

TIBETAN - TURKISH RELATIONS
(FROM THE BEGINNING TO THE 11TH CENTURY)



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PLAGIARISM

I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

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ÖZET

“Başlangıcından 11. Yüzyıla Kadar Tibet–Türk İlişkileri” adlı tezimiz Türklerin, Tibetlilerle siyasi, sosyal ve kültürel ilişkilerini incelemektedir. Orta Asya, binlerce yıl Türklere vatan olmuş kadim topraklardır. Konar-göçer bir yaşam süren atalarımız, ucu bucağı belli olmayan Orta Asya bozkırlarında hayvanları için verimli otlaklar ararken gittikleri yerlerde karşılaştıkları halklarla tanışarak temaslarda bulunmuştur. Türkler, Tibetliler ile kimi zaman gittikleri yerlerde karşılaşmış, kimi zaman da sınır komşusu olmuş, böylece iki toplum arasında ikili ilişkiler başlamıştır. Türklerin Hunlar döneminden itibaren Tibetli Ch’iang kabileleriyle temas kurdukları bilinmektedir. Tibetlilerin sonraki yıllarda Hunların yanında, Gök-Türkler, Karluklar, Türgişler, Uygurlar, Sha-t’o Türkleri ve diğer birçok Türk topluluk ya da devletiyle ilişki halinde oldukları bilinmektedir. Tarihi olayların sebep-sonuç ilişkisini kurmak ve yaşananları tüm yönleriyle anlamak ancak hadiselerin yaşandığı dönemin siyasi ortamını, devletlerarası ilişkilerini bilerek mümkün olabilir. Bu çalışma ile Türk ve Tibet halkları arasındaki ikili ilişkiler incelenerek, 11. yüzyıl ve öncesinde Türklerin içinde bulunduğu siyasi ortam ve şartların daha iyi anlaşılması amaçlanmaktadır. Araştırmada Türkçe ve yabancı dildeki ikincil kaynaklar toplanarak fişlenmiş, yabancı dildeki kaynaklar tercüme edilmiş ve gruplandırılmıştır. Farklı akademisyenlerin çalışmaları birbirleriyle karşılaştırılmıştır. Böylece Tibet – Türk ilişkilerinin objektif bir analizi yapılmaya çalışılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Orta Asya, Tibetliler, Türkler, Tibet–Türk İlişkileri

ABSTRACT

Our thesis titled “Tibetan - Turkish Relations from the beginning to the 11th Century” examines the political, social and cultural relations of Turks with Tibetans. Central Asia is an ancient land that has been home to Turks for thousands of years. Our ancestors, who lived a nomadic life, met and made contact with the peoples they came across while looking for fertile pastures for their animals in the unknown Central Asian steppes. The Turks sometimes encountered the Tibetans in the places they went, and sometimes became neighbors, thus bilateral relations between the two communities began. It is known that Turks have been in contact with Tibetan Ch’iang tribes since the Hun period. It is known that Tibetans were in contact with the Gok-Turks, the Qarluq, the Turgish, the Uighur, the Sha-t’o Turks and many other Turkish communities or states in addition to the Huns in the following years.

Establishing the cause-effect relationship of historical events and understanding all aspects of what happened can only be possible by knowing the political environment and inter-state relations of the period in which the events took place. With this study, it is aimed to better understand the political environment and conditions of Turks in the 11th century and before, by examining the bilateral relations between the Turkish and Tibetan peoples. In the study, secondary sources in Turkish and foreign languages were collected and recorded, foreign language sources were translated and grouped. Studies of different academician have been compared with each other. Thus, an objective analysis of Tibetan–Turkish relations has been attempted.

Key Words: Central Asia, Tibetan People, Turks, Tibetan–Turkish Relations

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AD:	<i>Anno Domini</i>
BC:	<i>Before Christ</i>
DCHBY:	<i>lDe'u chos-'byung</i>
DTHMP:	<i>Deb-ther dmar-po</i>
DTHNGP:	<i>Deb-ther sngon-po</i>
GBCHBY:	<i>mKhas-pa lDe'us mdzad-pa'i rGya-bod kyi chos-'byung rgyas-pa</i>
GBYTSH:	<i>rGya-bod kyi yig-tshang</i>
GLR:	<i>rGyal-rabs gsal-ba'i me-long</i>
MNRSGLR:	<i>mNa'ris ragyal-rabs</i>
PT:	<i>dPao gtsug ap'ren-ba</i>
YLJBCHBY:	<i>Yar-lung Jo-bo'i chos-'byung</i>
v.:	<i>vide</i>
r.:	<i>reign</i>

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1. INTRODUCTION

Tibetan-Turkish relations are a subject that has been little studied academically. This subject, which is in the field of pre-Islamic Turkish history, is not popular due to the lack of resources for this period.

Considering the studies conducted in our country on Tibetans, it is seen that the most comprehensive is the doctoral thesis¹ of Huang Chi-Huei dated 1971. Apart from this thesis, there are few academic articles and studies. The main sources about the topic of our thesis are, Chinese chronicles, Tibetan texts and chronicles, Islamic sources and Turkish inscriptions. In addition to these, Chinese and Tibetan annals and the translations of Tibetan texts into western languages are among the important secondary sources.

In our study, first of all, a long time was devoted to the stages such as gathering Turkish and foreign sources related to the subject and translating the English sources in order to learn about Tibetan history and culture. Then, all the sources were classified and recorded and continued with readings. Later, the information on Tibetan – Turkish relations in the collected resources was brought together, the writings of different academicians were compared, and Tibetan – Turkish relations were examined in detail. In our thesis, it is aimed to contribute to pre-Islamic Turkish history studies by comprehensively addressing Tibetan – Turkish relations from the beginning to the 11th century.

¹ Huang Chi-Huei. (1971): *Relations of Tibetans with Chinese and Central Asian Nations*, Unpublished doctoral dissertation, İstanbul.

2. TURKISH HISTORY AND CULTURE (UNTIL THE 11TH CENTURY)

2.1. Ancient History and Culture

Let's glimpse at the ancient history and culture under the following headings.

2.1.1. Ancient history of Turks

2.1.1.1. Origin of the “Turk” word

As it is known, we can take the Turkish history to 2700s before Christ, based on archaeological findings. It is known that the name Turkish was first seen in Turkish sources during the Gok Turks period (6th-8th century). The word “Turk” was read as two syllables in the form of “Türük” in the Orkhon Inscriptions written in the old runic Turkish alphabet. It is seen in Chinese sources that the word Turk is written in the form of Tu-jue (*Tu-chüeh*), with two syllables. Linguists believe that the word has developed from history to the present as Törük> Türük> Türk. It was understood from a Uighur document published in 1911 that Turkish means “power” as a word. It is known that the word Turk was used as a generic name meaning “power” before the Gok-Turks period. For example, in a Persian text dated 420 it is seen that it was used to describe the tribes of Altai, and later in 515, in a text describing the events of the period, it was used as “*Turk-Hun*” in the meaning of strong Hun.

The first use of the word “Turk” as a private name and as the name of a state was in the period of the Gok-Turk (552 – 745 A.D.) Empire (Kafesoğlu, 1997, pp. 44-45; Taşağıl, 2018, p. 44). It is seen that Tibetans use *Drugu*², *Tu-ru-ka*³, *Hor*⁴, *Gar-log*, *Durgyas*, *Hir-kis*

² According to Beckwith, in classical Tibetan usage, *Drugu* is a general expression that includes all of the “Turks”, including the Uighurs. However, in the Annals, it is seen that the only definite reference made to the “Eastern Turks” is ‘*Bug chor*. In this case, he anticipates that the word *Drugu* seems to designate the “Western Turks” (Beckwith, 1993, pp. 63-64; Venturi, 2008, p. 20).

³ In the Tibetan-English dictionary of Das and Bahadur, the meaning of the word Tu-ru-ka is stated as “Tu-ru-ka refers to Turks, sometimes it has been historically used as a general term for Muslims” (Das, 1902, p. 517).

⁴ According to the dictionary of Das and Bahadur, the word *Hor-yul* means Turkestan. According to the dictionary of Bell, “hor lung-pa” means Turkestan. Semih Tezcan states that Tibetans still call Turkestan Turks as “Hor” (Bell, 1920, p. 518; Das, 1902, p. 1329; Tezcan, 1975, p. 303).

and other similar words for the Turks, which the Chinese call Tu-chüeh⁵ (Das, 1902, pp. 517, 1329; Venturi, 2008, pp. 1-32).

2.1.1.2. *The origin of the Turks*

As a result of the anthropological analysis of human skeletons in kurgans dating back to 3000 B.C. it is seen that the Turkish race is defined as the Oghuz type and the Andronovo people with the characteristics of “brachycephalic, warrior, white race” in scientific circles. However, Turks are mostly described in Mongolian type (yellow, dolichocephalic) in both Chinese annals and Western sources. But, as a result of the examination of the anthropological findings found in the excavations in Central Asia, it was revealed that there was no unity between Turks and Mongols in terms of lineage. The definition of the ancient Turks as Mongolian in the sources can be explained as the effect of the fact that many Mongolian elements in the Turkish states of the period lived under the rule of the Turks. The examination of the archaeological findings in the excavations made in the geography where the Turks live shows that the Turks are brachycephalic and white people (Kafesoğlu, 1997, pp. 46-47).

2.1.1.3. *Homeland of Turks*

Central Asia constitutes an important part of Asia, the oldest continent in the world, and is the first place that comes to mind as a geographical location when it comes to “Pre-Islamic Turkish History”. The region surrounded by the Caspian Sea and the Ural Mountains in the west, the Greater Khingan Range in the east, Siberia in the north and the Himalayas and Hindu Kush Mountains in the south is called as Central Asia (Koca, 2017, p. 2).

In other words, the Former Soviet Republics of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan constitute Central Asia today. The border neighbors of the

⁵ As a result of the analysis of a Tibetan text discovered in the Dun-huang caves, it was determined that the Tibetans used different names for different Turkish tribes, federations or communities (Venturi, 2008, pp. 1-32).

region can be listed as Russia in the north, Iran, Afghanistan and Tibet in the south and China in the east (Çay & Durmuş, 2002, p. 872; Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2018).

Historians point to the first homeland of the Turks as the Altai Mountains, based on Chinese sources. The Altai Mountains extend from the Gobi Desert to the Western Siberian Plain in an area of about 2000 kilometers in the southeast and northwest direction, passing through China, Mongolia, Kazakhstan and Russia (Encyclopædia Britannica, 2019).

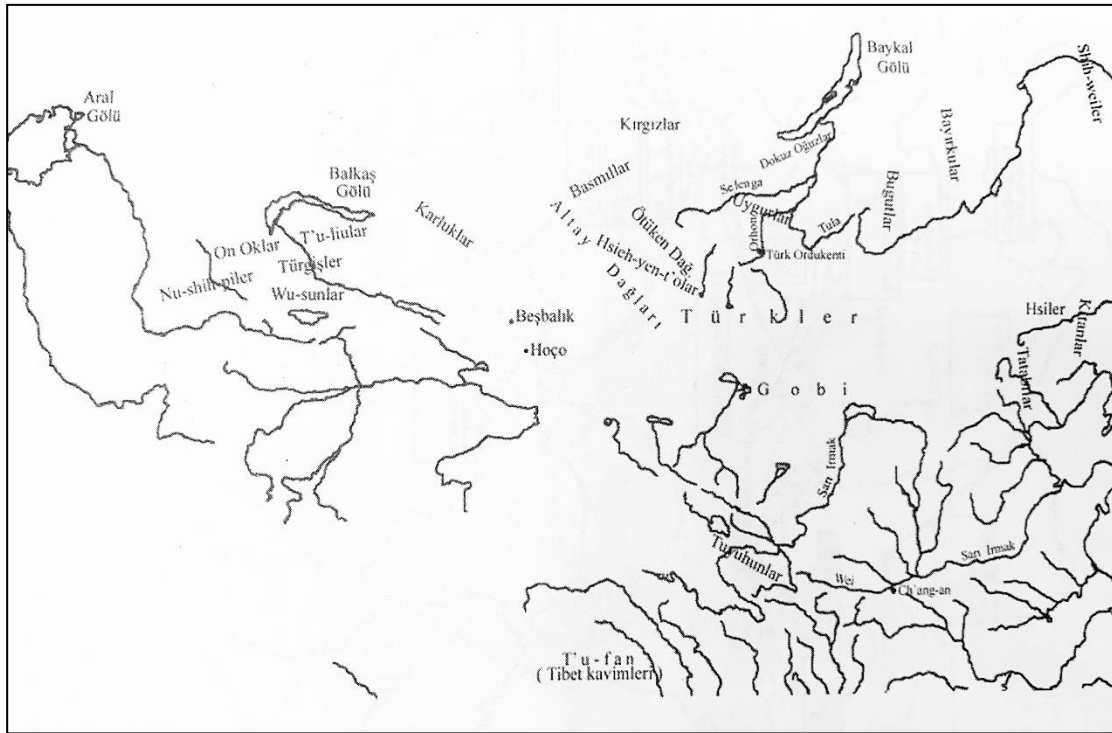


Figure 1. Turkish Country in the Ancient Period (Togan, 2006, p. 519)

According to Professor Ögel, considering the spread of the races in Central Asia, it is seen that most of the brachycephalic race, which is thought to be the ancestors of the Turks, spread to the Altai - Sayan and Tien-Shan Mountains region, and some to Kazakhstan (Ögel, 1984, p. 7). With the archaeological studies carried out in the following years (starting from the 1950s), it was concluded that the region between the north of the Altai Mountains and the south-west of the Sayan Mountains was the first homeland of the Turks (Kafesoğlu, 1997, p. 49; Taşağıl, 2018, p. 45).

The geographical conditions of the region they live in, as well as the climatic conditions, have definitely been effective in the development of Turkish History and Culture. Central Asia generally consists of vast grasslands, barren plains and sandy deserts. The vegetation cover of the region varies depending on the climatic conditions, water possibilities and soil structure. The vast taiga forests of Asia run across Russia, then southward to northeast China and Mongolia. As you descend to the south, this zone is followed by the steppe zone. The steppe zone is divided into two main parts due to the nature of the land. Among them, the Western Steppes, starting from the mouth of the Danube River, continues along the northern shores of the Black Sea, then proceeds along the Lower Volga to the east until reaching the Altai Mountains. The traditional approach that the Ural Mountains constitutes the border between Europe and Asia is completely meaningless for the history and geography of the steppe. Grasslands extend uninterruptedly south of the Ural Mountains and on both sides of the Ural River. The land layout divided the Eurasian Steppe into two main sections, the Western and Eastern Steppe areas. The Eastern Steppes are harsher and have unfavorable conditions for human habitation than the Western Steppes (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2020).

The soil in the steppe plains is unproductive, almost unsuitable for agriculture. The vegetation of the steppe areas is mostly uniform; it is a green, undersized cover of grass. This type of vegetation contains grasslands suitable for herding animals. It is especially suitable for feeding on sheep. There are opinions that these lands are the homeland of the horse and the Bactrian camel (Koca, 2017, p. 4).

The limited water resources in the geography they live in are effective in the formation of the horse-drawn nomadic (steppe) culture of the Turks. Whenever the water resources in their region were depleted, then they migrated to different regions and climates to find new water resources. As you move south from the steppe belt in the center of Central Asia, the

land turns into a barren state and deserts covered with sand in places. Some of the deserts in the south of the steppe zone are: Gobi, Taklamakan, Akkum, Kyzyl-Kum and Kara-Kum deserts. These deserts were extending from time to time and eroding the steppe cover since prehistoric times (Koca, 2017, p. 5).

Central Asia has a harsh continental climate. During the winter months, temperatures in most places are well below zero degrees (- 50 °C). Only the southern parts of Central Asia and the low plains can see temperatures above zero in winter. Due to the freezing temperatures, rivers and lakes freeze and the vegetation is covered with snow. The fact that the winter months are so cold creates unfavorable conditions for both humans and herds. In years when temperatures are very low, animal deaths occur due to cold and hunger. In the summer, it is very hot. The temperature is mostly above 40 centigrade degrees. In addition, there is little rainfall in the summer. During the scorching summer years, the water resources dry up, the pastures also dry up, and animals die in a mass due to hunger and epidemics. There is detailed information about the disasters caused by the climatic conditions in Central Asia in Chinese Resources (Koca, 2017, p. 4).

2.1.1.4. Turkish history in the ancient times

We can find information about the oldest period Turkish History from Chinese sources. Looking at Chinese sources to find out when Turkish history started, it can be traced back to 2700 (B.C.). However, the Chinese records of ancient times, just like the information they give about their own history, contain records about Turkish history that are not known whether they are real or legends. For this reason, it is striking that the information in the sources is more reliable only when it comes to 221 (B.C.). In early Chinese sources, the defenses of China against the invasions of the Huns draw attention. During the Warring States period, each of the three great states, Qin, Zhao and Yan, the southern neighbors of the Huns, began to build a wall along the northern border in order to defend their country against the

attacks of nomadic peoples. During the Qin Dynasty, the construction of the walled defense system probably began earlier than 324 B.C., and by around 270 B.C., the wall construction was not yet completed. Lastly, Yan King built a long wall that stretched from Tsao-yang to Hsiang-p'ing about ten years after the Zhao period to protect against attacks not only by the Huns but also by the Tung-Hu. During the Warring States period, the state that was able to control the southward expansion of the Huns became the Qin State, one of these three Chinese states. The unification of China by the First Qin Emperor in 221 B.C. pushed the influence of the Huns to the north. The Qin Dynasty connected, repaired and extended three separate walls built by the Qin, Zhao and Yan States during the Warring States. The wall, which eventually became a long wall and known today as the "Great Wall", stretched from the Lin Tao in Gansu to Chieh-shih in the north of what is now known as Pyongyang (in North Korea). Encountering the wall obstacle, Huns had to retreat towards Yin Mountains north of Ordos (Yü, 2008, pp. 118-119).

2.1.2. Turkish culture in ancient times

According to the Dictionary of the Turkish Language Association, culture is defined as: "The totality of all material and spiritual values created in the historical and social development process and the tools used to create and transmit them to the next generations, showing the measure of human domination over the natural and social environment". Its other meaning in the dictionary is as "the whole of thought and works of art specific to a society or community".

The Turkish Culture before common era is defined as the equestrian steppe culture. This culture is different from nomadic culture. Horse and iron are the basis of the steppe culture of the Turks. While the Turks lived in vast steppes suitable for animal feeding, they domesticated the horse and became the first nation to ride a horse. Those who live in the steppe culture and are engaged in stockbreeding and shepherding always have the aim of

finding fresh pastures to feed their livestock. For this reason, Turks went to distant countries more quickly by their horses and sought living spaces with abundant water and large pastures for themselves and their herds (Çandarlıoğlu, 2003, p. 92). It is thought that the Afanasyevo culture, which has traces in the Minusinsk Region and is thought to prevail in the region between 2500 and 1700 B.C., and the Andronovo culture, which lived in the same region is thought to prevail between 1700 and 1200 B.C., are both thought to be the ancestors of the Proto-Turks (Taşağıl, 2018, p. 45).

2.2. Turkish History Since the Establishment of the Political Union

2.2.1. The Great Hun Empire

2.2.1.1. *Hun name and origin of Huns*

The history of the Huns, which are accepted as the founders of the first Turkish State in history, is not certain, but as a result of the results obtained from the Chinese Sources, it goes back to 2700 (B.C.). Huns have been recorded under various names in Chinese sources such as *Yen-wool*, *Ch'un-wei*, *Hsien-yün*, *Hsün-yü*, *Jung-ti*, *Kuei-fang*, and *Hsiung-nu (Hun)*. It is seen that the name Hun in Roman historiography was recorded under different names such as: Hunni, Chunni, in Greek historiography: Huo, Xouw, in Sogdian historiography: Xun, in Armenian historiography: Hunik and in Indian historiography: Huna. The name of the Huns was first seen in the sources in 318 B.C. (Taşağıl, 2020, p. 31).

2.2.1.2. *Homeland of the Huns*

Before their conquest in the 3rd century B.C., the Huns lived in the steppes and forests, including Central and Northern Mongolia, between the Khingan and Sayan mountain ranges in the east, South Buryatia in the west, and the Lake Baikal in the north. The Huns, with their conquests in the following years, reached Northern China, Inner and Central Asia, Western Siberia and finally Europe (Martynova, 1988, p. 61).

In the time of T'ou-man (221 B.C.), whose name was first mentioned as Hun ch'an-yü⁶ in documents, the Chinese defeated the Huns and removed them from Northwest China. This has led them to gain strength in the basin of rivers such as Orkhon, Selenge, Onon and Ongi. During the reign of Emperor Motun (209-174 B.C.), the borders of the Hun Empire reached from Korea to Lake Aral, from Lake Baikal to the Great Wall of China and then to Tibet, including East Turkestan (Taşağıl, 2012, pp. 467-474).

2.2.1.3. A short history

The Great Hun Empire is the first nomadic state in the history of Central Asia. The Great Hun Empire, the first Turkish State to be established in the homeland of the Turks, emerged in the geography known today as Mongolia. Later, it expanded and reached the gigantic boundaries of the Caspian Sea in the west and the Pacific Ocean in the east. It is known that the people mentioned as Hsiung-nu in Chinese sources are the same people as the Huns. When Tou-man, the first known Hun Emperor in history, was first seen in sources (221 B.C.), the Qin Dynasty, the first great empire of China and thought to be the source of the name "China" was just being established (221-207 B.C.).

According to determinations of Barfield, the Hun Empire is one of the best examples of a nomadic state and was established along the northern border of China around 209 BC. The beginning of the great conquests of Motun, one of the most famous rulers of the Great Hun Empire, coincides with the establishment of the Han Dynasty. The Huns remained a political force on the Chinese border for more than 500 years; they fully dominated the steppes during the first 250 years of this. Much of the information about the Huns comes from the historical records of the Chinese who were often hostile to them. As evident in the Chinese annals, the Chinese have hostile feelings towards the Huns. Because the Huns were the most serious foreign threat to the stability of the old Han Dynasty (Barfield, 1981, p. 47).

⁶ Hun rulers are called as ch'an-yü (*shan-yü*) (Taşağıl, 2020, p. 34).

In 215 BC, General Meng Tien, by order of the Emperor of Qin, organized a great expedition against the Huns, who created danger on the Chinese borders. As a result of this campaign, Chinese forces successfully captured Ordos and pushed the Huns into Mongolia. The period when the Hun State transformed into an Empire is the reign of T'ou-man's son, Motun, which lasted about 35 years (209-174 B.C.). Motun first fought the forces of his eastern neighbor, Tung-Hu, who challenged him, defeating them. Motun, who, after a while, headed south-west and organized an expedition against Yüeh-Chih tribes, also defeated them. Then he turned south and set out on a North China expedition to reclaim the Hun lands and pastures lost during the T'ou-man period. As a result of the successful Chinese expedition, he took back the Hun lands that were lost in his father's time. Thus, the years of intense pressure of Motun on China began. In the records, thirteen Hun invasions to China between 198 and 141 B.C. are mentioned. In two of these, the capital of the Han Dynasty (206 B.C. – A.D. 220) was threatened (Chang, 2007, p. 142). Therefore Motun, within about eight years after coming to power, suppressed the states that posed a threat around him and gathered the steppe communities in Central Asia under the roof of the Great Hun Empire (Taşağıl, 2020, pp. 39-50).

