215 A, p. 6043; TT 198, 1073 b; WHTK 343, 1691 c.
113 Köl Tegin, east st 18-19; Bilge, east st 16; Tonyukuk I, west st. 3.
114 Köl Tegin, east st. 21; Bilgei east st 18; See also E. Chavannes, *Documents sur les Tuo-khoue Occidentaux*, Paris 1941, p. 283.
115 Kafesoğlu, *Türk Milli Kültürü*, p. 111.
116 Kafesoğlu, *ibid.*
117 Chavannes, *ibid.*, p. 67.
118 R. Giraud, *L'Empire de Turs Celestes*, map 4.
119 The view brought forth in W. Erberhard, *Çin Tarihi*, p. 209 that the Empress Wu accepted the request and sent a prince must be mistaken. In the sources, there is no such mention; furthermore, the Emperor Chung Tsung reigned much later (see CTS 194A, p. 5170; HTS 215A, p. 6047).
120 Bilge, east st 25; Kafesoğlu, *ibid.*, p. 113.
121 HTS 215 A, p. 6049.
122 CTS 194 A, p. 5173.
123 CTS 194 A, p. 5173; HTS 215 B, p. 6051; TT 1074 c, 1075 a; WHTK, 2691 c.
124 Bilge Khagan inscription, T. Tekin, *Orhon Yazıtları*, p. 43.
125 Bilge Khagan inscription, East, 36-38.
126 CTS 194 A, p. 5173; HTS 215 A, p. 6051; TT 1075 a, WHTK 2692 c.
127 CTS 194A, 5174; HTS 215B, 6052; TT 1075a; WHTK 2693 a.
128 Only in HTS 215B, 6052; CTS 194A; can not be found in TT and WHTK.
129 CTS 194A, p. 5174, TT *ibid.*; WHTK *ibid.*
130 CTS *ibid.*; HTS *ibid.*; TT 1076b; WHTK *ibid.*
131 CTS *ibid.*
132 Bilge Khagan inscription, East, 18-25.
133 CTS 194 A, p. 5175; HTS 215 B, p. 6053; TT 1076 b; WHTK 2693.
134 CTS 194 A, a. y.; HTS 215 B, a. y.; TT a. y.; WHTK *ibid.*
135 KT, KD.
136 KT, K, 10, 11.
137 According to Chinese sources, Chang Ch'ü-i and Lü Hsiangwere sent in order to participate in the funeral ceremonies. CTS 194A, 5177; HTS 215B, p. 6054.
138 KT, K, 11-12.
139 KT, K, 13.
140 KT, G, 11, 12.
141 The old riverbed of the Orkhun River is close to Lake Koşo Çaydam.
142 CTS 194A, 5177; HTS 215B, 6094.
143 BK, G 9.
144 HTS 215B, p. 6054.
145 CTS 194A, *ibid.*; HTS 215A, *ibid.*
146 The twenty-sixth of the tenth month of the year of the dog.
147 The twenty-seventh of the fifth month of the year of the pig.
148 BK, G, 10-15.
149 BK, GB, 1.
150 CTS 194A, *ibid.*; HTS 215B *ibid.*
151 CTS 194 A, p. 5177; HTS 215 B, p. 6054.
152 HTS 215 B, p. 6054; TCTC 214, p. 6844.
153 HTS 215 B, *ibid.*; TCTC 215, p. 6809-6860; CTS 103, p. 3198.
154 HTS 133, p. 5553; CTS 103, *ibid.*; TCTC 215, p. 6860.
155 TFKYK 970, 20b; TCTC 215, p. 6863.
156 CTS 9, p. 215, 228; HTS 5, p. 148, 150.
157 CS 50, p. 908-909; SS 84, p. 1864; PS 87, p. 3286-3287; HTS 215 A, p. 6028.
158 See Ibrahim Kafesoğlu, *Türk Milli Kültürü*, Istanbul 1984, p. 215.
159 *Ibid.*, p. 220, 235.