Motun besieged the Chinese army, which he trapped with a tactical success in the P'ing-Ch'eng war that took place in 199 B.C., for seven days. The Chinese Emperor, who joined the expedition at the head of his army, was also under the siege of the Hun and spent days of fear until the siege was lifted. The situation in which the Chinese Emperor fell is an event showing that the military superiority was in the Huns at that time. The war of P'ing-Ch'eng caused the Chinese Empire to develop a model of peace agreement through dynastic marriage (kinship) called *ho-ch'in*. This new method formed the model of the relations between the Han Dynasty and the Huns until the early years of the reign of Emperor Wu-ti of Han (141-87 B.C.). It is known that the agreement between the two parties was valid from the

winter of 198. It is also known that the agreement was renewed with the throne changes in the Hun and Chinese palace. It is thought that the renewal of the treaty lasted until 133 B.C. (Taşağıl, 2020, pp. 78-80; The Cambridge History of China Volume 1, 2008, pp. 385-386; Yavrucuk, 2019, p. 100). It is known that Emperor Motun made some important conquests some time before his death.

Motun Shan-yü is the Turkish Emperor who established an organized army for the first time in Turkish history. The first permanent Hun army established by Motun was formed according to the system based on ten and its multiples. After his death (174 B.C.), his son Chi-yü (174-160 B.C.) ascended the throne. The new ruler is known as Lao-shang Shan-yü in Chinese sources. Emperor Chi-yü, who continued to put pressure on Yüeh chih country in the west and raided further regions of Chinese land in the east, continued the expansion policy of his father (The Cambridge History of China Vol 1 The Ch'in and Han Empires, 221 B.C.-A.D. 220, 2008, p. 388).

Chi-yü Shan-yü personally commanded a cavalry of 140 thousand men and organized an expedition to the city of An-ting (in modern Gansu) around the year 166. After his death, his son Chün Ch'en, who became "ch'an-yü" in 160 B.C., did not hesitate to violate the bilateral agreement signed in 198 B.C. and continued his Chinese voyages. Although the Chinese sent three separate forces on them to stop the Hun attacks, they did not succeed. These raids caused the Chinese Dynasty to rearrange the old treaty with the Huns in favor of the Huns. During the reign of Emperor Ching-ti (157-141 B.C.) and the first years of Emperor Wu-ti (from about 156 to 135 B.C.), the Huns stopped organizing large-scale raids into China. However, this temporary peace is not free-of-charge relatively. The Han Empire continued to pay taxes to the Huns during this peace process. In addition, the Han Empire did not cause the Huns to trouble their commercial activities on the borders. However, taxes and gifts given each year started to cause economic difficulties for the Han Dynasty. Meanwhile, it is seen

that Hun raids started again in 148 BC. For example, the raids on the Shang Command in 144 B.C. and Yen-men in 142 B.C. draw attention. Emperor Wu-ti made an effort to put an end to the dominance of the Huns in his time. It is known that the Chinese Emperor embarked on new regulations to strengthen his army, taking the example of the Hun army, famous for its military success. The Han Dynasty, which made economic progress during the reign of Emperor Wen-ti, also strengthened its army during the Wu-ti period, while internal turmoil arose in the Hun Empire (Baykuzu, 2018, pp. 21-26; Taşağıl, 2020, pp. 95-104; Yü, 2008, pp. 124-125).

By the year 135 B.C., the Chinese government decided not to extend the duration of the Ho-chin treaty, which had been continuously renewed for 63 years.

The Emperor of China, who strengthened his army with the reforms he made, achieved success once or twice in the small-scale regional attacks of the Huns. Upon this, the encouraged Chinese forces had several other attack attempts, even in one of them (135 B.C.), the Huns were defeated and had to ask for peace. After this incident, the Wu-suns, who ruled under the Huns, separated from them. In addition, the Han government started to pursue a more active policy against the Huns from now on. The Huns were not successful in the raids carried out a while after the death of the Hun Emperor Chün Ch'en Shan-yü, and for the first time, Chinese forces came to the top and captured the Ordos Region. When Chün Ch'en Shan-yü died in 126 B.C., his brother, I-chih-Hsieh, ascended to the throne as *shan-yü* instead of his son. The new *shan-yü*, who ruled for 13 years, also organized expeditions to China. However, after a few successful raids, the clever politics of Wu-ti yielded results and Hun forces began to defeat one after another against Chinese forces. The Chinese army, led by successful generals such as Wei Ching and Huo Chü-ping, also captured the Gansu Region, which is located in the west of the Hun country around the year 121 (B.C.). Gansu region is a very precious land for the Huns (Baykuzu, 2018, pp. 21-26).

The Chinese army, which gained confidence after the Gansu region was taken by the Chinese, attacked the Hun lands for the first time. The Mo-Pei War, which took place between the two countries in 119 B.C., was very difficult and both states suffered great losses. With this war, it can be said that the military superiority of the Huns over the Chinese disappeared (Taşağıl, 2012, pp. 467-474).

I-chih-Hsieh Shan-yü died in the year 115. Upon this, his son Wu-Wei (114-105 B.C.) ascended the throne in place of the deceased Kaghan. The new ruler paused the military expeditions for a while, in order to gain time to rest and strengthen his army, which had been tired in years of war, and to resolve the economic problems in his country. After the death of Wu-Wei Shan-yü (105 B.C.), the new ruler, nicknamed “child shan-yü”, started raiding foreign countries and aimed to revive his country in a short time. Shan-yü, who had been on successful military expeditions for three years, died in one of the expeditions to China (102 B.C.). The rulers who came after him and ascended to the throne for a short time did not show much presence. However, in the meantime, the Chinese, who are waiting for the opportunity, have advanced to Ferghana. Famous General Li Kuang-li conquered Ferghana in the year 101 BC. With this conquest, the Han Empire started to show superiority in the Western Regions.

The Huns flocked to the Shang-ku and Wu-yüan areas around the year 90 BC. During these raids, people and state officials were killed and plundering was also made. The Chinese forces were defeated in the war with the Huns in 90 B.C., and the Chinese General Li Kuang-li was captured by the Huns. Meanwhile, the Chinese Emperor Wu-ti died in 87 B.C. (Baykuzu, 2018, pp. 21-25; Taşağıl, 2020, pp. 149-150; The Cambridge History of China Vol 1 The Ch'in and Han Empires, 221 B.C.-A.D. 220, 2008, pp. 108-109).

Meanwhile, Shan-yü Hu-lu-ku died in 85 B.C., and instead, Left Lu-li lord was declared the new shan-yü with the title of “Hu-yen-ti”. The new shan-yü became the ruler in controversy, and the country was in turmoil shortly before it was declared as “shan-yü”.

Besides, it is known that the Huns started the reform movement around 82 B.C., and hundreds of water wells were dug in the country and many fruit trees were planted with the advice of the Chinese-origin vizier. In the expeditions to China in 80 B.C., the Hun army commander was captured together with about 9 thousand soldiers under his command, so the Hun forces were withdrawn (Taşağıl, 2020, pp. 150-152).

In the period from 155 to 60 B.C., the Hun Empire entered a period of collapse, largely as a result of power struggles within the country. In 58 B.C., Hu-han-ye (58-31 B.C.) became the ruler of the Huns. However, after a while, throne fights broke out in the country. When civil war broke out in the country in 57 B.C., the primary reason for this was a natural disaster that destroyed the livestock of the Hun people and caused a political crisis within the country (Barfield, 1981, p. 47). The Hun Empire was first divided into five as a result of these civil wars (57 B.C.). Hu-han-ye, who went to war with his brother Chih-chih around 54 B.C., was defeated and retreated to the south with the people around him. Thus, it can be said that Huns are divided into two as East and West. After his brother Chih-chih declared himself “shan-yü” moved to the north and then settled in West Turkestan, Hu-han-ye migrated south and settled near the Great Wall of China. After a while Hu-han-ye organized a congress in 53 BC. In the congress, the issue of whether to be connected to China was discussed and as a result, it was decided to connect to China. Upon this, Hu-han-ye as was unprecedented in the history of Central Asia, went to the Chinese palace in 51 B.C., declaring his loyalty to the Han Dynasty and also paying his tax. The Han Dynasty gave plenty of gifts to the Hun leader, who declared his allegiance to China, thus it was provided a large economic aid to the Huns. He also donated sacks of food. It is known that the aids made by China are not one-off but last about fifty years (Baykuzu, 2018, p. 25; Eberhard, Çin Tarihi, 1995, p. 98; Taşağıl, 2020, pp. 171-172; The Cambridge History of China Vol 1 The Ch'in and Han Empires, 221 B.C.-A.D. 220, 2008, pp. 391-392).

While the Eastern Huns chose to join China, Chih-chih, the ruler of the West Huns, continued the Turkish tradition of raiding. Seeing that the West Huns were getting stronger, the Han Dynasty started to plan to eliminate Chih-chih, which it thought posed a threat to China (Taşağıl, 2020, pp. 175-177).

The leader of the West Huns, Chih-chih, was killed along with his family and those around him in 36 B.C. by a unit that China sent to destroy him. Meanwhile, the Eastern Huns signed a treaty with the Chinese dynasty (around 44-43 B.C.). According to the treaty, which is known to last until A.D. 9, the Huns and the Chinese will not organize military campaigns against each other, will not raid. And they will live in peace forever (Baykuzu, 2018, p. 25; Taşağıl, 2020, pp. 177-181).

It is seen that China did not comply with the agreement made with the Huns during the Wu-chu-Liou (8 B.C.-A.D. 13) period, who was the chief (shan-yü) of the Huns in 8 (B.C.). At the same time, the Hun army, which has replaced its former power, carries out successful military expeditions again, so it seems that the dependence on China has disappeared since 8 B.C. (Taşağıl, 2012, pp. 467-474). Wu-chu-Liou became the shan-yü of the Hun State in 8 B.C. and remained on the throne for a long time like 21 years. During his time, the dependence on China ended, and devastating military expeditions were organized to North China.

The other rulers who came to power after Wu-chu-Liou died in 13, continued the policy of acting independently from China. The Chinese Emperor Wang Mang organized many military expeditions with the desire to eliminate the Hun State, but could not achieve the success he wanted.

Hu-tu-er-shih, who ascended the throne in 18, died in 46, and instead his son Pu-nu (A.D. 46-83) ascended the throne. In the Hun country, there were disasters such as drought and locust invasion around 45, and then famine arose, which caused the economy of the

government to weaken. The disasters that lasted until 46 and also the Mongol raids coming from the east left the Huns in a difficult situation and caused them to retreat to the west. In the Chinese sources, it is stated that all the grass and trees dried up in a very large area due to the disasters that broke out in the Hun country, hunger shortage occurred due to drought and the half of the people and animals died. While the Hun State has been dealing with problems such as famine, hunger and throne fights since 45, Wu-huan from the Eastern Mongols started to gain strength. Ultimately, they attacked the Hun State, defeated them, and not only followed the escaped Hun troops, but also followed them to the north (Ögel, 2019, pp. 229-236).

As it is known, when Hu-tu-er-shih died, his son Pu-nu became the ruler in his place. Stating that he did not recognize the new shan-yü, saying it was against the laws of the country, Pi had the support of the eight Hun tribes in the south. As a result, the chief of eight tribes, which has a military unit of about 40-50 thousand people, declared Pi their “shan-yü” in A.D. 48. After this date, the state under the administration of Pi is referred to as “Southern Hun State” in Chinese Sources. Thus, the Hun State was divided into two as Northern Huns and Southern Huns in 48 (Taşağıl, 2018, pp. 50-51; Yü, 2008, pp. 141-143).

2.2.2. The Gok-Turk Empire

2.2.2.1. *The name and the origin of the Gok-Turks*

Legends give some information about the origins of the Gok-Turks. However, when it comes to Chinese sources, which are written sources, it is seen that the Gok-Turks come from the A-shih-na tribe of Huns. Therefore, according to the information given by various Chinese sources confirming each other, it is known that the Huns are the ancestors of the Gok-Turks. The word Tu-jue (T’u-chueh) is used for the Gok-Turks in Chinese sources. In the Old Runic Orkhon Inscriptions, which is the most important Turkish written source surviving from the Gok-Turks, it was seen that there is the word Gok-Turk, which means “divine, coming from the sky” in only one part of the inscription. The word Gok-Turk, which was used for the first

time in 1896 by the scientist named W. Bang, was accepted and used in scientific circles in the following years (Kafesoğlu, 1997, pp. 94-95).

2.2.2.2. *Homeland of Gok-Turks*

According to the information we have obtained from Chinese sources, it seems that the Turkish community that formed the Gok-Turks lived in the south of the Altai Mountains until around A.D. 542. There is also information in the sources that they lived in “the north” of the Huns. According to the information supported by archaeological research, it is known that they lived in the northwest of the city of Turfan and in the southern foothills of the Altai Mountains from around 450 onwards. Although they lived in the north of the Huns before, it is thought that they migrated to the southern skirts of the Altai Mountains in the following years. They have been living in a region that can be framed as the north of Turfan, the west of the Lake Etsin marshes and the south of the Altai Mountains since 450 (Taşağıl, 2003, p. 10).

2.2.2.3. *A short history*

Before the establishment of the Gok-Turk State, there was the Tabgatch State (Northern Wei), which was founded in 386 by the tribes of Turkish origin in China. It can be said that Tabgatch (T'o-pa) State moved away from its own culture, perhaps due to the influence of Buddhism, and later took the name Wei State. In the period when the Gok-Turk State took the stage of history, there was the Northern Qi Dynasty (550-577) in the east of Northern China and the Western Wei Dynasty, which would collapse in 557, in the west. In addition, there was Toles tribal confederation who lived a nomadic life by wandering in the mountains and valleys in the east of the West Sea (Taşağıl, 2003, p. 14).

2.2.2.4. *The first Gok-Turk Empire*

Internal turmoil started in the early sixth century in the Juan-juan State, known to be a Mongolian state. After the ruler was assassinated, revolts broke out against his successor, Ana-kui. The Toles, known as a large-scale tribal confederation living in the Altai at the time,

were also about to attack the Juan-juan. However, Bumin Kaghan who is the leader of Gok-Turks, defeated them as a result of a sudden raid on the Toles tribes. Thus, fifty thousand families of Toles tribal federation joined the Gok-Turks. Upon this, the Gok-Turks, whose numbers increased, became stronger (Sinor, 2008, p. 295). Bumin Kaghan, who gained confidence with the strengthening of the Gok-Turks and no longer recognized the Juan-juan yoke, started a rebellion against the Juan-juan State and won a great victory as a result (Taşağıl, 2003, pp. 16-18).

Bumin, who took the title of *Il Kaghan* after his victory, declared his independence (552), but died in a short time after the victory. It is known that his son Kara (K'o-lo) Kaghan, who ruled for only a few months, took his place. K'o-lo Kaghan, who took the title of "I-hsi-chi", defeated the remnants of the defeated Juan-juan on the "Mu-lai" Mountain in the north of Woye. After the death of K'o-lo Kaghan in 553, his brother Mukan took the throne (Taşağıl, 2003, pp. 18-19).

Mukan Kaghan, who came to power in 553, first eliminated the remaining forces from the destroyed Juan-juan State. In 555, he defeated them in the campaign he organized against the Khitan country and bound them to his own country. The K'u-mo-hsi and Shih-Wei tribes in the east and the Kyrgyz people living in the north and west of Lake Baikal were become vassal tribes to the Gok-Turk State. With the enlargement of the borders of the country, the Gok-Turks had become border neighbors with the Ak-Hun (Hephthalite) State, which had been ruling around Transoxiana and Northern Afghanistan since A.D. 350. A conflict began with the Ak-Huns, who held the Silk Road trade. As a result, the Ak-Hun State was defeated by the Gok-Turk army under the command of Mukan Kaghan in 557 and was destroyed. It is estimated that Istemi Yabghu supported the army under the command of Mukan Kaghan in the war along with his own unit (Taşağıl, 2003, pp. 19-21).

With the collapse of the Ak-Hun State, the Gok-Turk Empire became a border neighbor with the Sassanid Empire. Besides, Istemi Yabghu sent a delegation of ambassadors to Istanbul in 567 in order to form a relationship with the Byzantine Empire. It is estimated that such a policy was followed, because the Gok-Turk and the Sassanid Empires were at odds at that time. Mukan Kaghan, who made his country one of the strongest empires of the period, died in 572 (Taşağıl, 2012, p. 469). After the death of Mukan Kaghan, his brother Taspar (572–581) became the ruler upon his will. When Taspar Kaghan took power in 572, he encountered a strong state legacy from his brother. The Northern Qi and Zhou States sent gifts to congratulate and welcome the new kaghan of the country. When Taspar Kaghan took power, the borders of the state were very wide. For this reason, he divided the country into two main administrative regions, east and west, and appointed She-tu, the son of his elder brother K'o-lo at the head of the eastern region. And he appointed *Börü* who is the son of his younger brother Ju-tan, as the *Little Kaghan* at the head of the western region. Meanwhile, his uncle Istemi Yabghu was the administrator of the West Turkestan region from the establishment of the state to this time (Taşağıl, 2003, p. 27). It is known that Taspar Kaghan tergiversated to Buddhism and had a Buddhist pagoda built in his country and translated the holy books of Buddhism into Turkish (A.D. 575). Taspar Kaghan, who fell ill after a while and fell to bed, died in 581 (Taşağıl, 2003, pp. 27-31).

After the death of Taspar Kaghan, She-tu became the head of his country in 581 with the title of “Il Külüg Sad Baga Isbara Kaghan”. Meanwhile, Istemi Yabghu, who ruled the west of his country, achieved great success. The wide area extending from the city of Hami at the eastern end of today's East Turkestan to the Black Sea has come under the control of Istemi Yabghu. Thanks to him, the sovereignty of the Silk Road stretching from China to the Mediterranean passed into the hands of the Gok-Turks. After the death of Istemi Yabghu, his son Tardu became the leader (Yabghu) of the western regions. Meanwhile, the strengthening

of the Gok-Turk State was being watched with concern in China. Fearing that the Gok-Turk State would attack China, the Emperor sent his envoy named Ch'ang Sun-sheng to spy in the Gok-Turk country. The Chinese Emperor, who made good use of the valuable information obtained as a result of the spying activities of the Chinese ambassador, presented a wolf-headed banner to Tardu Yabghu, the Western Region Leader of the Gok-Turkish State, through his ambassador Yüan Hui. The sent "*wolf-headed flag*" shows that China recognizes the sovereignty of Tardu. Tardu, who does not like Isbara Kaghan and is thought to see him as a rival, declared the independence of the Western Turkic State in 582 with the courage he received from the wolf-headed flag sent by China (Taşağıl, 2003, pp. 34-38). Thus, the Gok-Turk Empire was divided into two as the Eastern and Western Gok-Turk State in 582. After China caused the division of the Gok-Turk State, it continued its intrigues. Within the scope of the plan to weaken the Eastern Gok-Turk State, the Emperor secretly sent gifts to the Mongolian tribes living in the east of the Gok-Turks with his ambassador. In the spring of 583, the Chinese Emperor organized a great expedition to the Gok-Turk country. At that time, Isbara had just returned from a China expedition that lasted about a year. For this reason, Isbara was caught unprepared for the military expedition organized by the Sui Emperor. Chinese General Li Ch'ung attacked the Gok-Turks suddenly and defeated Isbara. Isbara escaped from the battlefield without being able to get his armor and belongings. After these events, there was a great famine in the Gok-Turk country. The army could not find anything to eat but bone meal. Unable to stop the Chinese invasions and was defeated, Isbara wanted to make peace by sending an envoy to the Chinese Court, but the Emperor did not accept this offer. As a result, Isbara Kaghan, who could not find any other solution, had to accept the political superiority of China in 585. Isbara died in 587, getting sick. His brother, Ch'u-lo-Hou, ascended the throne with the title of "Baga Kaghan" (Taşağıl, 2003, pp. 39-48). Baga Kaghan acknowledged the superiority of China as in the time of Isbara Kaghan, in addition he

started to pay annual taxes to China. Baga was killed by being shot in the forehead with an arrow during a battle occurred in 589. After 589, there is not much information about the Eastern Gok-Turk State (Taşağıl, 2003, pp. 49-53).

621-626 was a period in which the Eastern Gok-Turk State made continuous raids to China and achieved success. However, in 627, a major natural disaster occurred in the Gok-Türk country. There was a lot of snow in the winter, freezing temperatures occurred and many animals died due to freezing. Food shortages arose in the country. This natural disaster shook the economy of the country. When the economic problems arose, Il Kaghan brought heavy taxes to the people to get out of the bottleneck. These taxes imposed on the public caused a reaction in the society against the kaghan. For this reason, some tribes went up to revolt. Uighur, Bayirqu and Hsie Yen-t'o (Syr Tardus) tribes are among the tribes that rebelled. The four chiefs affiliated to the Il Kaghan were defeated by the Syr Tardus tribe. Rebellions and internal disturbances have begun to prevail in the country of the Il Kaghan, who opposed China a few years ago. After a while, it is seen that Il Kaghan was captured by the Chinese commander Ch'ang Pao-hsiang and brought to the Chinese capital. He obeyed China here and came under the control of China. Thus, in 630, the Eastern Gok-Turk State disappeared (Taşağıl, 2003, pp. 60-63).

While most of the tribes left behind after the collapse of the Eastern Turk State took refuge in the Syr Tardus tribe, some of them migrated to the Western Countries around Turfan. A community of around a hundred thousand people was piled up in the region in the north of China. Around 650, the Chinese Administration began to divide the Eastern Gok-Turk lands into military garrisons. The chiefs of the Turkish tribes living in the region were taken to the head of the lower garrisons of the Northern Governorship (Taşağıl, 2004, pp. 2-4).

2.2.2.5. *Second Gok-Turk Empire (682 - 745)*

By the year 679, the control of China over the Eastern Turks began to deteriorate. The rulers A-shih-te Wen-fu and A-shih-na Fu-nien rebelled against the Chinese Administration. Although they were successful at first, the rebellion efforts did not come to fruition due to the food shortage and Chinese intrigues that came later. A-shih-na Kutlug, one of the participants in the uprising, managed to escape the death penalty that China gave to the rebels (Taşağıl, 2004, pp. 9-10).

Kutlug formed a community of supporters around the uprising, notably his deputy Tonyukuk. Later, he increased his economic power by plundering the flocks of Toquz Oghuz tribes. When the number of those attached to him increased and reached a certain military force, he defeated the Oghuz tribes in the Ötükän region and connected them to himself. After this incident, Kutlug declared his sovereignty with the title of “İlteris” and established the Second Gok-Turk Empire in 682. It is known that Kutlug started raids in Northern China after the establishment of the state. He made 46 raids in a short period of five years. When İlteris Kaghan died (692), his brother Kapghan Kaghan replaced him. Kapghan Kaghan continued the policy of his brother and wanted to keep China under pressure, to save the Turks living in captivity in China and to connect the Turkish tribes living scattered in Central Asia to his state during his 24-year rule (Taşağıl, 2012, pp. 467-474).

Kapghan Kaghan enforced the Khitan tribes to obey himself in the east before 695. Meanwhile, the Kyrgyz, who were occupying the Yenisei Region, were suppressed in the Ani River, and their kaghan were killed. Thereupon, around the years 696/697 they have become vassal to the Gok-Turk Kaghanate. Later, when he was about to start raids on the Turgish tribe, he heard that his wife died. And then he returned to the country. In 698, he organized an expedition to China. As a result, Kapghan Kaghan, who had invaded almost all of Northern China, returned to his country by carrying out successful expeditions. Towards the end of the

same year, the Gok-Turk army who crossed the Altai Mountains, encountered the Turgish tribes in Bolcu region and defeated them heavily. Thus, all Turgish tribes living in Lake Balkhash, Lake Issyk-Kul, and Ili and Talas regions came under the sovereignty of Gok-Turk rule (Taşağıl, 2004, pp. 20-27). After the Turgish people were taken under their obedience, the western Gok-Turk army led by Tonyukuk, Bilgä and İnel, crossed the Transoxiana and came to the Kyzyl-Kum Desert. Later, the Gok-Turk army, which descended further south from here, captured the Sogdians under the Turgish rule. The army, which also passed the “Ek-Tag” region, reached Iron Gate in 701. It is seen that Kapghan Kaghan organized another raid to China in 702. Pillages were also made in the cities of Tai and Hsin. Chinese forces could not stop these raids (Taşağıl, 2004, pp. 28-29).

Kapghan Kaghan dominated tribal groups such as *Basmil*, *Čik* and “*Az*” in the period until the year 709. After a while, there was an incomprehensible change in the character of Kapghan Kaghan. He caused the tribes affiliated to the state to rebel because of his harsh attitude and behavior. While Kapghan Kaghan was dealing with the rebellions, the Chinese encouraged and supported the tribes that rebelled against the Gok-Turk State. The Bayirqu tribe, an ally of China, started an uprising in 716. Kapghan Kaghan, who suppressed this rebellion, defeated them. Later, he was ambushed while returning to his country from the battlefield with a small number of soldiers with him and killed by Chie-chih-lüe, the head of Bayirqu, and his entourage (Taşağıl, 2004, pp. 32-33, 36). Although he carried out very successful works throughout his life, the unsuccessful policies implemented by Kapghan Kaghan towards the end of his life, caused the state to decline. However, he died in a very sad way. After the death of Kapghan Kaghan, his son İnel became a Kaghan. However, the administration of İnel Kaghan was weak and he was not successful in the administration of the country. Thereupon, Bilgä, son of İteris Kaghan, was chosen as the Kaghan instead. Together with his brother Kül Tegin, Bilgä Kaghan suppressed the recent riots. He

reconnected the tribes who left the state to the Gok-Turk State with great struggles. Bilgä Kaghan tried to fix the deteriorated relations with China and succeeded in establishing friendship again as a result of long efforts. In the Orkhon Inscriptions, one of the most precious sources of Turkish History, the events of that period are described in detail (Taşağıl, 2012, pp. 467-474).

Bilgä Kaghan was deeply shocked by the death of his brother Kül Tegin (A.D. 731) who was one of the greatest commanders raised by the Gok-Turk Empire. Three years after the death of his brother Kül Tegin, Buyruk Cur, one of the top statesmen, attempted to poison Bilgä Kaghan. Bilgä Kaghan managed to survive for a while although he was being poisoned, died in 734. The funeral was held for Bilgä Kaghan in 735. The son of him, I-Jan Kaghan organized the ceremony. The Bilgä Kaghan Inscription, carved on stone by his nephew Yollug Tegin, gives information about the period he lived. In addition, the Bilgä Kaghan Inscription is one of the most valuable written documents in Turkish History in terms of containing the advice he gave to the Turkish people. After the death of Bilgä Kaghan, the rulers were not as successful as him. As a matter of fact, riots began in the country. Qarluq, Basmil and Uighur forces defeated the Gok-Turk army in the rebellion they started in 742. The forces of Uighur, Basmil and Qarluq, who attacked the Gok-Turks again in 744 with the encouragement of the Chinese, killed the Ozmis Kaghan and defeated his army. After the murder of Ozmis Kaghan, his son Pai-mei, who was chosen as a Kaghan was also killed by the Uighurs in 745. As a result, the Uighurs, together with their allies, abolished the Gok-Turk Empire in 745 and seized the sovereignty in Ötükän region (Taşağıl, 2004, pp. 51, 53).

2.2.3. The Turgish Kaghanate

2.2.3.1. The name and the origin of the Turgish

One of the important Kaghanate of Turks in Pre-Islamic periods was founded by the Turgish. The name of the clan, written in different ways such as “Türkiş” in Islamic sources,

“Tou-k’i-che” or “Tou-kiue” in Chinese sources, is referred to as “Türgiṣ” in the Old Turkic Inscriptions. In addition, it is found in written Uighur documents as “Türgiṣ” as it is used today. Tie-li-che Kaghan, the Western Gok-Turk leader who ruled his country between the years 634 and 639, noticed the unrest among his people since 630 and divided his country into ten clans in 634 in order to strengthen his authority. Kaghan gave each clan an arrow, henceforth they are called Ten-arrows. These clans are also divided into two, afterwards. According to these five clans in the east of the country are called “Tu-lu (Tou-lou)” and five clans living in the west of the country are called “Nu-shih-pi (or Nou-che-pi)”. The ruler at the head of each of the tribes in the east was given the title of “cur” (in Turkish: çor), and the head of the tribes in the west, “erkin”. The Turgish was one of the tribes in the group of Ten-arrows called Tu-lu in the new system; they were the fourth tribe of the Tu-lu group. According to the information we received from Chinese sources, they had a chief named Ho-Lo-Che Cur in 651 and they lived along the Borotala River, which flows into Lake Ebinor under his rule.

It is known that the word “Türgiṣ” is mentioned in the Old Turkic Inscriptions such as Orkhon, Hoyto-Tamir, Tuba III (E 37) and Sine Usu. It is remarkable that Ezgene, mentioned in the Tuba III (E 37) Inscription, is a member of the Turgish tribe (Aydın, 2018, pp. 50-51, 60, 63, 187; Useev, 2010, p. 1519).

2.2.3.2. *Homeland of the Turgish people*

Turgish people used to live on the southwestern slopes of the Altai Mountains, according to what we learned from the Old Turkic Inscriptions and other sources. Due to some political developments, they had to migrate from here to the south long before 651. In a history that we do not know, most of the clan migrated to the vicinity of Ebinor Lake, while a small portion migrated to Pei-t’ing region.

It is known that the Turgish people lived in the region extending from the west of the Altai Mountains to the Syr Darya River from the middle of the 7th century to the middle of the 8th century. They densely lived on the banks of the Ili River, Issyk Kul and its surroundings, the valley of the Chu River and the Talas River (Salman, 2002, pp. 412-420).

2.2.3.3. *A short history*

In the second half of the 7th century, Chinese sources state that the clans Mo-ho, Souo-ko, A-li-che, Ko-chou and Kiu-pi-che were in the Turgish confederation. Among these, Mo-ho, Souo-ko and A-li-che tribes were located between the Ili River and Issyk Kul, while the Ko-chou tribe was living around Pei-t'ing.

The Turgish, which we first saw in 651 on the shores of Ebinor in Chinese sources, got stronger over time. As it is known, the Eastern Gok-Turk State disappeared in the 630s. Around 657, with the loss of the activeness of the Western Gok-Turk union, there was no power left to unite the Turkish tribes in Central Asia. When it comes to 682, it is seen that the Gok-Turk State in the east gained its independence for the second time, with the center being again Ötükän. Meanwhile, Western Turks, who were a part of them, were in a disorganized and miserable situation. The independence movement against the Chinese Empire had also stalled. A leader was needed to compile and gather the Turkish tribes in the western field. The Chinese Court sent the Turkish chief A-shih-na Hou-che-lo to the region in 686 to rule these tribes living in the land west of Issyk Kul. However, the Kaghan appointed by the Chinese, could not manage the region well and acted harshly on the people. After a while, Hou-che-lo Kaghan could not bear the attacks of the Kutlug Kaghan who is the emperor of Gok-Türk Empire and had to escape back to China. Ou-tche-le, who is the head of Turgish with the title of Baga Tarkan, made good use of Hou-che-lo's escape (A.D. 690). Ou-tche-le, which

gathered the Western Turks around, established a new state under the leadership of the Tu-lu clans (Salman, 2002, pp. 729-731). This state is called as the Yellow Turgish State⁷.

When Ou-tche-le (Ocirlıq) took the title of “Kaghan”, he divided the state into twenty military districts; then, he appointed 20 military governors, each commanding 7 thousand soldiers, in charge of each region. Thus, the newly established state had an army of 140 thousand people. Ou-tche-le strengthened the unity of his country at the beginning of his Kaghane and established a central organizational structure. In the period until 689, he established a strong system in his country where he provided peace and justice. In the Battle of Bolçu between the Gok-Turks and the Chinese in 689, Kapghan Kaghan won a great victory over the China-Turgish alliance. Ocirlıq was captured in this war. However, he was not killed. Until 706, the year of his death, there is no mention of an important event related to Ocirlıq in Chinese sources. There is a very valuable memento left to us from the period of Ocirlıq. This commemorative is Turgish coins found in archaeological excavations in recent years. The nickname of Ocirlıq Kaghan stands out among the coins seized during excavations. On one side of the coins there is the phrase “*Turgish Kaghan, Mr. Baga*”, on the other side the phrase “*Kuz Bos Ordin*” translated as “Free Balasagun”. The word “Kaghan” stand on the coins indicates that he is an independent head of state. According to Chinese sources, Ocirlıq died in late 706. Upon his death, his son Souo-ko (Su-ko) became ruler in 706. In the early years of his Kaghane, Su-ko continued Chinese relations, which started in the period of his father (Salman, 2002, pp. 412-420).

Relations with China deteriorated around 709, when the Chinese dynasty supported the Su-ko Kaghan’s rival. Upon these developments, Su-ko attacked a Tang Garrison in the Tarim Basin and temporarily seized it. In 711, another war broke out between the Turgish forces and the Gok-Turk forces that came over the Altai Mountains. The Turgish people, who

⁷ In Chinese Sources, those who founded this state are known as the *Yellow tribes*.

were defeated as a result of the war, surrendered to the Gok-Turks again. After this defeat, the Turgish people turned into a tribe tasked with paying tribute and serving them (Stark, 2016, pp. 2122-2127; Taşağıl, 2017, pp. 146-147).

A few years later, the Turgish people gradually began to regain their old power under the command of a leader named Che-pi-shih Su-lu, who was from the Kara Turgish branch and bore the title of “Cur”. Che-pi-shih Sulu must have been a talented and energetic leader, because Chinese sources have described him as *“his people loved him and he was completely in his service”*. Su-lu Kaghan resumed diplomatic relations with China in 715. However, T’ang Dynasty gave him only some minor titles of courtesy. After the murder of Kapghan Kaghan in 716, Su-lu, who had a hand in civil turmoil and riots in the Gok-Turk State, felt strong enough to declare himself a “Kaghan” during the instable period of the state. As a matter of fact, Su-lu Kaghan, who declared the independence of Turgish Kaghanate, of which Balasagun city located in the northwest of Talas was the capital, in 716, became the head of the newly established state (Stark, 2016, p. 2124).

The Turgish Kaghanate, which got stronger under the administration of Su-lu Kaghan besieged Aksu and Yaka Arik cities in 717 and initiated the plan to capture the Four Garrisons of China. Su-lu Cur, who captured the city of Tokmak, gained control of the Northern Silk Road. Thus, the control of the Northern Silk Road passed into the hands of the Turgish Kaghanate (Salman, 2002, pp. 412-420).

Su-lu, who was granted the title of “the loyal and obedient” by China in 719, did not break the alliance he established with the Tibetan Empire, despite China’s political maneuvers in this way (Gumilev, 2006, p. 113; Taşağıl, 2017, pp. 147-148). When Turgish Kaghan conquered Tokmak city, the Chinese Emperor filled the gap in the Four Garrisons with the city of Karashahr (Salman, 1990, p. 922). However, the Chinese forces failed to stop the very strong Turgish and Tibet alliance, and the alliance forces captured Tokmak and many

surrounding cities until the year 719. Ultimately, the T'ang Dynasty accepted the Turgish power in the western steppes. The official recognition of Su-lu Kaghan shows this (Stark, 2016, p. 2124).

Securing the eastern wings, the Turgish Kaghanate turned their attention to the rich oasis states in the west. As the Turgish expanded into the Chu and Talas region, they inherited their Turkish predecessors' sovereignty over the various oasis states in Ferghana, Tashkent, Ustrūshana, Sogdiana and Tukhâristân, as well as the income from the rich trading centers of the region. However, this situation brought them face to face with the Arabs who conquered the eastern lands as far as Ferghana and Tashkent. Thus, Turgish voyages, which will last about twenty years, started in Transoxiana and Eastern Khorasan. These expeditions will cause the Arabs to give Su-lu Kaghan the nickname "Abu Muzahim", which means "the father of the fight or the troublemaker".

In 738, one of the tribal leaders of the Sari (Yellow) Turgish clan, known as Kürsûl⁸ in Arabic sources, assassinated Su-lu and killed him. With the death of Su-lu, Kürsûl declared himself Kaghan. However, Tu-Huo Hsien, who is in Tokmak and is one of the sons of Su-lu Kaghan, was designated as "Kaghan" by the people. Tou-Mo-Tou, who enthroned Tu-Huo Hsien, also provided the support of Er-Wei Tegin, who lived in Talas city at that time as chief of the Kara (Black) Turgish Tribe. Thus, these three allies (Tu-Huo-Hsien, Tou-Mo-Tou and Wei Tegin) together attacked Kürsûl and abducted him from the area. But Kürsûl Baga Tarkan overcame his rivals with the support of the T'ang Dynasty after a short power struggle.

There is very little information about the activities of Tu-Huo Hsien Kaghan, who reigned for a very short time between 738 and 739. It is accepted that the Black Turgish State came to an end when he was captured and taken to China.

⁸ The name of *Kül-Chur Baga Tarkan*, whose name is known as *Kürsûl* in Arabic sources, is "Küli Ćur" in old Turkish.

Kürsül Baga Tarkan (740-744), a member of the Sari Turgish, was disappointed, although he hoped to be declared a Kaghan with the imperial ceremony. Instead of supporting a new and powerful man to rule the Turgish government, the T'ang Dynasty decided to appoint A-shih-na Hsin, a *puppet* kaghan from the A-shih-na clan, who seemed more reliable to them, as the kaghan. A-shih-na Hsin, appointed by the Chinese, was assassinated a few years later. Thereupon, in 742, Kutlug Bilgä (742-748) from the Kara Turgish clan was chosen as the kaghan (Taşağıl, 2017, pp. 149-150).

Il-Etmis Bilgä Kaghan ruled all Turgish tribes for four more years after the elimination of Baga Tarkan. There is no more detailed information about the actions of this kaghan, who sent envoys to China several times during his reign. There is not enough information about the end of Il Etmis Kutlug Bilgä in the sources.

After Il-Etmis Kutlug Bilgä, I-po Kaghan (749-751) was seen in the Turgish throne. There is no information about the Kaghan ruled the Turgish state between the years 751-753. When the "Sine Usu" Inscription is examined, it is seen that the Uighurs have always fought with Qarluq and Turgish states and won the battles since 751. It is estimated that the Turgish state was ruled by Tengride Bolmis Kaghan between 753 and 756. It is not known what the end of this Kaghan, who sent ambassadors to the T'ang Dynasty three times. In 757, it has known that there were violent internal conflicts between the Kara and Sari Turgish clans. It is seen that these conflicts resulted in the victory of the Kara Turgish clan at the beginning of 758. Afterwards the Kara Turgish clan chose A-to Pei-lo as their Kaghan. It is known from the sources that the Kara Turgish Kaghan, who was at work until the end of 759, had sent two envoys to the Chinese palace (Salman, 2002, pp. 412-420).

It is noteworthy that Turgish State weakened after 756. In the end, Qarluqs captured Tokmak city in 766. Thus, the old Turgish lands were completely controlled by the Qarluqs (Salman, 2002, pp. 412-420).

It was continued to be mentioned about the Turgish clan in the works of Islamic geographers in the ninth and tenth centuries. Therefore, it seems that the remains of the Turgish tribe continued to live in the area after 766. In the old runic inscription found in Khakassia and belonging to a period not earlier than the mid-9th century, it appears that a Turgish ambassador was mentioned (Stark, 2016, p. 2127).

2.2.4. The Qarluq Kaghanate

2.2.4.1. *The name and the origin of the Qarluq Turks*

Qarluqs, which have an important place in ancient Turkish history, are described as a large union of tribes, close to the Gok-Turk dynasty but separate from the Toles, according to Chinese sources. Accordingly, it can be concluded that the Qarluqs are kinfolk of the Gok-Turks. Qarluqs consist of three sub clans. These are Mou-ts'e (Mou-luo), Chih-ssu (P'o-fu) and T'a-shih-li. It is seen that the Qarluqs, which are formed from the merger of three clan, are defined as "Yabghu of three clans" or "the three tribes of Qarluq" in various sources in the following years.

The name Qarluq is recorded as "Ko-lo-lu or Ka-lo-luk" in Chinese sources, "Halluh, Harluh and Harlig" in Arabic sources, "Gar-log" in Tibetan sources, "Grr-wgt" in Sogdian sources and "Har-Lu-ut" in Mongolian sources. It is claimed in some sources that the word Qarluq means "snowdrift" (Salman, 2001, p. 509). According to the famous Turcologist Németh, Qarluqs known for their bravery, was named with the word "Qarluq", which means "the harshest natural event like a snowstorm", which expresses these characteristics (Salman, 1981, pp. 169-206).

In *Dîvân-ü Lugâti't-Türk* of Mahmud al-Kashgari there is an explanation for the Qarluqs such as, "they are different from the Oghuzs, they are among the nomadic Turks; they are called as Turkmen like Oghuz".

2.2.4.2. *The homeland of Qarluqs*

The Qarluqs lived in the north-west of Pei-t'ing and more intensely in the region of Tarbagatai with the Black Irtysh River in the west of the Altai Mountains. Tarbagatai Mountain where the Qarluqs spread, was located between the city of Čoček (Cöcek) within the borders of today's Tarbagatai Province and the northern part of Durbilcin District and the border of Kazakhstan (Yıldırım, 2015, pp. 129-130, 353).

According to the information given by Arab travelers, to the east of the Qarluqs are some parts of Tibet and the borders of Yaghma and Toquz Oghuz clans. There is a division of the Yaghma clan and the country of Transoxiana in the south. There are Oghuz borders in the west and Tuhsi, Chigil and Toquz Oghuz borders in the north (Şeşen, 2017, pp. 69-70).

In Chinese sources, Qarluqs are shown for the first time in history, in the southwest of the Altai Mountains, northwest of Pei-t'ing, at the edge of Pu-ku-chen Water, in a place called To-ta-Ling (Taşağıl, 2017, pp. 80-81). This region may not be the first homeland of the Qarluqs, this issue is not certain, but it is understood from the development of the events they were here for a period of 630 and before.

2.2.4.3. *A short history*

According to Chinese sources, the Qarluqs lived as a branch of the Gok-Turks and they consisted of three tribes. They appeared for the first time in history at the end of the sixth century (Salman, 1981, pp. 169-206). In the following periods, it is understood that they spread towards the Tarbagatai steppes located in the east of Kazakhstan and in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region.

The Qarluqs, lived as a vassal to the First Gok-Turk State at first. Then they lived as a vassal of the Eastern Turks after the Gok-Turk State had been divided into two. After a while, they were attached to the Western Gok-Turks. Qarluqs also participated in the rebellion initiated by the tribes who were not satisfied with the administration of the chief (yabghu) of

Western Gok-Turks. These events, which took place in 627, led to their recognition. The chief of Western Gok-Turks who wanted to suppress the rebellion, was killed around 630. After this event, some of the Qarluq clans were attached to the Eastern Turks (Salman, 1981, pp. 170-172).

It had been seen that the Qarluqs were completely been a vassal of Chinese Dynasty after 657. China has given the title of military governor to the leader of each of the three tribes that make up the Qarluqs (Salman, 1981, pp. 172-174; Taşağıl, 2017, p. 83).

As it was known, in the 630s, the Eastern Gok-Turk State disappeared. With the collapse of the Western Gok-Turks around 658, there was no power left to unite the Turkish tribes in Central Asia. Taking advantage of this situation, China took three headless Qarluq tribes under the sovereignty and turned the Qarluq lands into three provinces, which are connected to the Pei-t'ing province of China. He appointed the chiefs of the Qarluq tribes as governors of these provinces. As can be seen, the Chinese government was trying to prevent the Turkish tribes from uniting and waging war against China with the foreign policy move it implemented (Salman, 1981, p. 175).

In the following years, these three clans moved south and reached the foothills of the Tien-Shan Mountains. The Qarluqs, who have recovered since 665, are subject to the Chinese Empire, but have started to live independently from the Eastern and Western Gok-Turks. Their chiefs, who formerly had the title of “Kül erkin”, were later called as “Yabghu”. It is understood from the statements in the sources that they got stronger in military and political terms.

In the Old Turkic Inscriptions, the events between the Gok-Turks and Qarluqs during the period of Kapghan Kaghan, the Second Gok-Turk ruler, are mentioned. It is said that the Qarluqs often rebelled against the Gok-Turks. It was stated in the sources that after a Qarluq rebellion, which was stated to have taken place in 711, Qarluq and Gok-Turk relations

deteriorated. In 714, A-shih-na Hsien, who was also a Turk, suppressed the revolt of the On Oq (means: ten arrows) notables against China on behalf of China. Affected by this victory of China, the Qarluqs and some Turgish tribes declared their temporary loyalty to China in 714. After that, they were attached to the province of Pei-t'ing by China. Meanwhile, China did not mind using the tribes that declared their loyalty, for their own interests.

Kapghan Kaghan, who was angry with the connection of Qarluq and other tribes to China, raided the lands of the tribes that were attached to China after these events and plundered them. Then the Qarluqs attacked the Gok-Turks, who were fighting around Kara Göl (a lake) with the army of "Az" tribe at that time (715). The attack occurred at the beginning of the Tamig River⁹. It is known that the Qarluqs suffered a bitter defeat in the war, in which Gok-Turk commander Kül Tegin showed great success. It is reported in the sources that the Qarluqs took refuge in China after this defeat. After their defeat in the war in the Tamig River region, another Qarluq branch living in the west, around the Ili River, also rebelled against the Gok-Turks. The Gok-Turk commander Kül Tegin once again defeated (in 716) the rebellious Qarluq clan in a place called the Kara Göl (English: Black Lake) (Salman, 1981, pp. 177-178).

In 720, another war of unknown reason occurred between the Qarluqs and the Gok-Turks in the south of the Gok-Turk lands. The winner of this war, which was commanded by Tudun Yamatar, was again the Gok-Turks. During the reign of Bilgä Kaghan (716 - 734), the Qarluqs re-adopted the Gok-Turk rule. In 734, the Gok-Turk ruler Bilgä Kaghan passed away. The rulers who came to power after the death of Bilgä Kaghan could not be as successful as he. As a matter of fact, internal turmoil and riots started in the country. Ultimately, in 744, the Qarluqs, together with a coalition of Basmil and Uighurs, defeated the Second Turkic State

⁹ According to Giraud, the "head of Tamig" is the springhead of Tamir River, which the Chinese call "*T'gen-Shui*". It is said that this water flows into Orkhon River (Salman, 1981, p. 177).

and overthrew the Kaghan of the Eastern Turks. In addition, this incident paved the way for the establishment of the Ötükän-based Uighur State.

The Qarluqs played a critical role in the Talas War that took place between the Chinese and the Arabs in 751. After this date, the Tarim River basin was accepted as a border; the west side of the basin was divided into the Qarluqs and the east side to the Uighurs. Thus, the Central Asia remained under Turkish rule again. The Chinese Empire, which was dealing with severe internal problems, could not deal with the Western regions after this date (Salman, 2015, pp. 69-77).

After the Talas War, the disappearance of Chinese sovereignty in the Issyk Kul region was beneficial for the Qarluqs living in the west of the Altai Mountains. The Qarluqs took action while their neighbors, Abbasids, Tibetans, Chinese and Ferghana states were fighting among themselves, attacked the Turgish lands. The Qarluqs, first captured the cities of Tokmak and Talas, and then they captured the old Western Gok-Turk cantonment around the Chu River. After a while they accepted the old Western Gok-Turk cantonment as the center and established an independent Qarluq Kaghanate in 766. It is understood from the sources that the capital of the Qarluq State established is Balasagun (Salman, 1981, p. 194; Yasin, 2016, p. 86).