160 CS 50, p. 908; see also Liu Mau-tsai, *Die Chinesischen Nachrichten zur Geschichte der Ost Türken (T'u-küe)*, Wiesbaden, 1958, I, p. 6; A. Taşagül, *Göktürk İkesine Gelen Çinli Elçilerin Raporlarına Göre Göktürk-Çin ilişkileri (630-680)*, I. Ü. sos. Bil. Enst Yayınlanmamış Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Istanbul, 1989, p. 43.
161 Lines of the Orkhun inscription related to independence: Köl Tegin, East wing, 7, 9, 10, 22; south wing, 6; north wing, 2, 4, 6. Bilge Khagan, east wing, 9, 18, 19; Tonyukuk, 3, 10. (M. Ergin, *Orkhun Abideleri*, Istanbul, 1980).
162 CTS 194 A, p. 5169-5170; HTS 215A, p. 6045-6046; see also A. Taşagül, "Qapghan Khagan Devrinde Göktürk-Çin Münasebetleri, " *Türk Dünyası Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 65, 1990, p. 309-312.
163 CS 50, p. 909; PS 87, p. 3287.
164 Kafesoğlu, p. 233-235; B. Ögel, *Türk Kültürünün Gelişme Çağları*, Istanbul 1988, p. 452.
165 For the people see the Orkhun inscriptions: Köl Tegin, east wing, 6, 7, 8, 11, 13. Bilge Khagan, east wing, 1, 7, 8, 21, 22, Tonyukuk, 51.
166 CS 50. part; SS 84. part; PS 87. part; CTS 194. part (section A); HTS 215. part (section A).
167 Ögel, *ibid.*, p. 436.
168 See Köl Tegin, east wing 2, 3, 26-27 etc. Bilge Khagan, east wing 4, 21, 22.
169 Bk. Ögel, p. 570-580.
170 Bilge Khagan inscription, east wing, 27-30.
171 See Köl Tegin. east wing 25, 27; north wing 1, 9, 10. Bilge Khagan, east wing 1, 7, 8, 21, 22. Tonyukuk 51.
172 SS 84, p. 1865; PS 87, p. 3290; TCTC 175, p. 5449.
173 CTS194 A, p. 5173; HTS 215 A, p. 6049. See also Liu, *ibid.*, I, p. 171.; R. Giraud, *L'empire des Turc Celestes*, Paris, 1962, p. 52.
174 Ögel, p. 593-594.
175 CS 50, p. 909; TFKYK 961, p. 11311.
176 Ögel, p. 571.
177 Kafesoğlu, p. 250.
178 CS 50, p. 908.
179 SS 84, p. 1865; Liu, p. 45-52.
180 SS 51, p. 1332-1333; Taşagül, *Göktürk ülkesine gelen...*, p. 21.
181 CTS 194 A, p. 5174-5175; HTS 215 A, p. 6045.
182 See Köl tegin, west wing, least wing 3, 5, 1, Bilge Khagan, east wing 4, 6, 2, 3.
183 Kafesoğlu, p. 283.
184 See Kafesoğlu, p. 280.
185 CS 50, p. 909; SS 84, p. 1863; TFKYK 961, p. 11311.
186 S S 84, p. 1876.
187 W. Eberhard, *Çin'in Şimal Komşuları*, Ankara 1942, p. 76; Ögel, p. 241-248; Kafesoğlu, p. 216.
188 For further information on this topic see Pulleyblank, *The Sogdian Colonies in inner Mongolia T'oung-pao*, XLI, 1952, p. 317-356; S. G. Klyastorny, "Sur les colonies Sogdiennes de la Haut Asie", *Ural Altaische Jahrbücher*, XXXII, 1-2, 1961, p. 95-97.
189 Taşagül, "Qapghan Khagan devrinde Göktürk-Çin Münasebetleri", p. 310, 315, 316; Pulleyblank, p. 321.
190 SS 51, 1332-1333.
191 For a biography of the Chinese envoy Cheng Yüan-shou see CTS 62-7b; HTS 100-3a; See also Taşagül, *Göktürk-Çin ilişkileri*, p. 29, 100, 108.
192 For a biography of the Chinese statesman P'ei Chü'nün see Taşagül, *ibid.*, p. 65-85.
193 Köl Tegin, south wing, 5.
194 Ed. Chavannes, *Documents Sur les Tou-kue Occidentaux*, p. 239; Kafesoğlu, p. 96.