This state originally covered an area stretching from Issyk Kul to the city of Tarâz. Later, the Qarluqs, which showed a great development, captured the cities of Tashkent, Ferghana and Kashgar and expanded their borders to the Syr Darya River. Approximately in the 780s, a ruler named “Aslan İl Türgig¹⁰” had ruled the country. The state had borders extending to the coast of Syr Darya in the west, the shores of Chu and Ili in the north, the Four Garrisons in the east, and the south of the Ferghana-Kashgar line in the south under his rule. In the second half of the 8th century, the neighbors of the Qarluq State were Oghuz and

¹⁰ İl-Türgig means who regulates the country (Salman, 1981, p. 196).

Pechenegs (Pečeneg) tribes in the north, Tibet in the south, Uighurs and China in the east, and Abbasids in the west. However, in 791 the aforementioned Chinese border disappeared because the Tibetans captured that land (Salman, 1981, p. 196).

Upon the collapse of the Uighur Kaghanate in 840, Bilgä Kül Kadir Khan, the ruler of the Qarluqs, who accepted himself as the successor of the Gok-Turks, received the title of “Kara Khan”. At the time of the establishment of the Qarluq Kaghanate, there was an independent “The Yabghu State of Qarluqs” in the Upper Tukhâristân region at the elbow of the Amu Darya River. It has not been determined when the Yabghu State, which has an important place in the sources due to the first Islamic raids, ended. However, in the following centuries, it is known that one branch of them migrated to India and the other to the Sîstan region (Salman, 2001, pp. 509-510).

Since the 840s, Qarluqs are mentioned only as the name of a tribe, not like the state in Chinese Sources, as it used to be. The Qarluqs took part in the army of the state with other Turkish tribes after the establishment of the Qarakhanid State (840 - 1212). However, they continued their nomadic lifestyle by not losing their height structure from the past. Sometimes they rebelled against the state in cooperation with foreigners (Yasin, 2016, pp. 85-104).

Around the year 943, the lords of the Kashgar region (according to Barthold, these must be the Nine Oghuz Clan) had entered the Chu Valley and attacked Transoxiana, thus caused the collapse of the Qarluq Kaghanate (Salman, 1981, pp. 204-205).

2.2.5. The Orkhon Uighur State

2.2.5.1. *Uighur name and the origin of the Uighurs*

The Uighurs, which are named as *Huei-ho*, *Wei-ho*, *Wei-wu-er* in Chinese sources, are considered by the Chinese as descendants of the Huns. It is known that in Chinese sources, the word Uighur is given a meaning such as “the one who is flying like a hawk, attacking”. Where the Uighurs came from, which has an important place in Turkish history, has attracted

the attention of researchers. One of the tribes among the Toles, which is the union of tribes, is the tribe named *Yüan-ho*. In the sources after 605, it is highly probable that the tribe pronounced as *Wei-ho*¹¹ is the same tribe as the tribe named *Yüan-ho*. The tribe in question is believed to be the basis of the Uighurs. In the sources, it is reported that the *Wei-ho* tribe consisted of ten thousand people in total and half of the population was soldiers (Çandarlıoğlu, 2012, p. 242; Taşağıl, 2018, p. 203).

2.2.5.2. *Homeland of the Uighurs*

In the early days, the Uighurs who lived in the Toles tribal union living in the vicinity of Orkhon, Selenge Rivers and Tola River became a vassal state with the establishment of the Gok-Turk State. Accordingly, the Uighurs were one of the tribes that lived under their rule during the Second Gok-Turk State.

The borders of the Uighur State, which was founded in 745, extended between the Altai Mountains in the west and Ssu-wei in the east at first. It is seen that the region is the old borders of the Eastern Gok-Turk State. It is seen that during the period of Kutlug Bilgä Kül Kaghan, who was the first ruler of the Uighur State, the lands of the country expanded and they dominated the entire former Hun lands. During the Mo-yen Ch'o Kaghan period, the borders of the country extended to the Syr Darya River (Çandarlıoğlu, 2002, pp. 193-214; Taşağıl, 2018, p. 209).

2.2.5.3. *A short history*

The Uighurs, one of the oldest Turkish tribes, established their state on the banks of the Selenge River in Outer Mongolia. The Uighurs started to settle in East Turkestan in the second half of the 8th century. According to some historians, the capital of the Orkhon Uighur State in East Turkestan was known as the city of Pei-t'ing (Vernadsky, 1936, pp. 453-461). Today, Turkish historians have been considering the city of Karabalghasun as the capital city

¹¹ It is reported in the sources that the *Wei-ho* tribe, known as the ancestors of the Uighurs and included in the Toles tribal confederation, lived especially in the north of the Tola River (Taşağıl, 2017, p. 155).

of the Uighurs. It is stated in the sources that this city was called Ordu-Baliq¹² by the Uighurs at that time.

As it is known, the Uighurs, who got stronger around the year 742, took with them Basmil and Qarluqs from the Turkish tribes and rebelled against the Gok-Turk rule. This trilateral alliance, which emerged with the provocation of the Chinese Dynasty, attacked the Gok-Turk center in 744 and massacred the Ozmis Kaghan who is the ruler of Gok-Turks. After the death of Ozmis, his son Pai-mei, who was chosen as a Kaghan in 745, was also killed as a result of the Uighur Turks raid. The Gok-Turks, whose rulers were killed and their country burned down, dispersed, thus the Gok-Turk State collapsed. After the collapse of the Gok-Turk State, the Uighur Turks established a new state in the territory of the Gok-Turk State. Kutlug Bilgä Kaghan, who was the first ruler of the Uighur State, ascended the throne in Ötükän like the rulers of Gok-Turk.

While the Uighurs were establishing a state, they were involved the Toquz Oghuz tribes in it. The Toquz Oghuz tribes are as follows: P'u-ku (Bu-gu), Pa-ye-ku (Bayirqu), Qun (Hun), Tongra (T'ung-lo), Ssu-Chie, A-pu-sse, Ch'i-pi, Ku-lun-wu-ku and A-tie (Ediz). When the Uighurs joined to the Toquz Oghuz union, the name of the union became known as the "On Uighurs". In some Islamic sources, the Uighurs are recorded as "Toquz Oghuz" instead of the "Uighur". Their being one of the founding elements of the Uighur State seems to be the reason for this naming. The first ruler of the Uighur State was Ku-li P'ei-lo, whose title was "Kutlug Bilgä Kül Kaghan". This newly established state attempted to expand its territory. Therefore, together with the places captured during the reign of Kutlug Bilgä Kül, the borders of the country stretched between the Altai Mountains in the west and Ssu-Wei in the east. The Uighur Kaghan gave the administration of the left administrative division of the country to the Yabghu of Qarluqs. Kutlug Bilgä Kaghan passed away in 747 (Taşağıl, 2018, pp. 207-208).

¹² The word *baliq* means "city" in old Turkish (Atalay, 1985, p. 379; Sinor, 1981, p. 96). Therefore, "Ordu-baliq" city can be named as "City of Army" in modern Turkish (Atalay, 1985, p. 124).

Later on, Ko-le (747 - 759), whose title was “Mo-yen-ch’o Bilgä-Kül Kaghan” became the ruler. In the first place, Mo-yen-ch’o ensured unity within the country, suppressed opponents to him, and then tried to bind the Turkish tribes living in the vicinity to himself. While the Čik tribe was subordinated in 750, after a while, the Toquz Tatar union who lived and rebelled in northwest Manchuria were also defeated. Besides the “Čik” tribe that rebelled in 751 was subordinated themselves again, the Uighur forces attacking to the revolting Kyrgyz clan were defeated them. Mo-yen-ch’o Kaghan, who defeated the Qarluqs around the Urungu River, later defeated the Qarluqs again, which are located in the steppes between the Altai - Tien-Shan Mountains. The defeated Qarluqs were drawn to the west. After defeating the Turgish Kaghanate, Mo-yen-ch’o Kaghan expanded the borders of his country to the Amu Darya River. As a result of the policies implemented by Mo-yen-ch’o, the people living in the east of Central Asia accepted the superiority of the Uighur State (Taşağıl, 2018, pp. 208-209).

The Uighurs helped to suppress the uprisings in China during the Mo-yen-ch’o period. When Mo-yen-ch’o Kaghan died, his son I-ti-chien (Mo-yü) became the ruler. In the sources, the title of the new Kaghan was sometimes found as “Bögü Kaghan” and sometimes as “Il Küllüg Bilgä Kaghan” (Çandarlıoğlu, 2019, p. 207; Taşağıl, 2018, p. 210).

In the time of Bögü, the An-Lu-shan rebellion was completely eliminated with the alliance of China and Uighur. Both capitals of China were cleared of the rebels and taken back. The Chinese Dynasty has weakened considerably as a result of these rebellions. Taking advantage of this situation, some statesmen tried to persuade the Uighur Kaghan to organize an influx to China. The Kaghan Bögü went an expedition to China in 762 and plundered the cities he went to taking advantage of the weakness of the Chinese forces. In addition, the Kaghan adopted the religion of Manichaeism in 764 (Ögel, 1955, p. 356; Taşağıl, 2018, pp. 210-211). One of the important events that took place in period of Bögü was the revolt of the Chinese General P’u-ku Huai-en (765) of Turkish origin (Baykuzu, 2014, pp. 394-399).

After the successive rebellions, the T'ang Dynasty was deeply wounded, its economy weakened and its treasury depleted. This situation was a great opportunity for the Uighurs. In addition to the Uighurs, the Tibetans, who started to get stronger again after a while, started to cause trouble in the borders of China, which weakened. In addition, the west of the Yellow River (Chinese: Huang He) has been completely taken over by Tibetans after a while. So, it was time for Tibet - Uighur rivalry (Baykuzu, 2014, pp. 398-399).

The Uighurs, who were effective in suppressing the rebellions in China, received gifts and taxes from China for a long time, thus strengthening their economy. After a while, the Kaghan Bögü wanted to organize a new expedition to China. His minister Tun Baga Tarkan (779–789), who could not convince the Kaghan that his request was not appropriate, declared his rule by killing the Kaghan with his relatives. With the ruling of Tun Baga Tarkan, whose title is “Alp Kutlug Bilgä”, there has been a change in the ruling family of the Uighur State. By starting with him, Uighur Kaghans will be descendants of Tun Baga Tarkan (Ögel, 1955, p. 361).

Pei-t'ing (Beshbaliq) is a garrison affiliated to China. However, it was close to the Uighur State and was communicating with China through the Uighurs. Therefore, the townspeople had to get on well with the Uighurs and constantly had to pay tribute to the Uighurs. In the regions close to the Pei-t'ing Garrison, the Sha-t'o tribe with approximately 6 thousand tents, three Qarluqs (uc-qarluq) tribal union, the white dressed Turks (Pai-fu T'u-chueh)¹³ and other West Gok-Turk tribes were living peacefully under control of the Uighur State. Since the 780s, the unending demands of the Uighurs have caused complaints among the people of the city. It is understood that the atmosphere of peace and tranquility deteriorated after a while. Being aware of the unrest in the region, Tibetans succeeded in influencing Qarluq and other Turkish tribes, who reacted against the Uighur State. Upon this

¹³ In the sources, a definition as the “white dressed Turks” is encountered. The historian Klyashtorny states that those recorded as the “white dressed Turks” in Chinese sources are the Manichaeans (Sultanov & Klyashtorny, 2019, p. 119).

Tibetans and their Turkish allies united, and then occupied the city of Pei-t'ing. However, the Uighurs opposed this occupation and recaptured Pei-t'ing in 788. Despite this, the people of Pei-t'ing agreed with the Sha-t'o people and handed over the city to Tibetans again (Gökalp, 1973, p. 36).

The Uighur Kaghan named Tun Baga Tarkan died in 789, upon which his son To-lo-ssu (789-790), became the new ruler of the country with the title of "*Ay Tengride Kut Bulmus Külüg Bilgä*". In the period of Külüg Bilgä, the city of Pei-t'ing was taken back from Tibetans. The Sha-t'o tribe and the eastern group of the Qarluqs supported the Tibetans. However, this situation was not in the interests of the Uighurs. Therefore in 790, Pei-t'ing passed into the hands of Tibet again (Taşağıl, 2018, p. 214).

In the Karabalghasun Inscription, it is stated that the most important action of this ruler was to organize and renew the traditions and customs of his country (Ögel, 1955, p. 362).

In the period 790–791, the Chinese were anxious in their struggle against the Tibetans, despite the help of the Uighurs. China lost its fortified places in East Turkestan during the battles. This region was conquered by Tibetans. Despite some temporary success, the Uighurs were unable to displace the Tibetans. The wars of 790-791 are mentioned in the inscription of Karabalghasun (Qara-Balghasun) Monument. Although the Uighurs achieved success against Sha-t'o clan and the Tibetans in many places, they were defeated as a result of the war. The Uighur Kaghan To-lo-ssu, whose reputation was shaken after this defeat, was poisoned by his wife or brother and was killed in 790. It is known that one of the wives of the deceased Kaghan was the little daughter of General P'u-Ku Huai-en. It's known that the General was Turkish originated (Taşağıl, 2018, p. 214).

Although his brother had come to power contrary to tradition after the ruler died, the notables of the state objected to this situation. Thereupon, the new ruler and those around him

were killed. A-ch'o (Feng-ch'eng) who was the 16-17 years old son of the previous Kaghan, was ascended the throne (790–795) as the ruler (Taşağıl, 2018, p. 215).

The defeated Uighur forces withdrew from Pei-t'ing in late 790. The next year (791), the Qarluq clan settled in the Uighur lands near Pei-t'ing and the Uighurs were forced to go further south. It can be said that the progress of the Chinese in East Turkestan has been halted with the Battle of Pei-t'ing (791). As a result, East Turkestan has been conquered by Tibet, until the middle of the 9th century (Hoffmann, 2008, p. 385).

In September 791, Tibetans attacked Ling-chou¹⁴, but Uighur soldiers defeated them. We see that the Uighurs gained the strength to prevent the attacks of Tibet. Indeed, right after the enthronement of the new ruler, the Uighurs defeated Tibet and the Qarluqs. The Uighur ruler, who sent an ambassador to China in the ninth or tenth month of 791, presented the Tibetan and Qarluq prisoners, which he took captive in the battle of Pei-t'ing, to the Chinese Emperor. Besides, in January 792, the Kaghan sent a prisoner who was a Tibetan commander by name Shang Chieh-hsin, whom he took prisoner with his envoy Sha-chih as a gift to the Emperor of China (Ecsedy, 1964, pp. 85-86; Mackerras, 1969, p. 232). The Chinese annals tell us that the allied Chinese and Uighur forces had been failed in the Pei-t'ing campaign in 791.

In 795, the Uighur ruler A-ch'o Kaghan died. The deceased ruler had no son. Therefore, the people enthroned Kutlug Bilgä (795–805) with the title of *Ay Tengride Ülüg Bulmis Alp Ulug Bilgä* Kaghan. It is understood that the new ruler, who belongs to the Hsieh-tieh clan of the Toles tribal union, was therefore an adopted child (Taşağıl, 2018, p. 215). Kutlug Bilgä Kaghan, also known as Ku-tu-lu P'i-chia, took the name Yaghlaqar (Yao-lo-ko) as a family name. Yao-lo-ko is the name of the royal clan of the Uighurs (Çandarlıoğlu, 2019, p. 158). The new ruler first suppressed the Qarluq rebellion. He eliminated the gangs that

¹⁴ Ling-chou corresponds to the city of Yin-Ch'uan, the capital of the Ning-hsia Hui Autonomous Region in present-day North Central China (The Cambridge History Of China Volume 3, 2008, p. 461).

Tibetan and Qarluqs formed against the Uighurs. After the Qarluq clan has obeyed to Uighurs, he went down to Turfan and eliminated those who engaged in gang activities. Later on, he rewarded the local people who lived ordinarily, and punished those who were gang members (Ögel, 1955, pp. 331-376). Another tremendous activity of Kutlug Bilgä was the Kyrgyz expedition (İzgi, 2000, p. 22).

The Kyrgyz had rich mineral deposits in Southern Siberia. They were selling the iron they obtained from here to a wide region from Iran to China. The Uighurs, who defeated the Kyrgyz, had a great economic benefit by having these mineral deposits. The activities of Kutlug Bilgä, who fought with the Qarluqs living in the region of Tien-Shan Mountains and expatriated them until Ferghana, are described in the Karabalghasun Inscription. During the reign of this ruler, Kucha and Karashahr eventually passed into the hands of the Uighurs. The Kaghan Kutlug Bilgä, who ruled for ten years and gave the Uighurs a bright period, died in 805 (Taşağıl, 2018, p. 215).

There is not enough information in the sources about the origin and identity of Tengride Bolmis Alp Külüg Bilgä (805–808), which came after the Kaghan Kutlug Bilgä and remained in power for only three years. In the Karabalghasun Inscription, it is reported that the Tibetans besieged Kucha (Chinese: Chiu-tz'u) during the Külüg Bilgä period, but the kaghan of the Uighurs came to the aid of the city and defeated the Tibetans. Therefore, it is understood from this Turkic inscription that the borders of the Uighur State extended to Kucha (Ögel, 1955, p. 365).

Chinese princess Hsien-an, who lived among the Uighurs for 21 years, died in the Uighur country in 808. One month after her death, the kaghan of the Uighurs also died. Instead of the deceased Kaghan, “Ay Tengride Kut Bulmis Alp Bilgä” ascended the throne as the new ruler. There is not much information about the Kaghan, which is mentioned as Pao-i

K'o-han in Chinese sources. It is thought that the inscription of the Karabalghasun was written in the name of this kaghan (Ögel, 1955, p. 367; Taşağıl, 2018, p. 216).

After a while, the Uighurs attacked the Tibetans and captured the city of Liang-chou¹⁵. The Tibetans suspected that the Sha-t'o Turks were getting closer to the Uighurs during this incident and removed them from Pei-t'ing and placed them in Gansu (beyond the Yellow River). Later, the Sha-t'o tribe was indeed attached to the Uighurs (Çandarlıoğlu, 2019, p. 161; Taşağıl, 2018, p. 216).

The Chinese government reported that in 809, in the place called Ta-shih-ku (*Great Stone Valley*), a ten thousand Tibetan cavalry attacked and robbed the Uighur embassy delegation, who were returning to their country after visiting China (Huang Chi-Huei, 1970, p. 169). In 812, Uighur forces crossed south of the Gobi field and attacked Tibetans in the west (Taşağıl, 2018, p. 216).

The Tibetans, advancing north in 816, attacked the Uighur capital. The Kyrgyz also started a rebellion at that time. At that time the Tibetan Emperor passed away, so the Tibetan commander who was fighting the Uighurs returned to his country. Thus, the Tibetans could not complete the Uighur expedition (Gumilev, 2019, p. 502).

Meanwhile, it is seen that the Chinese-Uighur alliance has disappeared since 817. Taking advantage of this situation, Tibet launched an attack on China (Gumilev, 2019, pp. 310, 548).

In 820, the Kaghan of the Uighurs sent an ambassador to China and wanted to make peace treaty through marriage. Emperor Hsien-tsung, who refused this request several times, finally agreed to this marriage. However, in the same year, the Chinese Emperor Hsien-tsung died and Mu-tsung ascended the throne instead (Çandarlıoğlu, 2019, pp. 168-169).

¹⁵ It is located in the Gansu Province. In addition, one of the four command headquarters in Ho-hsi region is located in Liang-chou (Yıldırım, 2012, p. 139).

The Uighur ruler *Ay Tengride Kut Bulmis Alp Bilgä* Kaghan, died in early 821. Thereupon, *Kün Tengride Ülüg Bulmis Alp Küçlüg Bilgä* Kaghan (821–824) began ruling the country as the new Uighur ruler (Çandarlıoğlu, 2011, pp. 63-70).

According to sources, the Tibetans were not pleased with the fact that the Uighur ruler will be get married a Chinese princess. Upon this, it is seen that Tibet started raids into China. By the year 821, it is seen that the Uighur and Chinese States decided to re-ally against this powerful enemy. This alliance will be strengthened by the wedding mentioned above. The marriage agreement of T'ang Dynasty with the Uighurs was perceived as a provocation for Tibetans. Tibet reacted to this alliance with the military expeditions against both states. In the same year, the Tibetan army raided the Chinese border and fortress. Tibetan commander Zhang Khri sum rje (Shang Ch'i Hsin Erh¹⁶) carried out an attack on Orkhon Valley. However, since their allies, the Qarluqs, were at war with the Arabs in Ferghana at that time, they could not achieve success. As a result, the Uighurs repulsed the Tibetan attack. Noticing the unsuccessful course of the war, the Tibetans made a peace offer to China. Thus, the war ended in 821 (Gumilev, 2019, p. 503).

From the translation of the Chinese text of the Karabalghasun Inscription, known to have been erected during the Uighur period, it is understood that Küclüg Bilgä Kaghan was attacking on the Qarluqs who collaborated with the Tibetans. The inscription tells that the flags of the rebels were torn, their heads were cut off, and those who fled were chased to west, to the country of Ferghana. Those captured were taken prisoner along with their animals. It is known that the remaining Qarluq people after this incident, remained loyal to the Uighurs until the Uighur State collapsed (Abdurrahman, 2001, p. 63; Orkun, 1994, p. 235).

¹⁶ He is an important figure in the history of Tibet. He was Commander-in-Chief of the Tibetan Army during the powerful period of the Empire. He is the person who wrote the text of the 821–822 Treaty signed between China and Tibet. Besides, he is among those who signed the text on behalf of Tibet (Li, 1956, pp. 9, 17, 71-73; Stoddard, 1997, p. 77).

Meanwhile in 824, the emperor Ching-tsung, whose reign would last for two years, ascended the throne in China; the same year, the Kaghan of the Uighurs also died. Instead, his younger brother Hazar Tegin (824–832) became the ruler with the title of *Ay Tengride Kut Bulmis Alp Bilgä Kaghan*. Hazar Tegin was assassinated in 832. After his death, *Ay Tengride Kut Bulmis Alp (or Hu Tegin)*, ascended the throne with the title of “Chü-lu Bilgä Chang-hsin”. There are opinions that, the Hu Tegin belonged to the Kürebir (Chiou-lo-wu) branch of the Nine Uighur tribes (Gömeç, 2008, p. 262).

Hu Tegin was more successful than his predecessor, it is known that he put the state in order. However, a certain Kürebir who was one of the ministers, agreed with Chu-yeh Ch’ih-hsin, chief of the Sha-t’o tribe, and attacked Hu Tegin. According to some sources, the Kaghan, who could not digest defeat, committed suicide. According to the other sources, the Kaghan was killed by Kürebir. After this incident, the minister Kürebir put Ho-sa (Hazar) Tegin in charge of the country. In 839, a lot of snow fell in the Uighur country, an epidemic broke out, after which most of the animals died. These disasters shook the country's economy and led to further deterioration of the already tense political environment. While the Uighur State struggled with these troubles, it started to weaken (Taşağıl, 2002, p. 381).

It is seen that the Uighur General Külüg Baga, who was not in the country at the time of the murder of the previous ruler, secretly agreed with the Kyrgyz clan. Külüg Baga, together with a hundred thousand Kyrgyz cavalries, raided to the Uighur capital. A large part of the Uighur people was slaughtered, there was a great massacre. The entire wealth of the people, including the tent of the Kaghan, passed into the hands of the Kyrgyz. The Minister Kürebir and the Kaghan Hazar Tegin of the Uighurs were killed. According to Chinese sources, the Kyrgyz had sworn that they would capture the “the golden tent” of the Uighurs before this war (Mackerras, 1972, pp. 124, 182-183; Taşağıl, 2018, p. 217).

Thus, the Uighur State disappeared in 840. The Uighurs were exiled from Ötükän Region by the Kyrgyz (Çandarlıoğlu, 2019, pp. 187-188). After the events, about fifteen tribes, including the chief vizier Sarchuk and the nephew of the old ruler, called as Menglig (Pan Tegin) went west towards Qarluq country (Abdurrahman, 2002, p. 239).

Another part of the dispersed the Uighurs went to the north of China and established a new state in Kan-chou city of Gansu Province. These are known as the *Yellow Uighurs* in history. The group that included Pan Tegin, the nephew of the former ruler and went west, is divided into two branches. One of them has settled in Kucha and the other in Pei-t'ing. Those who go to the vicinity of Pei-t'ing are the Uighurs known as *Pei-t'ing Uighurs* in history. Another group consisting of thirteen tribes went as far as the southern borders of China (Çandarlıoğlu, 2012, pp. 242-244; Taşağıl, 2018, p. 217).

2.2.5.4. The Gansu Uighur State

After the disintegration of the Uighur State, when the group that went to the west came to the north of the Gobi Desert, a part of it separated and continued to the south of the desert. This group came to the corridor in Gansu Province and united with the indigenous Uighur people who have been living here for a long time. This group, which came to the Gansu Corridor, is the group referred to in Chinese sources as “*One of the clans among the group went to Tibet*”. At that time, the Gansu Region was under the control of the Tibetans. Therefore, Chinese sources wrote that they had went to Tibet. Böğü Tegin, the commander of the Uighurs in the Pei-t'ing region, went to war with Tibetan forces in the vicinity of Lake Bugda (T'ien-ch'i) of East Turkestan, around 865–866. The Uighur commander, who defeated them, ended the sovereignty of the Tibetans in the northeast of the Tien-Shan Mountains and in the Gansu province. Upon these developments, the Gansu Uighurs who survived the Tibetan oppression established a state around the year 875, which would be called the “Kan-chou (Gansu) Uighur State”. The founders of this state would later be called

the “*Yellow Uighurs*”. According to Chinese sources, the rulers of the Gansu Uighur State are descended from the Yaghlaqar tribe, like the rulers of the Uighur State that collapsed in 840. And in the same way, their rulers are called as “Kaghan”. The Gansu Uighur State has endeavored to establish good relations with the T’ang Dynasty. However, in 907, the T’ang Dynasty collapsed. After that, a new era began in China, called the Five Dynasties (907–960) (Abdurrahman, 2001, pp. 52-53).

It is known that the Gansu Uighurs were under the rule of the Kara Hitays after 940 and the Tanguts after 1028. Gansu Uighurs did not exist militarily after the second half of the 11th century. It is known that they were under Mongol rule after 1226. Today, Gansu Uighurs live in northwest China (Çandarlıoğlu, 2012, pp. 242-244; Taşağıl, 2018, p. 218).

2.2.5.5. *The Turfan Uighur State*

After the collapse of the Orkhon Uighur State (840), some of the Uighurs who fled their country went westward and settled in the vicinity of Pei-t’ing, Turfan and Tien-Shan Mountains. They chose Menglig (Pan) Tegin, who was the nephew of the last Uighur ruler, as the leader (yabghu). Menglig Tegin settled in the city of Kingit, which is located in the center of the region known today as Karashahr. Around 848, Menglig Tegin declared himself a “Kaghan” as the leader of all the Uighurs. Menglig was spiritually devoted to Uge (Wu-chia) Tegin, the elected Kaghan of the Uighurs who migrated south after 840. For this reason, he first declared himself “yabghu”, but after the death of Wu-chia Tegin, he declared himself “Kaghan”. The Uighurs who settled in this region are known as Turfan, Kao-Ch’ang or Pei-t’ing Uighurs (Abdurrahman, 2001, pp. 54-55). It is known that these are referred to as Hsi-chou¹⁷ Uighurs in Chinese sources (İzgi, 2011, p. 4). Around 911, they gained their

¹⁷ Kara-hodja (Turfan) was named Hsi-chou (western province) after it became a Chinese province. Here, soon after, Emperor T’ai-tsung established the Governorship of the Western Regions, called *An-hsi tu-hu-fu*, in order to govern the foreign peoples who recognized the Chinese authority (The Cambridge History Of China Volume 3, 2008, p. 226).

independence from China and after that they became known as the Western Uighur State (Çandarlıoğlu, 2012, pp. 242-244).

According to what we learned from Chinese and Islamic sources; the state was disintegrated as a result of the weaknesses of the rulers who came to power after Menglig Tegin. The Western Uighur State came under the rule of Genghis Khan in 1209 (Çandarlıoğlu, 2012, pp. 242-244).

2.2.6. The Sha-t'o Turks

2.2.6.1. *The name and the origin of Sha-t'o Turks*

According to Chinese sources, the Sha-t'o tribe is Turkish (Eberhard, 1947, p. 15). According to Barthold, the Sha-t'o tribe is Turkish and its roots go back to the Oghuzs. The Arabs recognized the Pei-t'ing region, during the period when "Toquz Oghuz" people lived in that region. Although the Toquz Oghuz union migrated eastward later, the Arabs continued to call the people living in the region Toquz Oghuz. A rebellion that broke out in China in the 9th century was suppressed with the help of the Toquz Oghuz union according to Arab sources, while it was suppressed with the help of the Sha-t'o Turks according to Chinese sources. From this incident, it is understood that the tribe that the Arabs called Tuguz-guz (Toquz Oghuz) must be the Sha-t'o Turks (Barthold, 2017, p. 63). According to Chavannes, Sha-t'o Turks come from the same root as Chu-yüeh clan, that is, from Western Turks. In addition, east of Barkul (P'u-lei), where they live, there is a large stony desert named Sha-t'o, for this reason they are called Sha-t'o Turks (Chavannes, 2007, p. 96; Vasary, 2016, p. 140).

Summarizing the above, it can be said that the ancestors of the Sha-t'o tribe were the Chu-yüeh tribe, and this name, which was given to them later, originated from the sand and stony area where the tribe lived. In addition, the word "Sha-t'o" is the Chinese equivalent of "sand pile" according to the Chinese sources. In this case, it can be thought that the word

“Chu-yüeh” is the Chinese pronunciation of the Turkish word “desert” (Vasary, 2016, pp. 140-141).

The sources tell us that the Sha-t’o Turks were formed from the union of several tribes. Only information about the Chu-yüeh and So-ko¹⁸ (or Sa-ko) tribes can be obtained from the tribes that make up the Sha-t’o union (Eberhard, 1947, p. 16).

2.2.6.2. *Homeland of Sha-t’o Turks*

The Chu-yüeh people were living on the Chin-shan Mountain. This mountain falls to the north and west of Barkul. Accordingly, Sha-t’o Turks lived in the west and east of Barkul (Alptekin, 2014, p. 493). It is stated by Taşağıl that when the Gok-Turks were divided into two as west and east, the Sha-t’o Turks lived in the vicinity of the Tien-Shan Mountains and in the old lands of the “Wu-suns”. In addition, the information that the “Chu-yüeh” tribe is their ancestor can be found in various sources (Alptekin, 2014, p. 493; Taşağıl, 2017, p. 183).

2.2.6.3. *A short history*

If the “Chu-yüeh” origin Sha-t’o tribe had not established dynasties in China one day, it was a Turkish community with a small population that would not have been mentioned in history. After the separation of the Gok-Turks as *East* and *West Gok-Turks*, the Sha-t’o tribe began to live in the lands where the Wu-suns used to live, together with the Chu-yüeh and the Chu-mi clans. Previously, they lived under the rule of the Western Gok-Turks, depending on the Chu-yüeh tribal union. Later, a group belonging to the Chu-yüeh tribal union was named “Sha-t’o” and became part of the T’ang Dynasty (circa 650). In addition, in 661, it is seen that they fought with the Chinese against the Toles tribes (Eberhard, 1947, pp. 15-16).

As it is known, the Sha-t’o Turks come from the Chu-yüeh tribe of the Western Gok Turks. Part of the Chu-yüeh tribe came under Chinese rule in 643 under the rule of Mi-shê and his brother Pu-chên. As a matter of fact, there were conflicts among the Western Turks in

¹⁸ So-ko, used to be a tribe of the Turgish union (Eberhard, 1947, p. 16).

those years, and after a while they would also come under Chinese rule. However, a small group led by Ho-lu continued to live independently until it came under Chinese rule in 648. Following these events, A-shih-na Ho-lu revolted against China in 651. During the same period, a small group of Chu-yüeh led by Ku-chu is also reported to occupy an anti-Chinese position. Ku-chu was killed by the Chinese Dynasty, whereupon Chu-yüeh group affiliated to him came under Chinese rule until 712 (Wu Hsing-tung, 1970, p. 3).

After 660, when the name “Sha-t’o” became more common, the tribe’s name “Chu-yüeh” was not used much anymore. Chin-shan, chief of the Sha-t’o tribe, participated in the expedition to the Toles in 661. The wars between China and the Toles tribal union took place between 661 and 663. The Chinese Court awarded Chin-shan with the title of Ch’ang-i-kung (commissioner in charge of attack and punishment) for his success and usefulness in the wars (Wu Hsing-tung, 1970, p. 3).

In addition, Chin-shan was appointed by the Chinese Court in 702 as the governor of the province of Chin-man and was also awarded the title of “Duke of Chang-ye Territory”. During the reign of his son Fu-kuo, the danger of Tibet appeared (towards 712). The chief of the Sha-t’o Turks first transferred the headquarters to Pei-t’ing, in order to avoid this danger. Then he went to China and tried to draw attention to the Tibetan danger (Taşağıl, 2017, p. 184; Wu Hsing-tung, 1970, p. 3).

Sha-t’o Turks have been vassal province of the Uighurs in 742. Their leader, Ku-tuo-chih, was appointed deputy governor by the Uighurs (Taşağıl, 2017, p. 184).

The T’ang Dynasty faced many internal and external problems in the period until 763. The most important problem he faced is the An Lu-shan rebellion. The Chinese government decided that the best solution was to eliminate An Lu-shan, who was originally from Sogdia, with the help of the Turks. For this purpose, he sought help from the Uighurs and Sha-t’o Turks (Gökalp, 1973, pp. 35-36). The Uighurs who accepted the request of China for help

took action. The leader of Sha-t'o, Ku-tuo-chih, participated in the battles with the title of "assistant to tu-hu". The Sha-t'o chief was instrumental in suppressing the rebellion (Gökalp, 1973, p. 35; Taşağıl, 2017, pp. 184-185).

According to a document mentioned in T'ang Shu (one of the Chinese Annals), between the years 756 - 763, there was a confusion in Pei-t'ing, where the Sha-t'o tribe was lived. And the Uighurs suppressed it (Gökalp, 1973, p. 36).

Meanwhile, from 764 onwards, the Tibetans were once again a danger to China. During this period, a change began in the T'ang policy of the Sha-t'o Turks. In 764, the Chinese General P'u-ku Huai-en attacked to the south and defeated the commander Po-wen-ta of Ala-shan district. Meanwhile, the Tibetans attacked to Liang-chou near Kan-chou. Po-wen-ta, who was defeated and escaped to Gansu, was killed in *Yang-chu-le* by Sha-t'o soldiers (Gökalp, 1973, p. 36).

The Sha-t'o Turks became almost the biggest auxiliary force and ally of the Uighurs until 786. However, after this date, they started to be uncomfortable with the huge amount of taxes the Uighurs received from them. Thus, the good relationship between them began to deteriorate. On the other hand, the Tibetans were also getting stronger. Sha-t'o Turks found it reasonable in their self-interest to approach the Tibetans within this condition. The Sha-t'o People, consisting of more than six thousand tents, have been allied with the Tibetans. It is known that the Sha-t'o Turks were under the control of the Tibetans in the period from 786 to 805 and played a pioneering role in the raids to the borders (Taşağıl, 2017, p. 185). The Tibetans removed the Sha-t'o tribe from Pei-t'ing in 795 and settled them in Gansu province, a place closer to them. Undoubtedly, they aimed of keeping them under tight control (Gökalp, 1973, p. 37).

In 808, the Uighurs occupied the Liang-chou region under Tibetan rule. Thus, war started between the two sides. The Tibetans who were defeated in the war suspected that the

Sha-t'o tribe was collaborating with the Uighurs. Because of these suspicions, they were planning to expel their Sha-t'o tribe away from the country they lived in. Worried that his people would be exiled beyond the Yellow River, Sha-t'o chief Chu-yüeh Chin-chung took his people of 30 thousand with him and fled to the east of Ötükän first. Essentially, the intention of the chief was to seek refuge in China (Taşağıl, 2017, p. 185; Wu Hsing-tung, 1970, p. 4).

When the Sha-t'o convoy came to Ötükän, they could not find any support from the Uighurs here. Lacking support from the Uighurs, the Sha-t'o Turks began to flee from the Tibetan forces that followed them. Therefore, the Sha-t'o convoy could not hold at Ötükän and continued towards Shih-men. However, they fought countless battles and struggles until they got there. In some sources, it is stated that the chief of Sha-t'o Turks committed suicide during these events (Gökalp, 1973, p. 38; Taşağıl, 2017, p. 185). His son, Chu-yüeh Chih-i, who replaced the deceased chief, planned to reach Ling-chou by crossing the I-pu-la Mountains and then the Ala-shan Mountains. However, while on the road, he was attacked by Tibetan forces who caught up with them. The defeated Chih-i lost many soldiers in the war. The Sha-t'o community, which fled from the battlefield, consisted of two-thousand-foot soldiers, seven hundred horse-drawn soldiers and a small herd of animals that remained after the losses. Having suffered great losses as a result of devastating wars, the community eventually reached the Ling-chou border. The Sha-t'o people took refuge in Fan-Hsi Chao, the governor of the T'ang Dynasty Ling-yen Garrison. The Sha-t'o Turks, who were settled in the Yin-shan (Yen-chou) region in the Ordos Province of Inner Mongolia, would soon become the founders of three separate dynasties in China. Chu-yüeh Chih-i, was appointed as the military officer (or, as the governor of the region) of this region (Gökalp, 1973, p. 38; Wu Hsing-tung, 1970, p. 5).

As it is known, Chin-chung, chief of Sha-t'o tribe, died in the wars with Tibet. The Sha-t'o group of seven hundred people under the direction of his younger brother Ko-le A-p'o came right after the first group and they also took refuge in Fan-Hsi Chao. The Sha-t'o Turks, who came under the control of China, strengthened the Ling-Yen garrison. The Ling-Yen army, which went on a campaign in the following years, successfully returned from many battles thanks to the support of Sha-t'o forces. Therefore, the Ling-Yen Garrison commander very much appreciated the military capability of the Sha-t'o Turks (Gökalp, 1973, p. 38; Taşağıl, 2017, p. 185).

After Sha-t'o chief Chih-i died, his son Chu-yüeh Chih-Hsin replaced him. Support to China continued during the period of son of Chih-Hsin called Li-K'e-yung. Meanwhile, a great uprising broke out in China (Taipei city) in 876. The Chinese government was able to suppress the rebellion thanks to the Sha-t'o Turks in 880 (Taşağıl, 2017, p. 123).

The Chinese Government rewarded the Sha-t'o commanders who were successful in wars by giving them various titles. For example, Li-K'e-yung has acquired a valuable title in the form of "*Lung-hsi-chiün-kung*¹⁹" (Taşağıl, 2017, p. 123; Wu Hsing-tung, 1970, p. 7). The next year Li-K'e-yung, chief of the Sha-t'o Turks, died. Thereupon, his son Li Ts'un-hsü became the new leader of the tribe (Wu Hsing-tung, 1970, pp. 7-9).

The Five Dynasties period in China (A.D. 907–960) began when Zhu-Wen destroyed the T'ang Dynasty (A.D. 907) and established the Later Liang Dynasty. This period ends in 960, when Zhao Kuangyin (Taizu) overthrew the Later Zhou Dynasty. Three of the Five Dynasties who dominated China were founded by Sha-t'o Turks. The names of the dynasties established by the Sha-t'o Turks are as follows: Hou (Later) T'ang Dynasty (A.D. 923–936), Later Jin Dynasty (A.D. 936–947), Later Han Dynasty (A.D. 947–951). The Kingdom of Pei (Northern) Han (A.D. 951–979), which was among the "Ten Kingdoms" established by the

¹⁹ Lung-hsi-chün is the name given to the southeast of the state known today as Gansu. Kung, on the other hand, is a title like "duke" or "earl" (Wu Hsing-tung, 1970, pp. 14-15, 17).

military governors of the T'ang Dynasty, was also established by the Sha-t'o Turks (Wu Hsing-tung, 1970, p. 76).

2.2.7. The Kyrgyz Turks

2.2.7.1. A short history

The word Kyrgyz, was used for the first time by the Chinese historian Sima Qian. And it was recorded as *Ko-k'un* in the sources (annals) where the events of 203–201 B.C. period were described. The Kyrgyz whose names were mentioned in the Orkhon Inscriptions, were mentioned in the stories of the Huns period as well. Therefore, starting from the periods short before Christ, information about the Kyrgyz is come across. The Kyrgyz are included in various forms such as “Kien-Kun” in Chinese sources, “Hir-hiz, Hir-hiz” in Arabic and Persian sources, “Gir-tis, Hir-tis²⁰” in Tibetan texts. Meanwhile, in Gok-Turk and Uighur sources, it had been recorded as “Kırkız”. The word “*Kırkız*” is defined as “*the name of a tribe from the Turks*” in the work of Mahmud al-Kashgari called *Dîvân-ü Lugâti't-Türk* (Atalay, 1985, p. 458). It is known that the Kyrgyz were seen for the first time in history around the Yenisei River (Barthold, 2017, p. 41; Türkoğlu, 2019, p. 62). It is known that the Kyrgyz clan lived between the 6th and 9th centuries, west of Lake Baikal and in the region where the Yenisei River originates (Kafesoğlu, 1997, p. 94). From the second half of the 6th century, the information about the Kyrgyz people began to be clear. It is stated in the sources that the Kyrgyz country is neighbors with the Kurikan people in the east, the Qarluq people in the southwest and the Tibetans in the south.

²⁰ Ethnic words in the form of “*Hir-tis*” and “*Gir tis*” are the equivalents of the word *Kyrgyz*. In the Tibetan text numbered “P.T.-1283”, the Kyrgyz tribes are mostly expressed with the words “Hir-tis” or “Gir-tis”, which are very similar to each other. However, somewhere in the text is mentioned the tribe of “Khe-rged” who covered their tents with birch bark. Bacot and Clauson define the word *Khe-rged* used here as a *Kyrgyz* clan (Venturi, 2008, p. 26).

2.2.8. The Yabghus of Tukhâristân

2.2.8.1. A short history

According to the definition of Istahri, one of the Islamic geographers, in the 7th and 8th centuries, the borders of Tukhâristân region were in the east of Balkh city, west of Badakhshân, south of Amu Darya (Oxus) River and north of Hindu Kush Mountains. It is seen that the Tukhâristân region is named in different ways such as Tokaristan, Tuharistan or Tu-ho-lo, in the sources. It is thought that the region was named after a tribe called “Tohar” who lived here. In the sources of the ancient period, the region was divided into two as Upper Tukhâristân and Lower Tukhâristân. It is stated that the Ak-Hun State dominated the region until 557. Later, the Gok-Turks and the Sassanids united and attacked the Ak-Hun State and in 557 eliminated the state. Thus, there was an authority gap in the region. It is seen that the Western Turks want to fill the authority gap in the region. The ruler of Western Gok-Turks sent his governor named *Tong Sad Tse-ki* to the region. Thus, the Western Gok-Turks sovereignty started in Tukhâristân. During his travel between 629 and 645, Hsüan-tsang, a traveler and a Buddhist pilgrim, saw and then recorded that 27 provinces in the region were under the rule of Turks. It is clearly stated in the sources that, the rulers (or yabghus) of Tukhâristân are descended from the royal clan of the Gok-Turks, that is A-shih-na (Beckwith, 1993, p. 68).

In the 630s, the capital of the “Yabghus of Tukhâristân” was the towns of Balkh and Kunduz, then popular with Buddhists. The famous Islamic historian Tabari (Muhammed b. Cerîr Tabari) mentions that the princes of all cities from Sindh Region to Herât regarded themselves as servants of the ruler of Tukhâristân and prostrated before the ruler who bears the title of “*Yabghu*” (Babayar, 2002, pp. 184-185; Esin, 1973, p. 131). According to the sources, the raids of the Islamic armies to the region started in the middle of the 7th century.

After 710, it is seen that the Muslim Arabs dominated the Lower Tukhâristân region (Salman, 2012, pp. 214-215).

The ruler (yabghu) of Eastern Tukhâristân after 726 is Kutlug Toen Tardu. It is known that an ambassador was sent to China during his period. In addition, China gave him the title of “*King of Hephthalite and Yabghu of Tukhâristân*” in 729. The Tibetans attacked the Yabghu of Tukhâristân in 749. However, they defeated the Tibetans with military support from China. It was learned from Chinese sources that the last ambassador from the Yabghu of Tukhâristân came to China in 759. After the Talas Victory in 751, the influence of Arabs in West Turkestan increased. Although it was stated in Arabic sources that the State of Tukhâristân has been collapsed by the Qarluqs towards the second quarter of the 8th century, there is no definite information on this subject (Babayar, 2002, p. 185; Salman, 2012, pp. 214-215).

3. TIBET HISTORY AND CULTURE (UNTIL THE 11TH CENTURY)

3.1. Early Tibetan History and Culture

Let's glimpse at the ancient history and culture under the following headings.

3.1.1. Early Tibetan history

3.1.1.1. *The origin of the name and the Tibetans*

The geographical region known as “Tibet” and often referred to as “the roof of the world” is today the name of the autonomous region located in southwest China. The word Tibet has been used as “Thubet” in Mongolian, “T’u-fan” in Chinese, “Thibet” in Thai, “Tubbat” in Arabic and “Tüpüt” in Turkish (Shakabpa, 1984, p. 1). Looking at the Encyclopedia of Britannica, alternative titles to the word Tibet appear as *Bod, Gangs-ljongs, Hsi-tsang Tzu-chih-ch’ü, Kha-ba-can, Thibet, Thubet, Tibet Autonomous Region, Tubbat, Tufan and Xizang Zizhiqu* (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2019). By the Tibetan letters, the word “བོད་” means “Tibet”. The pronunciation of the word in Latin letters is *bod*. *Bod-pa* means person from Tibetan people (Jaschke, 2003, p. 372). According to some Tibetan scholars, the word “*bod*”, which means Tibet, originated in the period before the emergence of the bon religion, with the derivation of the word “pugyal”. Another group of scholars argue that the word “*bod*” derives from the name of the “bon” religion, which was a religion emerged before Buddhism in Tibet.

According to what the Tibetan historian Tsepon Shakabpa cites from the Arabian sources, it is seen that the country of Tibet is recorded as “Tüpüt” or “Tüpüt Kaghanate” in Arab historiography. Another noteworthy issue is that, as in the Upper Yenisei Inscriptions, in the Turkish Inscriptions in Mongolia, the authors refer to the country called *töpöt*. It is seen that the name “*tüpüt*”, which the Turks gave to this country spread along the Silk Road, first entering the Arabic language and then the European languages. According to Barthold, the word “*Tüpüt*” appears in the Orkhon Turkish Inscriptions, exactly as it is in Arabic sources.

Likewise, according to Elliot Sperling, the equivalent of the word *Tibet* in old Turkish is “Tüpüt” and in addition, the Arabs and Persians borrowed the word from the Turks. Although there are different opinions on this issue, it should not be overlooked that the name of the country, which is used as “Tibet” in many languages today, may be derived from the word *Töpöt* or *Tüpüt* in the Old Turkish (Scharlipp, 1995, p. 48). Andreas Gruschke states that in Turkish, Tibet is pronounced as “Tübüt”. According to Thomas Baynes, the pronunciation of the word “*Stod-Bod*”, which means “Tibet” in Tibetan language, is “Tö-böt”. In addition, it is seen that this reading is exactly the same as the Kyrgyz reading.

Although the Ch’iang clan who are regarded as the ancestors of the Tibetans, started to invade China in the 2000s B.C., today’s Tibetans have been seen in Chinese sources since the 7th century. The country of Tibetans, who descended from the plateaus and started official relations with China in the first half of the 7th century, was named “T’u-Fan” in the annals of the T’ang period. The word “Fan” used here is a general name given to neighboring peoples by the Chinese in ancient times. Hsüan-Tsang (? – 664) who is a Chinese traveler and priest, has recorded Tibet as “T’u-Fan” in the same way in the book of travels. It is seen that in the treaties signed between China and Tibet in the T’ang period, the word “Fan” was used as the Chinese equivalent of Tibet. It is not known how and why the word “T’u” was added to the beginning of the word “Fan” in the historical records belonging to the T’ang Dynasty and turned into “T’u-Fan”, which means Tibet. By adding the word “T’u” in front of the word “fan (means barbarian)”, the Chinese probably wanted to distinguish the Tibetans from other barbarians or, to show that they regard the Tibetans as superior to other barbarians (Huang Chi-Huei, 1970, p. 1). Information about the origins of Tibetans comes from the past to the present in the form of a collection of different stories and legends. Tibetans have a “common past interwoven with legend”. In the sources, a thesis is put forward linking the origins of the Tibetan people to the Hindu people. According to the proponents of this view, the Hindu

leader Rupati and his followers fled to Tibet after being defeated after the war with the Pandavas. Later, Tibetan People emerged from those born of these Hindus. Because of this escape story, the word “bod”, which means “fled” in the oral language, emerged (Shakabpa, 1984, p. 1). Some historians state that there is no need to attribute a meaning to the word “Bod” and that the word is used only as a form of definition.

According to another legend, the Tibetans are descended from a male ape. Accordingly, God Avalokiteshvara descended on earth as a male ape. This monkey had six offspring from mating with a female ogress (*ogress: a giant*). These newborn hybrid monkeys are no different from other monkeys except that they have no tails. Thus, the six babies born are believed to be the first Tibetans. In addition, the six-hybrid offspring are said to represent the six main clans of the Tibetan people. The inhabitants of the Tibetan plateau are said to have features of ancestors, both monkey and ogress. Apart from the divine origin mentioned in the Tibetan legend, it seems that the story told is not that different from the modern theory of evolution (Stein, 1972, p. 46). These legends, coupled with the traditional view of Tibet that regard their country as the center of the world, show that Tibetans recognized themselves as natives of the Tibetan Plateau, not immigrant people. Scientific data also confirm this. Genetic data reveal that ancestors of the Tibetans originated from North Asia and Siberia. There is evidence that human settlement on the Tibetan Plateau goes back about 20,000 years from today. Dozens of human camps dating to the Neolithic Period have been counted in the region. Older sites, some dating to the Chipped Stone period, were also found. Some camps have also been found in the highlands of more than four thousand meters. The locations of modern Amdo and Lhasa cities between three and five thousand years ago, are full of highly developed Neolithic cultures, comparable to some of the Neolithic cultures of China. Tibetans are classified as an East Asian type of Mongolian race, along with *Mongols, Japanese, Koreans, Chinese* and so on (Kuzmin, 2011, p. 6).

Some historians claim that the Jung tribe was the ancestor of Tibetans. It has been determined that the word *Jung* is also included in the Chinese annals and is used to mean the “*Western barbarians*”. The Chinese recorded all the peoples living in the west of the Chinese country as “Jung” nation, regardless of their origins. Consequently, it would not be correct to admit that the “Jung” people were the ancestors of the Tibetans, and this thesis is not an acceptable thesis, even in the light of today’s evidence (Eberhard, 1996, pp. 114-115; Ögel, 2019, p. 22).

On the other hand, T’ang Dynasty annals, base the origins of Tibetans to the nomadic “Ch’iang” tribes living in the great steppes of northwest China in the 200s B.C. (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2019). Among the Chinese, the name Ch’iang is extremely old. The word Ch’iang is found on the *oracle bones of the Shang Dynasty*, in the *Bamboo Annals*, in the *Shu-ching*, in the first important work of Chinese historiography namely *Shi-chi*, and in the Annals of Han Dynasty. In these sources, the name “Ch’iang” is written in one character consisting of “sheep” and “man” symbols and always the same (Hoffmann, 2008, p. 372). From the historical records of the T’ang Period (618–907), it is seen that the Ch’iang tribes and the Tibetan People have many common cultural characteristics (Stein, 1972, p. 46). The ethnological and anthropological studies of Eberhard show that the culture of the groups he calls “West Tibetans” is practically identical to the culture of the “Ch’iang” tribes. Although there are some differences, it shows that, as with similar steppe peoples, the Ch’iang tribes were also influenced by others on some issues (Hoffmann, 2008, p. 372).

The “Tibetan-Yi” corridor, also called the “Tibetan-Burmese” ethnic corridor, is located in the southeast of the Qinghai-Tibet plateau and includes mainly the western Sichuan and Yunnan provinces and some regions in the east of Tibet. The Tibetan-Yi corridor was not only an important channel of prehistoric ethnic migration, but also an important center of cultural relations and commodity trade (Zou, et al., 2020, p. 2).

The famous anthropologist Fei Xiaotong, who first introduced the concept of the Tibetan-Yi Corridor, not only pointed out this, but also pointed out that this region is an “ethnic area shaped by history”. This corridor was the border (point of contact) between China and the Tibetans and the Yi and Tibetans, and served as a political seesaw at the different historical stages. This corridor is the area where Ch’iang, Ti (Di), Rong and similar ethnic nations live and long-lasting local regimes of different sizes emerge. The Tibetan-Yi Corridor, in addition to being the main region inhabited by the Tibetan-Burmese ethnic group, is an important historical region that witnesses the development and differentiation of this ethnic group. The academic world used to associate the origins of the Tibeto-Burman ethnic group with the historical “Di and Ch’iang people”. In addition, the thesis that the Di and Ch’iang people came from the upper reaches of the Yellow River in the Gansu-Qinghai region was generally accepted. As a result, although the primitive ancestors of the Tibeto-Burman ethnic group are collectively referred to as the “Di and Ch’iang people”, this issue is still under discussion. However, archaeological data proves that the oldest inhabitants of the Tibetan-Yi Corridor undeniably came from the upper reaches of the Yellow River (Shuo Shi, 2018, pp. 2-3). The famous Turkish linguist Mahmud al-Kashgari, who lived in the 11th century, is the author of *Dîvân-ü Lugâti’t-Türk*, which is considered the first Turkish dictionary. Mahmud had given some information about Tibet and the origins of the Tibetan People in his book *Dîvân-ü Lugâti’t-Türk*. The “Tübüt (Tibet)” article of the dictionary contains the following information:

“Tübüt: It is a crowded tribe living in the Turkish country. Musk deer are found in the area where they live. The musk-producing belly of these deer is cut out and taken, this is called as a musk pod. This is called a belly musk. The Tibetans are the sons of a man named Tābit who is a Yemeni person. This man killed someone there and then escaped with the fear. He came to China on a ship, he liked the country of “Tübüt” and settled there. His offspring

increased there, and his grandchildren bought a land of nearly 7,500 kilometers from the lands of Turks. China, is on the east side of Tübüt. On the west, there is Kismir (Kashmir?), in the north there are Uighur provinces and, in the south, there is the Indian Sea. Apart from this, there are also words borrowed from Arabic in their language. They say “uma (umm)” to the mother and “aba (ab)” to the father” (Atalay, 1985, p. 355; Aydın, 2018, p. 92).

3.1.1.2. Homeland of Tibetans

Described as the “roof of the world” in most written sources, Tibet is the highest country in the world. The Tibetans call their country in their own language, “*Bod*” or “*Bod-Yul*”. Tibet had been known as a forbidden region surrounded by high snowy mountains for a long time to the world.

Mahmud al-Kashgari described the geographical position of Tibet as follows, “*it is bordered by the China in the east, Kashmir in the west, Uighur provinces in the north and the Indian Sea in the south*” (Atalay, 1985, p. 355). Today, Tibet is bordered by the *Uighur Autonomous Region of Xinjiang* and the *Kunlun Mountains* to the north; by *Sichuan region* to the east; by *India, Himalaya Mountains, Nepal and Bhutan* to the south and by *Pakistan and Karakoram Range* to the west. According to some sources, early in history, the capital was in the Yarlung Valley, south of the Tsangpo River. Later it moved to Lhasa. The height of the capital Lhasa is approximately 3,630 meters above sea level. Other important cities of Tibet include Xigatze (Shigatse), Gyantse, Chamdo (Qamdo) and Nedong (Kuan-Chun Lin, 2012, pp. 123-125). In the annals of T’ang Dynasty, Tibet is located about 4 thousand kilometers (eight thousand li) west of the Ch’ang-an. Formerly, during the Han Dynasty, this was the land of the Western Tibetan (Ch’iang) people.

Tibet, in ancient times, had a local administrative structure called Trikor Chuksum. Accordingly, the country was divided into thirteen divisions. Each of these divisions consisted of ten thousand people. Each unit of ten thousand households was known as “Trikor (khri-

skor)”, in addition, Chuksum means “thirteen”. After a while, these definitions disappeared and were replaced by the expression Chol-Kha-Sum (Shakabpa, 1984, p. 2). Although it is not used today, Tibet has been defined by three main geographical regions for very long periods. This is called Chol-Kha-Sum for short. The three regions that make up the name Chol-Kha-Sum are called Dbus-Gtsang (U-tsang)²¹, Kham (Dotod) and Amdo (Domed). In short, from Ngari Korsum to Sokla Kyao, the region is known as *U-Tsang*; from Sokla Kyao to the upper edge of the Yellow River, it’s known as *Kham*; and from the Yellow River bend to Chorten Karpo (White Stupa) it is known as *Amdo* (Shakabpa, 1984, p. 2).

Today, the U-tsang region is considered to extend from the Ngari Korsum²² region on the border of Kashmir to “Sokla Kyao (Sog-la skya-bo)” near the town of “Sog (Suoxian)” and covering most of the Tibet Autonomous Region (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2008). The traditional Kham region extends towards the southeastern direction from the upper reaches of the Yellow River with the town of Sog in the northern part of Tibet Autonomous Region (at the present day), and extends towards the western part of Sichuan province of today (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2014). The Amdo region, which forms the northeastern part of ethnic Tibet, reaches from the upper course of the Yellow River to the northeast to Chorten Karpo (currently in *Gansu* province of China) (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2016). Tibetans say that, the best religion exist in U-tsang; in addition, they say that the best men (or women) come from the Kham region and the best horses from the Amdo region (Shakabpa, 1984, p. 2). The Tibetan Empire began to conquer new places between the 7th and 9th centuries. The country was extended to reach the Tarim Basin to the north, China to the east, India and Nepal to the south and Kashmir region to the west. As the empire expanded, the recently

²¹ Dbus and Gtsang, which form the Dbus-Gtsang region, are the historical provinces during the period of the first kings of Central Tibet (in the 7th century A.D.). Dbus-Gtsang (U-tsang) was one of the three historical sites of Tibet in ancient times. The Dbus area comprised the Skyid-chu valley system in which Lhasa was located, as well as the Yar-klungs and 'Phyong-rgyas valleys in the south side of the Brahmaputra River (called the *Tsang-po* in Tibet). To the west of the Dbus region, there was the province of Gtsang (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2008).

²² Ngari Khor-sum (Mnga'-ris skor-gsum): It is a Tibetan definition, means “the three regions of the western Tibet”. The region called as *mnga'-ris skor-gsum* by the Tibetans is a vast region in Western Tibet stretching from the Himalayas to the Kunlun Mountains (Powers & Templeman, 2012, p. 449; Sørensen, 1994, p. 112).

joined dominions to the west were called as “Mnga’-ris”, and the ones to the east and northeast were called as “Mdo-kham”. Thus, with the expansion of the borders, three important historical regions known as *Mnga’-ris*, *Dbus-Gtsang* and *Mdo-kham* (with the merger of Kham and Amdo Regions) were formed (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2008; Shakabpa, 1984, p. 333). This high-altitude country is surrounded by mountains all over. Kunlun Mountains in the north separate East Turkestan and Tibet. In the west and south, the Himalayan Mountains are the border of Tibet with its neighbors. Mount Everest (Tibetan: Chomolungma) is the highest point in the world with a height of 8,842 meters and it is located on the border of Nepal and Tibet. In Northern Tibet, humans live up to an altitude of 4,876 meters (16,000 feet) the most. In southern Tibet, the settlements with the lowest altitude are around 1,200 meters, but most residents live at altitudes between 2,100 and 3,650 meters (Kuan-Chun Lin, 2012, p. 123; Shakabpa, 1984, p. 3). The southern border of Tibet is surrounded by the Himalayas, the western border by the Karakoram Range, and the northern border by the Altun (in Uighur: Altyn Tagh) Mountains (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2019).

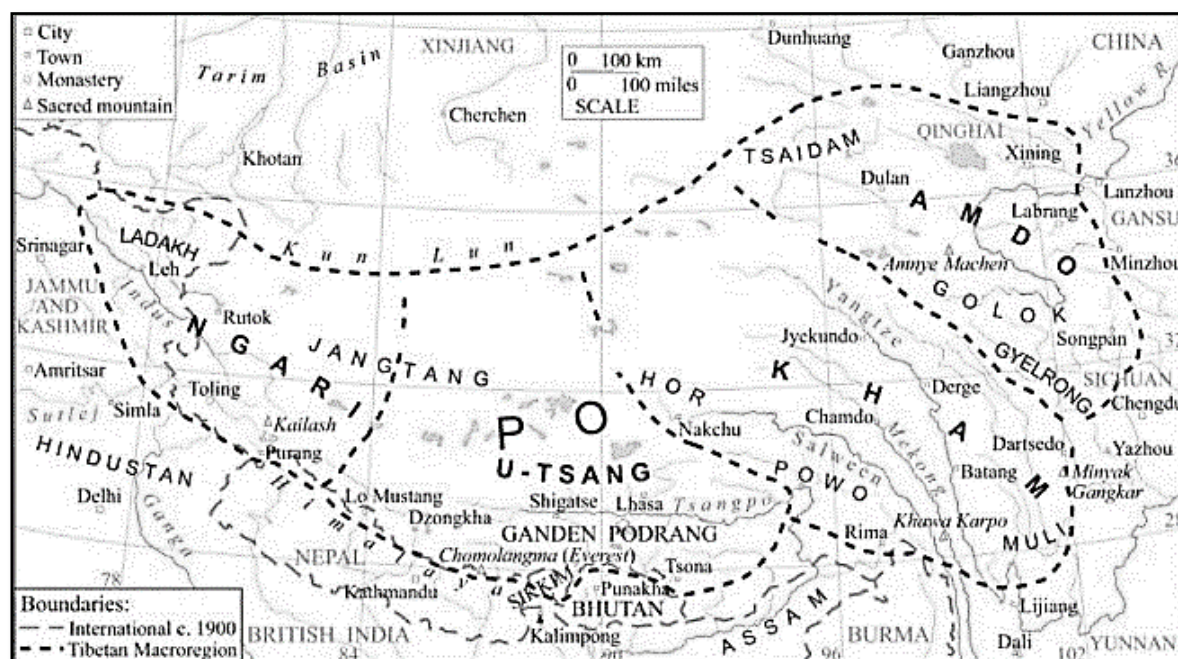


Figure 2. Tibetan Plateau and Macro Geographic Regions (Ryavec, 2015, p. 29)

What is known as the Tibetan Plateau is a very high plateau in southwest China. It covers the entire Tibet Autonomous Region and most of Qinghai province. It extends to the province of Sichuan in the west and to the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region in the south. The plateau, which has an area of approximately 2.5 million square kilometers, is an area formed by mountains and plateaus at an altitude of 4 thousand to 5 thousand meters in general (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2011).

Manasarowar (Ma Pham Mtsho), located in the west and considered sacred to both Buddhists and Hindus, Namuhu (Gnam Mtsho) located in the northwest and Yamdok (Yardok Yutso) located in the center of the region are among the great lakes of Tibet. Surrounded by high mountains and numerous lakes, Tibet is also the source of many great rivers. Tibet's largest river is the Brahmaputra (Tibetan: Tsangpo) River located in the Dbus-Gtsang region. This river runs through the narrow and long valley between the Himalaya and Kailas Mountains. And it crosses the south of the plateau in an east-west direction (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2008; Kuan-Chun Lin, 2012, pp. 123-125).

It is known that in many poetic writings written in Tibetan, the authors call the country of Tibet as “Khawachen” or “Gangjong” meaning “snowy abode” and sometimes “Sildanjong” meaning “land of cold climate” (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2019).

People in other parts of the world imagine that Tibetan people to be living in a place that is snowy and covered with ice, all the time. In fact, it doesn't snow much in Tibet, but when it snows once, it takes a long time to melt. The climate of Tibet changes according to altitude. Generally, the weather is dry and there is a caustic sun. In the higher regions the weather is colder and it rarely rains. However, in the lower places the amount of rainfall is at moderate-level and there is a fairly mild climate. For example, the maximum temperature in the capital Lhasa is 29 degrees Celsius and the minimum temperature is -19 degrees Celsius (Shakabpa, 1984, p. 3).

Tibet is a country rich in plant and animal diversity. Also contrary to popular belief, Tibet is not completely dry and barren, it is rich in forests. In addition, there is wide fertile valleys and it has endless pastures suitable for raising livestock.

3.1.1.3. History of early period

Our knowledge of the ancient history of Tibet is very limited due to the insufficient resources we have. Thanks to the archaeological researches, a certain number of cultures have been identified in this region, whose traces can be traced back to the 2000s BC. The chiefly two of these cultures are the “Yang-shao” culture in the west and the “Lung-shan” culture in the east. The “Yang-shao” culture was seen in North, West and Central-North China, so it is understood to be found in mountainous regions. Traces disappear as you descend to the plain. It is estimated that the ancestors of the Tibetans who maintained this culture lived in neighboring places with the ancestors of the Turks. In East Turkestan, traces of painted pottery belonging to this culture have been found, in this case it is also possible that these were made by Turkish tribes. Today, painted vessels similar to those of the *Yang-shao* culture are still found in some Tibetan tribes. This situation supports the theory that the ancestors of Tibetans and Turks were neighbors in ancient times. In ancient history, the ancestors of Tibetans lived scattered in the province of Sichuan to the west, furthermore Gansu and Shansi (Shan-hsi) regions (Eberhard, 1995, p. 18).

The oldest information about the ancestors of the Tibetans is also what we learned from Chinese sources. According to these sources, the people of Ti, along with the nomadic Ch’iang People, who live in the northwest region of China and are the common name of many tribes, are known as the ancestors of the Tibetans. Although the “primitive ancestors” of the Tibetan-Burmese ethnic group are collectively referred to as the “Ti and Ch’iang people”, however, this issue is still debated today. In the annals, the word Ch’iang is written in one character consisting of “sheep” and “man” symbols and always written the same, as

mentioned before. By the way, the studies of Eberhard reveal that the cultural characteristics of the people grouped as “West Tibetans” are almost identical to the culture of the “Ch’iang” tribes (Hoffmann, 2008, pp. 372-374).

According to the information obtained from the sources, the language and traditions of the nomadic Ch’iang and Ti tribes, who are considered the ancestors of the Tibetans, are similar. According to some academicians, their ethnic origins are the same, and for others, they are related tribes because their traditions and languages are similar. However, a definite judgment has not been reached on this issue. During the Han Dynasty, these tribes generally lived by starting from the north-western parts of China and extended as far as Shan-hsi and Gansu states and their surroundings. However, it is known that Ti and Ch’iang do not live in exactly the same place. The Ti tribes lived in the south of Gansu province and in the mountainous regions that did not cross the northern border of Sichuan province. On the other hand, the Ch’iang tribes lived scattered in the region starting from the Lake Koko-Nor (Tibetan: Tso Ngömpo) to the upper basin of the Yellow River and in the region stretching along the T’ao shui water. Therefore, *Ti* tribes were located closer to China than *Ch’iang* tribes. The Chinese, who organized campaigns on these tribes in time, caused them to migrate to different regions. The annals tell us that almost half of the communities living in the south of the Yellow River during the Jin Dynasty (265 - 316) were Ti and Ch’iang tribes (Otkan, 1989, pp. 778-779).

When we go back to ancient times, it is seen that legends and fairy tales are mixed with the facts. Thus, there is a situation where it is difficult to determine the events that actually happened. According to legends in Tibetan sources, Nyatri Tsenpo (Gnya-Khri bTsan-Po) as the first king of the Yarlung (or Pugyal) Dynasty around 127 B.C. was assigned to the inhabitants of the Yarlung Valley. The first Yarlung King descended to earth with a rope (*heavenly rope*) from the sky. In the legend, it is seen that the king descended from the

sky like a divine being. When the king came down from the sky, he met with the shepherds who were grazing their flocks. They took him on their shoulders, brought him to their country and made the king. This is how the Yarlung Dynasty began, according to the legend.

According to the belief, the Tibetan People lived in caves until their king came down from the sky. It is believed that the first house in Tibet was built by the king who came from heaven, this house is called “Yumbulagang”. The first seven kings of the dynasty are believed to be divine. Namely, after the first seven Yarlung kings completed their mission in the world, they returned to the sky using the rope they landed on earth. Hence, the first seven Yarlung kings to return to the sky are believed to be immortal. It is also believed that these kings did not have a grave on earth (Shakabpa, 1984, p. 23).

Eberhard divided the Ch’iang society into two groups as, those living in the south (in the direction of India) and those living in the north-east direction. In addition, with the information he obtained from Chinese annals, he procured the names of 17 nomadic Ch’iang tribes. These tribes are, *Chang-ch’iu-pa*, *Hsi-hsia*, *Hsi-li*, *Hsi-yeh*, *I-nai*, *Ku-shih-mi*, *Jo-ch’iang*, *Po-chih*, *Po-ho*, *Po-lu*, *P’u-li*, *She-mi*, *Su-p’i*, *Tê-jo*, *Tse-ho*, *Wu-ch’a* and *Wu-lei*.

Unlike the Huns, the Ch’iang tribes had never be united under a tribal federation. On the contrary, there was a distinct tendency to divide among Ch’iang society (Eberhard, 2010, pp. 128-132). As a society, they neither established a relationship of “lord–vassal” nor did they develop a system of control and solidarity among themselves. A Ch’iang community, whose population and power grew to a certain point, would be divided into several tribes, each led by a powerful chief. When a community collapsed, the community in collapse would join to a stronger tribe as followers. According to Chinese sources, General Chao Ch’ung-kuo said about the Ch’iang tribes in 63 B.C.:

It is relatively easy to bring the Ch’iang community under control, because they are divided into many military tribes, large and small, and they always fight among themselves. It

is not in their nature to establish a tribal union (The Cambridge History of China Vol 1 The Ch'in and Han Empires, 221 B.C.-A.D. 220, 2008, pp. 422-423).

Early in the Han Dynasty (206 B.C. – A.D. 220), the Ch'iang people were an important ally of the Huns. Although Chinese sources claimed that the Hun Emperor Mo-tu was trying to drive the “Ch'iang” society away, the similar cultural elements between the two communities were showing that the Ch'iang society might be closer to the Huns than the Chinese. The Han army under Emperor Wu-ti command, moved forward to the Ho-hsi region and the Gansu corridor. Whereby, they did not only aim at removing the Huns from the Western regions, but also away from the Ch'iang tribes. In 88 B.C., when the mighty Hsien-ling tribe sent an envoy to the Huns to form a military alliance, the Huns responded enthusiastically and then sent a delegate to the Ch'iang tribe with the following message: “The Ch'iang tribe have suffered from the expeditions of the Han armies. The Chang-i and Chiu-ch'üan regions, which had fertile lands, were actually ours. It would be convenient for us to make a joint attack on China and to settle in that region.”

Even two centuries after these events, we see that in 122, 138, and 140, the Hun forces still allied themselves with the Ch'iang tribes in the wars against the Han forces (The Cambridge History of China Vol 1 The Ch'in and Han Empires, 221 B.C.-A.D. 220, 2008, p. 424).

3.1.2. Culture in the early period

There is some information we have obtained from Chinese sources about the civilization of the Ch'iang tribes, which are accepted as the ancestors of the Tibetans. There is information about the Ch'iang tribes living in the southern regions, such as they planted wheat, made wheat wine and flour bun, and used clothes and items made of felt. While the Chinese annuals describe Tibetans living in the southwest and at high altitudes, it is stated that they especially make floury buns. In both the Ku-shih-mi and Po-chih tribes, it is stumbled

into a very similar legend (the legend of Dragon Lake) that mentions horses of dragon origin. However, dragons are also found in legends of other societies. For example, in the Iranian and Sogdian legends, there is an assertion that the ancestors of well-proportioned and large breed beautiful horses were dragons. Although *the legend of Dragon Lake* is also seen in the Ch'iang tribe, it is interesting that the Tibetan horses are small breeds, unlike the large breed horses of dragon origin. The Chinese sources tell us again, some information about the civilization of the Ch'iang tribes living in the northeast regions. The material culture items of the Northeast Ch'iang tribes are as follows: They wear clothes made of felt, they wear boots and waist belt, women also wear heavy earrings and they get their hair cut short. In addition, they do fortune-telling with the bones of sacrificed sheep, they fill the human skulls with the alcoholic drink and then drink it (Eberhard, 2010, p. 165). Furthermore, they do not eat horse and donkey meat. When a person dies, a horse or ox is sacrificed, then the head of victim is placed on the grave of deceased. They play the game of chess and dice, and enjoy playing drums. There is also some information about the spiritual cultural elements of Ch'iang tribes. For example, they like horseback riding and don't want to go to war at the end of the month. In addition, the families of those who died in the war are seen as honorable people and valued. In the opposite case, for example, a *foxtail* is worn on his head to show that a person fleeing war is a "coward" (Huang Chi-Huei, 1970, pp. 14-15). It is known that some of these customs are also found in Huns. In addition to all of these, it was observed that they remained under Chinese influence. It is noteworthy that they tried to imitate the Chinese script. Besides they tried to adapt the ceremonies in the Chinese Court and the custom of using surnames to their own society (Eberhard, 2010, pp. 163-165).

3.1.2.1. Polity

Today, although the majority of Tibet is dominated by China, it is a country that is partially autonomous. The first known political structure in the Tibet country began with a

regional kingdom established in the Yarlung Valley. Looking at Tibetan annals on Tibetan history, it is seen that there are two types of sources written according to two different basic traditions. While one of them is the history written according to the “Bon” tradition, the other is historiography under the influence of “Buddhism”. It is understood that these two traditions did not agree on determining the first dynastic member of the Tibetan royal, and they determined different names on this subject. Prior to the advent of Buddhism to Tibet, or according to Bon belief, the first Tibetan king descended from heaven and he was called *O-lde spu-rGyal*. According to the historiography influenced by Buddhism, the first King of Tibet is *Gnya'-Khri-bTsan-Po*, who came to Tibet from India in the 2nd or 3rd century B.C. and established the kingdom. The period that started with the first king was called the Yarlung Dynasty (Wylie, 1963, pp. 93-94).

By the 7th century, the foundations of the kingdom, which would dominate a much larger area than the Kingdom of Yarlung in a short time and would be called the Tibetan Empire, were laid. It is understood that it was recorded for the first time in Chinese annals as the kingdom expanded and attracted attention of the China. At that time, Songtsen Gampo (r. 629–649), a very important figure in Tibetan history, was ruler. After Songtsen Gampo formed a political union by bringing the Ch'iang tribes together, Tibet had expanded the borders of the country with the fruitful policies followed by the kings who came to power in the following years. Thus, it has become a very large Empire. The Tibetan Empire lived in its strongest period until 842. It is noteworthy that in Tibet, which was ruled upon monarchy, a double-headed administrative structure was formed with the increase in the influence of the religion of Buddhism in the society. In the new structure, there were two centers of power: the king in charge of religious affairs and the king in charge of earthly affairs. In the double-headed structure, in addition to the king who deals with the secular order of the country, it is often seen that one of the brothers of the king is appointed as religious leader and is

concerned with the religious order of the country. After the collapse of the empire, many hegemonies, large and small, emerged in the territory of the country, but none of them could establish a central political union. Therefore, after 842, when the Empire collapsed in Tibet, a central administration that unites the whole country could not be established.

Today in Tibet, at the top of the administrative structure is the Dalai Lama, the spiritual and temporal ruler of Tibet. In the structure that has survived from the first Dalai Lama in 1391 to the present day, the person with the title of Dalai Lama is the religious leader of Tibetan Buddhists. In theory, the authority of the Dalai Lama is absolute. However, in practice, he does not use his authority without negotiating with the consultants who help him make decisions. During the absence of Dalai Lama, it is appointed agent by the National Assembly to lead the government (Shakabpa, 1984, p. 21).

3.1.2.2. *Economic life*

Philological evidence indicates that the name Ch'iang (Qiang) is etymologically derived from the root of the Chinese word yang (*means: sheep*). During the Han Dynasty, although the Ch'iang economy was not limited to only herding sheep, shepherding continued to dominate. Chinese annals note that, during the Later Han Dynasty several Ch'iang tribes combined shepherding and farming in border provinces such as the fertile Yü-ku province in the Hsi-hai²³ region and Ch'ing-shan of Gansu, thus carrying out both activities. Furthermore, “wheat” was apparently the main agricultural product of the Ch'iang tribes (The Cambridge History of China Vol 1 The Ch'in and Han Empires, 221 B.C.-A.D. 220, 2008, p. 423).

Today, Tibet's economy is largely based on agriculture. Livestock is common, especially on the Tibetan Plateau, due to the limited arable land. In the north of Tibet, the land is not cultivated as there are no suitable conditions for agriculture, but the region is suitable

²³ At the present day Hsi-hai is located in the “Hui Autonomous Region of Ningxia” in north-central China. Ningxia district is partly adjacent to the province of Shaanxi in the east. It also borders with Gansu province in the east, south and west, and border with the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region in the north (Encyclopædia Britannica, 2019; The Cambridge History of China Volume 1, 2008, p. 423).

for putting animals (sheep and yak) out to pasture. Areas below 3,650 meters (about 12,000 feet) are suitable for agriculture.

3.1.2.3. *Natural resources*

Although Tibet is rich in mineral resources, its economy is underdeveloped. It is stated in the work named “Hudûdü’l-’âlem” that there is gold mine in the country of Tibet. So, the existence of gold deposits has been known since ancient times (Şeşen, 2017, p. 67). In addition to the large gold and borax deposits discovered in the Kailas and Mapam regions in the studies conducted in the 1930s and 40s in Western Tibet, reserves of radium, iron, titanium, lead and arsenic were also discovered (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2019).

3.1.2.4. *Trade and finance*

As it’s known, one of the main routes of the historical Silk Road connecting the west and east passes through the city of Kashmir on both the Tibetan Plateau and Indian Peninsula. For more than a thousand years, people have traveled on dangerous routes for trade, livelihood, adventure, or exchange of ideas. It is known that Tibet has been trading with India, Nepal, China and Kashmir Region since ancient times. It is reported in various sources that Tibetan goods reach up to the Islamic geography. According to Hudûdü’l-Âlem, Tibet had horns of black foxes, sable, gray squirrels and similar animals with commercial value as well as gold mines. In addition, “musk” obtained from musk deer abundant in Tibet is a product with economic value. According to various sources, Tibetan musk was the most valuable among the musk exported from India, China, Kyrgyz region or other regions. Tibetan musk was also being brought from Tibet to the Transoxiana Region and sold to other Islamic cities from there (Şeşen, 2017, pp. 67, 111, 143). Tibetan salt and wool were being bartered with the grain and other agricultural products of the region. This barter has traditionally been going on for centuries or millennia. Moreover, the basis of this trade has been in the hands of various communities, mostly Tibetan speaking, living in the high valleys just south of the Nepal-Tibet

border (Von Fürer-Haimendorf, 1978, p. 339). Ladakh²⁴, has been the main center of important trade networks, both in terms of long distance and local trade. The capital city of Ladakh, Leh, was the most important crossroads for those making transit trade with Tibet. The city had a very strategic location. The city was serving as a very important warehouse. All trade with East Turkestan and Tibet had to pass through this city (Gill, 2000, p. 79).

Export: The major export goods of Tibet were wool, yak-tails, borax, and salt. The other export goods include leather and fur of various animals, Tibetan musk, incense and leaves, herbs, and various medicinal products. In addition, horses, sheep, donkeys, mules and goats were exported to India, Nepal and China every year (Shakabpa, 1984, p. 9).

Import: Imports from India included products such as woolen material, cotton fabric, low-quality silk, cotton, wool, kerosene, glass, and various machinery. In addition to iron and copper, basic materials such as rice, fruit and medicine were also imported from foreign countries. While silk, porcelain, enamel, and ceremonial scarves were purchased from China, copper items and brass were supplied from Nepal. In Tibet, taxes were usually paid in kind, and surplus food, especially grain, was stored in state warehouses (Shakabpa, 1984, p. 9).

Finance: In the early period, the barter system has been prevailed in the business life. Barley grains were used to pay for purchases of all kinds of goods, from horses to clothes. Laterly, silver was used in commercial transactions. But initially, silver was only used according to its weight. As the weights became standard, some kind of currency was developed using these pieces of silver. Nepal coins called “tamka” had been used in Tibetan trade life since 1750s. In 1792, they issued their own coin with Tibetan inscription on it, by using the Nepalese coin as a model. Furthermore, the Tibetan government issued the first Tibetan paper money in 1890 (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2019).

²⁴ Ladakh is a word of Persian origin. The original of the word in Tibetan language is *La-dvags* (*La-dwags*). Ladakh refers to the central parts of the Western Tibetan Kingdom (Francke, 1926, pp. 93, 296), Ladakh is the region in the Indus Valley between “mNa-ris” and Baltistan (Jaschke, 2003, p. 540).

3.1.2.5. *Agriculture and livestock*

The main agricultural region of Tibet is a huge valley located in Southern Tibet which runs from the Upper Indus River Valley in the west, till to the Upper Brahmaputra Valley and stretches for about 1,600 kilometers. Much of the agriculture, livestock and industry of the country are concentrated in this valley, which includes the cities of Lhasa, Shigatse and Jiangzi (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2019). The main agricultural products are barley, wheat, oats, rye and cowpea. Barley, the favorite agricultural crop of Tibetans, yields well even at high altitudes (up to four thousand meters) where it is difficult to grow other crops. Other products include corn, beans, buckwheat, canola, cotton, mustard, and hemp. Trees such as willow, poplar, apricot, peach, pear, apple and walnut are quite common. Strawberries, grapes and mushrooms grow in abundance in the land of the country. Vegetables such as potatoes, cabbage, cauliflower, tomatoes, onions, garlic, celery, radish and turnips are common in low-altitude regions, while mountainous regions have little vegetarian alternatives. Also, wild orchids and other meadow flowers are common. Medicinal herbs and plants are grown throughout the country and in lower altitudes. In the past, annual grain production was more than enough for the population of the country. For this reason, production surplus of the barley and wheat have been stored for 25 to 50 years thanks to suitable climatic conditions (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2019). Many different animal species live in Tibet. In addition to many wild species living in this geography, there are also animal species that make human life easier or are raised as a source for income. Among these, the “yak”, an animal specific to Tibet and called the “Tibetan Ox”, is used in transportation and is important for the nomadic people. Musk, a fine fragrant substance, is produced from the musk deer, a wild deer species living in Tibet. The musk has a commercial value, since it's used in producing perfumes and soaps. Other animals bred in the country include sheep, cattle, goats, camels, donkeys and horses.

3.1.2.6. *Social and cultural life*

Social classes: It can be said that the social structure in Tibet includes three main social classes. The first class, is the nobles. These could also be called as the landowner aristocracy. The noble class can hold senior positions in government offices. The second social class is ordinary people. The other social class is the clergy. Each of these three classes has ratings and subsections. The social classes among the Tibetans were defined by specifying the opposite poles. Such as: the *public* versus the *clergy*, the *noble* versus the *peasant*, the *worker* versus the *merchant*, the *nomad* versus the *farmer*, and the *burgher* versus the *merchant*. Those engaged in agriculture have traditionally established the Tibetan peasant class. Most of them worked as tenants or hired workers in monastic-owned or noble-owned lands (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2019).

Marriage: Traditional marriage ceremonies were a process that began with interviewing both a clergy called a lama and an astrologer to determine a couple's compatibility. Following the marriage contract, signed by both parties, an official ceremony was held in the house of bridegroom. There was no obligation to hold the marriage ceremony at the temple or before official authority. In ancient times, “polygamy” practice was observed, albeit on a limited scale. Today, monogamy is dominant (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2019).

Death: When a death occurs, the family members donate to a charity in hopes of providing a better reincarnation to the deceased. When an important religious figure dies, his body is preserved in a tomb or in a place called stūpa (Buddhist memorial monument). When a member of the public dies, according to tradition, it is needed that the corpse was to be fed to the vultures, this practice is called the “sky burial” or the “celestial burial”. The burial ceremony, performed by throwing the dead body into the river (water burial), is practiced in some regions. There are also traditions of interment (*burying beneath the ground*) and *cremation*, but these are rare practices (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2019).

Calendar: In ancient times, the Tibetan calendar was based on a twelve-year cycle. Each of these years was expressed as an animal. These were mouse, ox, tiger, rabbit, dragon, snake, horse, sheep, monkey, bird, dog and pig. This twelve-year cycle was used until the 11th century (Shakabpa, 1984, p. 17).

Others: A white scarf is preferred in celebrations, shrine visits, marriage and death ceremonies, and other similar occasions by the participants. This tradition derives from the old tradition of offering clothes to decorate statue of God. The presentation of the “white scarf” symbolizing purity has gradually turned into a greeting style and has become a tradition. Another tradition is that prayer flags are hung on roofs, tents; hills and almost everywhere Tibetans are present. These flags are believed to bring wealth and good luck (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2019). The gathering of the people at religious festivals is one of the concrete examples of Tibetan culture. See below the picture of a large crowd gathering for a religious holiday in 1998:



Figure 3. Ganden Monastery, Central Tibet (Ryavec, 2015, p. 33)

3.1.2.7. Food and drink

The basic Tibetan meal is a type of food that is consumed daily and made from roasted barley. Other major nutrients include cooked goods made from wheat flour, yak meat, mutton and pork. Dairy products such as butter, milk, and cheese are also common. Tea and the barley beer called chang (or chhaang) are popular beverages. People living at higher altitudes generally consume more meat than those living in low altitudes where a variety of vegetables can be found. Rice is generally consumed by wealthy families, southern border farmers and monks (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2019). Except for the imported goods of rice, tea, some fruits and sweets in early times, the country was self-sufficient in food supply. Surplus food, especially grain, was being stored in government warehouses. It was estimated that the grain reserves were sufficient for three years in case of famine. Since food items are stored in state warehouses, there was no shortage of hunger in the country before the Chinese invasion (Shakabpa, 1984, pp. 9-10).

3.1.2.8. Clothing

It is said that the first kings of Tibet wore a turban-like headdress. Besides they dress long and loose robes and wear shoes with toes indicated upward. It is believed that this type of clothing would be originated with the kings of Persia. Originally the robes of Tibetan lama and monks were Indian-style clothing, but later changed to suit the harsh and cold Tibetan climate. In the early period, Tibetan soldiers wore armored clothing. However, they began to wear cotton clothes in the 17th century. The military uniform was modeled in the British style after 1916, but from 1947 it was gradually modified to suit the Tibetan style (Shakabpa, 1984, pp. 20-21).

3.1.2.9. Language

Although Tibetan language is made up by modeling one of the Indian dialects, there is no similarity between Tibetan and Indian or Tibetan and Chinese. The current Tibetan

alphabet is derived from the Brāhmī and Gupta dialects used in India, with a history dating back to 350 (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2019).

3.1.2.10. Religion

Bon is considered to be the oldest local faith in Tibet that has survived to the present day. It is stated in the written sources of early period that, the Bon religion was founded by a person named Shenrab Miwo in Western Tibet. For some, the Bon religion is a simple belief system of prophecy, penance, votive, excommunication, and similar folk beliefs. For others, it is seen as a more complex religious system involving priests called Bon-po who are believed to have supernatural powers (Shakabpa, 1984, p. 13; Schaik, 2013, p. 241).

There are also other religious groups who do not accept the Bon as a first religion. According to this view, there was a religion called “Gcüg” in Tibet long before the Bon religion. According to the *Gcüg* religion, kings were believed to have divine power. It is believed that the first seven kings of Tibet came from the sky and rose back to the sky after completion of their work on earth. Therefore, they do not have a gravestone. It is said that this religion, which has complex but consistent rules itself, has matured under the influence of Iran. However, it is seen that there is not much information about the details of this religion in most of the sources (Roux, 2001, pp. 153-154). Buddhism first came to Tibet in the 7th century, from Nepal and India. However, the real spread of Buddhism started in the 8th century. It cannot be said that Buddhism spread to all of Tibet at once. On the contrary, it took time for harmonization. It was introduced to the country in a certain period by Buddhist monks and teachers invited from various countries. The main Buddhist sects seen in Tibet are as follows: Nying-ma-pa, Ka-gyu-pa, Sa-kya-pa and Ge-lug-pa (Shakabpa, 1984, p. 13).

The Tibetans must have felt grateful to the Indian and Nepalese clergy who taught them this religion in the early years when they started learning the religion of Buddhism. As a matter of fact, it is stated in historical sources that they presented gifts made of pure gold to

Buddhist temples in Nepal and India in order to bring important clergymen to their countries (Shakabpa, 1984, p. 9).

3.1.2.11.Arts

In means of arts, Tibet is best known for its scroll paintings decorated with religious images called “thang-ka”. Figures or idols made of metal, and wooden block prints are also popular. It is noteworthy that art culture is intertwined with religion. In painting, for example, there are three categories of images that represent peaceful, moderate, and angry gods. Apart from these, there are dance types called the *gar* and the *'cham*, performed by Buddhist priests and where the behavior, attitude and gestures of the gods are enacted. Ancient legendary stories and historical events were carefully staged outdoors in the form of opera, musical and drama. The folk songs and dances of the local regions are colorful and simple but full of joy. The shows called “*bro*” of the Khams region, “*sgor-gzhas*” of the Dbus-Gtsang peasants and the “*kadra*” of the Amdo region are staged, and these performances last a few days at festive occasions (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2019).

3.1.2.12.Sports

In ancient Tibetan tradition, it was popular to compete in the three-mile foot races. Also, Tibetans enjoyed swimming. Racing in rivers against the current was a show of endurance. Equestrian sports and archery contests were also among the favorite sports (Shakabpa, 1984, pp. 19-20).

3.2. After the Foundation of the Political Union

3.2.1. Zhang-zhung period

It is known that the nomad and shepherd “Ch’iang” community could not come together and establish a real state until the beginning of the seventh century. However, the T’u-yü-hun (Tibetan: Thogon, Tho-yo-gon) State, whose people consisted of Ch’iang tribes of northeast region; but whose ruling family was Hsien-pi originated, could be considered an

exception, albeit partially. It is known that the ruling family of the state called itself as A-ch'ai (Tibetan: A-zha) and this name was mentioned as "A-zha" in Tibetan literature (Hoffmann, 2008, p. 373; Venturi, 2008, p. 24). According to the ancient sources, the Zhang-zhung was the old name given to all of the Western Tibet, including the Gu-ge region. Therefore, contrary to the information in some sources, Tucci says that the territories named Zhang-zhung and Gu-ge were not synonyms (Tucci, 1956, pp. 71-75). According to the ancient historical documents of Bon priests (called Bon-po), before King Nyatri Tsenpo, there was a Zhang-zhung Kingdom that ruled the entire country of Tibet. When the King Nyatri Tsenpo appeared at first in the history, eighteen kings of Zhang-zhung had come to power. Later, in the Yarlung Valley, a clan named "*Bod-ka g.yag-drug*" appeared. The name of the clan in the Tibetan language is shortened to "Bod". Hence, prior to the rise of the Bod clan, Zhang-zhung was the name of a great empire that covered all of Tibet. As the Zhang-zhung Empire started to decline, a Kingdom known as Bod (or Tibet) emerged in the Yarlung and Chongyas valleys. The attempts that continued for several centuries from Nyatri Tsenpo to the reign of King Namri Songtsen finally paid off and in the 7th century this clan (Bod) established a powerful empire (Norbu N. , 1981, pp. 27-30; Thar, 2009, p. 28).

3.2.2. Yarlung Dynasty

The period of Yarlung Dynasty is known as the period before the tribes living in the region united to become a powerful Tibetan Empire. In Tibetan chronicles and other written sources, there are different names about the name of the first legitimate king of Tibet. As mentioned earlier, the legend about the birth of the Tibetan Kingdom is conveyed differently by the Bon Priests and differently by the Buddhist Priests. Although the name of the king and where he came from is controversial, according to the ancient historical documents, the first

king of the Yarlung (or Pugyal) dynasty, Nyatri Tsenpo (Gnya-Khri bTsan-Po²⁵), came to power around 127 B.C. (Wylie, 1963, pp. 95-96). There is no detailed information about the kings who came to power after the death of the first Yarlung King. A list of later Tibetan kings has been given in the old historical annals. However, both the names of kings and the genealogy are controversial. However, since the King Namri Songtsen (gNam-ri Srong-brtsan), known as the thirty-second Tibetan King, the events became clearer. Namri Songtsen is thought to have ruled between 570 and 620. King Namri Songtsen is recorded as “*Slon-btsan rlung-nam*”, in the ancient Dun-huang documents. The aforementioned Namri Songtsen wanted to unite the Ch’iang tribes that lived in dispersed ways. His son, who ascended the throne after him, was able to realize this dream (Hoffmann, 2008, p. 376).

According to Beckwith, in the Old Tibetan Chronicles, it is stated that King Namri, after defeating a vassal of the Zhang Zhung Kingdom, directed his conquests west to the region called *Rtsan-bod*. As one can see, the name “Bod”, later used as the general name for all of Tibet in Tibetan sources, is used here to refer to a conquered region. In ancient times the name *Bod* meant only a part of the Tibetan Plateau. When the word “Bod” used in conjunction with the word “Rtsan”, which later changed into “gTsang”, it has meant Central Tibet. In the following years, Central Tibet has now become known as *Dbus-gTsang*. The first kings of Yarlung were southerners, as they themselves say. Coming from the south, they first conquered Central Tibet and then the entire Tibetan Plateau except for the allied areas (Beckwith, 1993, p. 16). Thirty-one kings who came to power in the Yarlung Dynasty are known to have ruled only in the Yarlung Valley during their reign. But the thirty-second King of Yarlung extended the domain of the kingdom; hence the kingdom also ruled the middle part of the Tibetan Plateau (Beckwith, 1993, pp. 16-17). Thus, the 32nd King Namri Songtsen moved the capital of the country from Yarlung Valley to the Kyi-chu Valley and then formed

²⁵ It is regarded as the first ruler of Tibet in Buddhist sources (Huang Chi-Huei, 1970, p. 4). However, according to the Bon belief, the first Tibetan king was O-lde-spu-rgyal who descended from the sky (Wylie, 1963, pp. 95-96).

the new settlement as the capital, called as Rasa. Subsequent kings built a royal fortress on Mount Marpori within the Rasa enclave. And then after a while they changed the name of *Rasa* province to *Lhasa*. Lhasa, today the capital of Tibet, has grown on this basis (Kuzmin, 2011, p. 12).

3.2.3. Tibetan Empire

The dynasty established by the Bod clan in the Yarlung Valley grew stronger and began to dominate the region. After a while, Tibet began to be ruled by two separate kingdoms, the “Zhang-zhung” and the “Bod” kingdoms. It is known that the Bod Kingdom, which emerged in the Yarlung Valley, expanded from the 7th century and later took over the whole of the Tibet (Norbu N. , 1981, pp. 27-30). After the beginning of the Yarlung Dynasty firstly appeared on the stage of history, many generations passed and at last, the 32nd Tibetan King gNam-ri Srong-btsan (570–619) was seen at the head of the Kingdom of Tibet. Presumably in 617, the son of the King Namri Songtsen, Songtsen Gampo (Srong-btsan sgam-po) was born. One year after the birth of Songtsen Gampo, the T’ang Dynasty was founded (618–907) by the Emperor Li Yuān (Kaot-su). Although the information about the date of birth of Gampo is not certain, there is some information that he was born in the year of the ox according to the Tibetan calendar in old Buddhist documents. Therefore, the year 617, which is the year of the ox, is likely to be the birth date of Songtsen Gampo. In addition, it is stated in the sources that Gampo ascended the throne at the age of 12 or 13, in 629 or 630 (Shakabpa, 1984, p. 25; Sørensen, 1994, p. 199). Please see below the map of the Tibetan Empire between the 7th and 9th centuries:

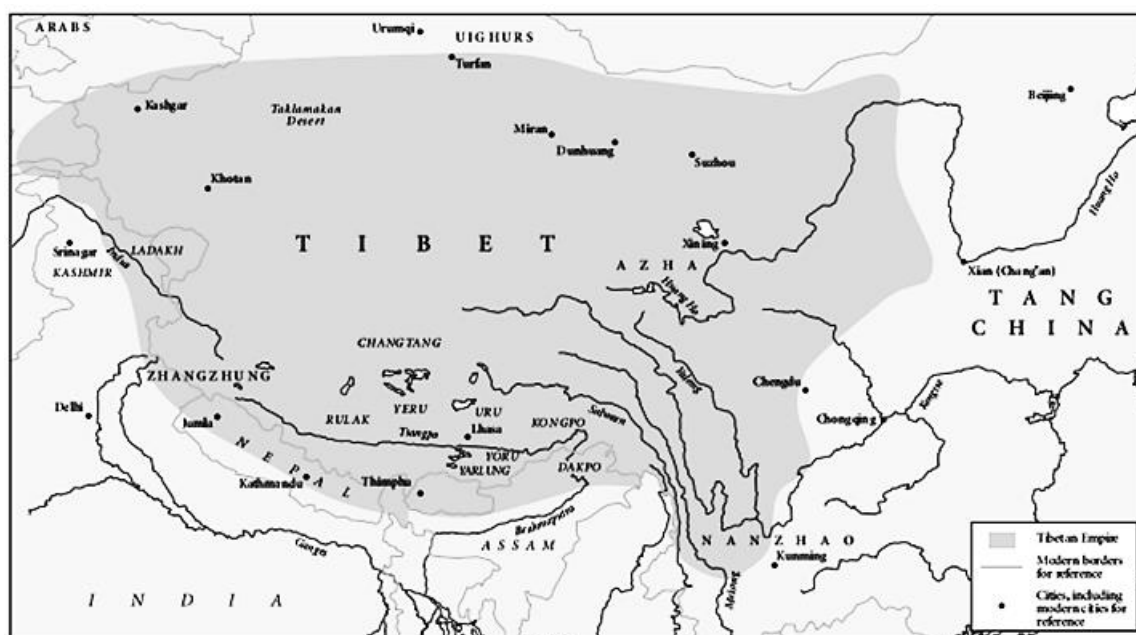


Figure 4. Tibetan Empire Between the 7th and 9th Centuries (Schaik, 2011, p. 20)

The historical sources tell that the King Namri Songtsen killed by poisoning. After the king (btsan-po)²⁶ was killed, internal turmoil arose in the country. However, the new king who took the throne found those who caused the death of the previous emperor and punished them with death. Although he was a ruler at a young age, this first success was a sign of his abilities that he will display in the years to come (Hoffmann, 2008, p. 377). Songtsen Gampo is the thirty-third king of Tibet. Furthermore, he is considered to be the founder of the Tibetan Empire. A few years after Gampo came to power, he sent a letter to the King of Nepal with gifts in company. In the letter he sent with his ambassador, he stated to the Nepalese King that he wanted to marry with his daughter, Princess Bhrikuti Devi. The king accepted the request of Gampo for marriage, married his daughter to Gampo. Nepalese Princess of Buddhist belief brought Akṣobhya Buddha statue with her while coming to Tibet. Tibetans who saw the Buddha statue considered it sacred (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2019).

Songtsen Gampo went to an expedition to the northwest, firstly. The king, who attacked on the T'u-yü-hun State, defeated them and added the Koko-Nor region to the

²⁶ Tibetan kings are called as “btsan-po” (Huang Chi-Huei, 1970, p. 10).

borders of the Tibetan Empire. And then laid them under tax. The reason for this rush attack made by Gampo to the T'u-yü-hun is not understood. But at that time there was a situation that caught the attention of the Tibetans. This was that both T'u-yü-huns and Turks could easily obtain marriage permission with Chinese princesses. Although the marriage demand of T'u-yü-hun State was accepted by China, the request of the Tibetan King to marry a Chinese princess was denied. Thus, the Tibetans may have attacked the Tu-yü-huns out of resentment over this marriage issue (Hoffmann, 2008, pp. 377-378).

Songtsen Gampo wanted to develop his country culturally. At that time, Tibetan tribes spoke different dialects from each other. Lack of language unity in the country was causing problems. Also, Tibet did not have a unique alphabet. Gampo gave importance to this issue and started to work on the creation of Tibetan alphabet. For this purpose, he sent Thon-mi Sam-bhota, one of the statesmen working in the palace, to India accompanied by 16 men, to learn and study the Indian (Sanskrit) language and then to form the Tibetan alphabet. After a long period of travel and research, Sam-bhota laid the foundation of Tibetan writing and grammar (around 632), by taking the Brahmi and Gupta scripts as an example. When he returned to Tibet, he worked with the fifty Indian letters, and then he created the Tibetan alphabet by thirty Tibetan consonants and four Tibetan vowels. It is known that Sam-bhota wrote eight books on Tibetan grammar. However, only two of them have reached to the present day. After the introduction of the written language, the new alphabet became common to all Tibetan tribes and played an important integrative role.

During the reign of Songtsen Gampo, three doctors from neighboring regions were invited to the country. These are: *Bharadhadza* from India, *Hen-wen* from China, and *Ga-le-nos* from the place known as Tazig or Khrom. The doctors brought to the country by the king translated medical texts written in their own languages into Tibetan language and presented them to the king. After a while, while Indian and Chinese doctors returned to their countries,

Ga-le-nos, who came from Tazig country, did not return to his country and remained as an imperial doctor in Tibet. Ga-le-nos was named 'Dzo-ro in Tibet. Due to his successful and egalitarian approach to fulfilling his duty, he was given the title of "healing doctor". The three sons of Ga-le-nos also became doctors by training in medicine and established the medical tradition in three different regions of Tibet (Garrett, 2007, pp. 373-377).

As it is known, during the Chou and Sui Dynasties (557–618) that ruled in China, Tibet had not yet established an official relationship with China (Bushell, 1880, p. 440). The first official relationship of Tibet with China is thought to have started in 634. The King of Tibet sent an envoy to the China Palace in 634. After a while, T'ang Emperor sent his envoy named Fêng-Tê-Hsia to Lhasa, the capital of Tibet (Huang Chi-Huei, 1970, p. 19). The Tibetans, aware of the good relations between T'u-yü-hun and the States of China, conveyed to the Chinese ambassador that their king wanted to marry a Chinese princess. The King of Tibet wanted to establish an alliance with China through his marriage to the Chinese princess. Evaluating the demand of the King of Tibet, Chinese officials stated that they were at war with Hsien-pi and the Turks and that they made the alliance agreement by marriage to end the wars. However, they were not at war with the Tibetans, so there was no point in making an alliance agreement. Thus, the King of Tibet was unable to establish a diplomatic marriage he desired. Angry at the negative response of the Chinese Emperor, the King of Tibet invaded a Dangsyang²⁷ village in Xuizhou District in September 638. During the occupation, a Tibetan ambassador came to the T'ang capital and threatened the Emperor with attacking China (Kuzmin, 2011, p. 13). This incident accelerated the decision of the T'ang Dynasty to make peace with the King of Tibet.

King Songtsen Gampo of Tibet repeated his wish to marry a Chinese princess in 641 by sending an envoy to the Chinese Empire. Tibetan embassy delegation returned with good

²⁷ Dangsyang (or *Dangxiang*): They are the ancestors of the Tangut People (Kuzmin, 2011, p. 13).

news. In March 641, Emperor T'ai-tsung (626–649) agreed to send his own nephew, the royal princess Wen-Ch'eng Kung-chu, as a bride to the Tibetan ruler in order to establish a marriage alliance with Tibet. However, due to the unfavorable travel conditions of the period and the long distance, the journey of the princess and her entourage to Tibet took several years. Princess Wên-Ch'eng was only able to marry Songtsen Gampo in 646 (Ecsedy, 2004, p. 93; Kuzmin, 2011, pp. 13-14). During the Princess Wên-Ch'eng came to Lhasa, she brought personal use items such as silk, porcelain and a statue of the Gotama Buddha²⁸ (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2019).

By the way, the Tibetans have conquered a part of upper Burma, which is now called as Myanmar. Then in 640 they conquered Nepal and stayed there for a few years. Family names such as *Tsang*, *Lama*, *Sherpa* and *Tamang* seen in Nepal today are of Tibetan origin and are inherited from the Tibetans who once occupied Nepal (Shakabpa, 1984, p. 27).

According to historical Bonpo records, the first queen of King Songtsen Gampo was the royal Princess named Lithigmen of Zhang-zhung Kingdom. However, after a while, it is understood that there is a dispute between the two countries. King of Zhang-zhung, Ligmigkya, was ambushed and killed by the soldiers of King Songtsen Gampo on his way to the city of *Sum-ba* (in Amdo province). As a result, the Zhang-zhung Kingdom came under the rule of Tibet in 643 or 645 (Norbu N. , 1981, pp. 29-30; Shakabpa, 1984, p. 27; Stein, 1972, pp. 58-59). Thus, King Songtsen Gampo became the sole ruler of the Tibetan Plateau (Beckwith, 1993, p. 20).

Songtsen Gampo, who started working to establish a new administrative organization structure in his country, divided the kingdom into six governorates (khospon) and appointed six governors to them. In addition, according to the newly created system, occupational classes such as servants and farmers were rearranged. One person per thousand families is

²⁸ His full name is Śākyamuni Gautama Buddha, he is considered the founder of the religion of Buddhism (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2019).

appointed as spokesperson. Each governorship had its own military unit; In addition, distinctive uniform, flag and horse colors were determined to distinguish regional governorships from each other (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2019).

Songtsen Gampo had a son named Gungsong Gungtsen. While his father was still alive, his son ascended the throne at the age of 13. However, the unfortunate young king was only able to serve for 5 years because he died at a very young age. When his son died, Songtsen Gampo returned to his former duty which is to be the king. Songtsen Gampo built a walled city called *Ra-sa* for his Chinese wife who was a royal princess. Later, this city was named *Lhasa*, which means “*the place of the gods*” (Hoffmann, 2008, p. 379).

According to some lama historians, he is considered to be the first king to introduce Buddhism to Tibet. Dun-huang documents report that Songtsen Gampo died in 649. However, some Chinese sources report the date of death as the year of 650 (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2019; Huang Chi-Huei, 1970, p. 26).

Gampo initiated the creation process of Tibetan alphabet and grammar, thus enabling the new religion to be understood by being read from the books. He expanded the borders of his empire to the limits of Nepal, the T'u-yü-hun State, the Western Tibet region and other tribes living on the border with China (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2019).

After the death of Songtsen Gampo, his grandson Mang-Song Mangtsen took the throne at a young age. Since Mangtsen was emperor at a young age, Gar Yulsung Tongtsen (mGar sTong-brtsan), one of the reliable ministers of Songtsen Gampo, a member of the Gar clan, carried out state affairs as regent until his death in 667. Gar Tongtsen had four sons. One of his sons became prime minister, while the other three came to the higher ranks in the army. It can be said that the Gar family was instrumental in the progress of Tibet in the 7th century (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2019; Kuzmin, 2011, pp. 15-16).

The King of Tibet sent an embassy to the Chinese palace in 658 and asked to marry a Chinese princess. However, it could not get a result. Meanwhile, the T'u-yü-Hun State has always good relations with the Chinese Empire. The Chinese Emperor always responds positively to the marriage demands of the T'u-yü-Hun King. This issue may have opened the gap between Tibet and T'u-yü-Hun States. As a result, the Tibetans organized a campaign against the T'u-yü-Huns in 660. The King of T'u-yü-Hun, who was defeated in the war, left his country with his wife, a Chinese princess, and took refuge in Liang-chou province of China around the year 663. Meanwhile, the T'u-yü-hun people had to leave their country after their escaper king. Then they came towards the Chinese border and settled in Liang-chou province (Huang Chi-Huei, 1970, p. 38).

Thus, while the only buffer state (T'u-yü-hun) between Tibet and the Chinese countries disappeared, Emperor Kao-tsung was stunned by this. With the subjugation of the T'u-yü-hun State, Tibet gained free access to the Gansu border regions and also the Tarim Basin (The Cambridge History Of China Volume 3, 2008, p. 285).

Meanwhile, the year 670 was marked by military victories for the Tibetans. The Tibetan army, which moved towards the Tarim Basin in 670, captured many provinces in the Western Regions of China (Hsi-Yü). Tibetan forces attacked to the north with the help of the King of Khotan and Turkish forces and captured Kucha and Aksu in 670 (Huang Chi-Huei, 1970, p. 40). Thus, China lost the control of the Four Garrisons in An-hsi. Tibet has got the control of almost the entire Tarim Basin and the southwestern mountains by the end of 670. China lost the sovereignty of outposts close to the border in East Turkestan (Kuzmin, 2011, p. 15).

When the T'u-yü-hun people, who took refuge in China, caused trouble for T'ang, the Chinese Emperor was looking for a remedy so that they could be sent back to their country. Emperor Kao-tsung told his senior commanders and ministers at the meeting he held in his

palace in 669 that he was thinking of organizing an expedition to Tibet. However, when the statesmen disagreed with his opinion, the Tibet expedition was postponed to a later date.

The T'ang Dynasty lost the Four Garrisons in An-hsi. Emperor Kao-tsung worried about this. For this reason, the idea of organizing an expedition to Tibet, which statesmen did not approve of came to the agenda again, in the meeting held in the palace the previous year. After the approval of the Tibet expedition, the Chinese Emperor sent an army of hundred thousand warriors under the command of General Hsieh-Jen-Kuei (Xue Zhengui), over Tibet in August 670 to recapture the Four Garrisons. After the tough wars, the Chinese Army was defeated. The Tibetan army under the command of Triding Gar defeated the Chinese in the battle at the Ta-fei Ch'uan²⁹ location. This war is the first major Sino-Tibet war in the T'ang Period. Angered by this defeat, Emperor Kao-tsung reduced the ranks of General Hsieh-Jen-Kuei. The hopes of the T'u-yü-huns, who trusted the Chinese dynasty, to return to their homeland in the Koko-Nor region after this war were dashed. Thus, the country of T'u-yü-hun was literally taken over by the Tibetans (Huang Chi-Huei, 1970, pp. 40-41; Kuzmin, 2011, p. 15).

In 671, another Chinese Army under the leadership of a Chinese commander named Chiang K'o embarked on a campaign against Tibet. However, General K'o died on the way, so the military expedition was canceled and the army returned to China. Meanwhile, Tibetan king Mang-Song Mangtsen sent his minister named Jang-jig, who speaks Chinese, to T'ang Court as an envoy. The Emperor of China asked the ambassador some questions about Tibet and got information from him. The emperor asked the envoy why Tibet was attacking China. Ambassador Jang-jig returned to his country, saying that he had been sent to the China Palace only to give gifts and had no knowledge of other matters.

²⁹ It's presumed that Ta-Fei-Ch'uan is a river located somewhere south of the Koko Nor (Beckwith, 1993, p. 33).

The T'u-yü-hun society was placed in the southern parts of the Hao-Wên-Shui River by the T'ang Dynasty in 672. However, after a while they were transferred to Ling-Chou where was thought to be safer. The region where they live was named An-Lo-Chou, which means "a safe and happy place", and their chief was appointed as the governor of this place (Huang Chi-Huei, 1970, pp. 41-42).

The control of the Tarim Basin by Tibet was not very safe for the kingdoms here. Probably for this reason, the kings of Kashgar, Khotan and Karashahr, who fought with Tibet and their Western Turkish allies during the period of 673–675, once again offered their allegiance to the T'ang Dynasty. Thus, the An-hsi Protectorate was re-established (The Cambridge History Of China Volume 3, 2008, pp. 285-286).

Tibetan forces raided Shan-chou and Kuo-chou cities of Gansu province in 676. During the raid, they slaughtered a large number of local people, pillaged and seized the loot. The Emperor of China sent Prime Minister Liu Jen-kuei towards the T'ao-ho region and Commander Li Yu on a campaign towards the Liang-chou region. But the Tibetan forces acted swiftly, and while the Chinese troops were not yet on their way, they raided the towns of T'ieh-chou, Mi-kung and Tan-ling in Gansu. Hearing this, the T'ang Emperor summoned his commanders in front of him. The emperor severely reprimanded his commanders for failing to march the army in time, because this caused the loss of many northwestern towns (Shakabpa, 1984, p. 31).

Tibetan ruler Mangsong Mangtsen died in 676. The Tibetans kept the death of their king a secret for three years. Thus, the Chinese would not know that there was an authority vacuum in Tibet. When the king died, the young queen was pregnant. The heir of the deceased king was born shortly after his death (Shakabpa, 1984, p. 31).

Dusong Mangje (*Khri 'dus-srong Mang-Po-rje*), the heir to the deceased king, was informed about his father's death when he was three years old. It is known that Mangje

remained on the throne between the years 676 and 704. In addition, the Zhang-zhung Kingdom of Tibet revolted in 677, but this rebellion was eliminated the following year. In the last quarter of the 7th century, the military power of Tibet was being sharply felt in neighboring countries. Tibet defeated Chinese forces at Koko-Nor in the summer of 678. After this event, the war between Tibet and China stopped temporarily due to the death of the rulers of both countries and the subsequent local events (Kuzmin, 2011, pp. 15-16).

Meanwhile, China had increased its influence on the alternative road to the west, running along the Dzungaria and the Ili Valley in the north of the Tien-shan Mountains. The influence of China in the region continued until 677, when the Tibetans, together with the Western Turks, occupied the Tarim Basin again. In 679, the Chinese armies defeated the Western Turks and captured the Western Turkish Kaghan, then advanced to capture Tokmak. In the same year, the Tibetans were expelled from the Tarim region and the “Four Garrisons” (this time the city of Tokmak was included instead of Karashahr) were once again established (The Cambridge History Of China Volume 3, 2008, p. 286).

According to Chinese sources, Mang-Song Mangtsen passed away in 679. After his death, Princess Wen-Ch’eng died also in Tibet (in 680). Wen-Ch’eng, mentioned earlier, is a royal Chinese princess who came to Songtsen Gampo in 641 as a wife. Emperor Kao-tsung sent an envoy for the funeral of Princess Wen-Ch’eng, who was respected for his contribution to China - Tibet relations (Huang Chi-Huei, 1970, pp. 51-53).

T’ang Emperor Kao-tsung died in 683. When the former Emperor died, he was first replaced by Chung-tsung, who ruled in power for a year. Later, the brother of the queen namely Jui-tsung (684–690) ascended the throne. However, during the short reign of these two kings, Empress Wu Zhao (624–705), wife of the deceased emperor Kao-tsung, took control of the country. Ultimately, Wu Zhao (Wu-Hou) declared his rule by seizing the

Chinese throne in 690, at the age of 65. Empress Wu Zhao (Wu Zetian), who ruled for 15 years, is the first and only female ruler of the Chinese Empire.

The Tibetans attacked the city of Kucha³⁰ (in modern Xinjiang) in 687. The Chinese sent an army in the summer of 689 to help their allies in Kucha, who were defeated by the Tibetans. Again, in 692, another T'ang military unit under the command of Wang Xiaozhe, was sent to the area. Shortly after that, the Tibetans withdrew from the Kashgar area. It is unknown why Tibetan forces retreated.

In the following two years, the Chinese who were allied with the Turks, defeated the Tibetans on their northeastern and western borders. However, the Tibetans also dealt a serious blow to the Chinese around Lanzhou in 695. After this victory, Tibet offered a treaty to China. Accordingly, they were threatening to disconnect the western borders from the rest of the China, if they did not accept the terms of treaty. The Chinese, who were aware of the internal turmoil in Tibet at that time, tried to prolong the peace negotiations, hoping that the Gar clan, which was very successful in wars, would weaken. The Tibetan King Dusong Mangje, who had trouble with the Gar Clan, attacked to the Gar clan in 698. Approximately two thousand people belonging to the clan were caught and executed. The King regained his political struggle with the Gar Clan and his reputation in the country. After this process, the foreign policy of Tibet continued where it left off (Kuzmin, 2011, p. 16).

Tibet resumed attacks in Lanzhou and in the north-east in 700 and 701. Over the following few years, there were intermittent periods of negotiation between these wars. In 703, revolts broke out in Nepal and Northern India where were under the rule of Tibet. Chinese Sources state that Dusong Mangje died in a place called as Myava when he was on his way to suppress the riots, in 704 (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2012; Kuzmin, 2011, p. 16).

³⁰ Kucha is a town at the foot of the southern slope of the Tien-shan Mountains and in the northwestern side of the Uighur Autonomous Region of Xinjiang. Kucha, which was captured by the T'ang Dynasty in 648, had been the government center of the An-hsi Protectorate by 649 (The Cambridge History Of China Volume 3, 2008, p. 227).

Upon the death of Dusong Mangje, Tride Tsugtsen, who was only seven years old at the time, succeeded her father on the throne. However, because he was not mature of age, his grandmother Trimalo took over the role as regent of the king. Tride Tsugtsen is known by the nickname Mes-Agtshom (means: old hairy) given to him in his old age because of his bearded appearance. During the reign of Mes-Agtshom, three temples, Drakmar Dinzang, Chimpu Namral and Drakmar Keru, were built in the south of Lhasa. The grandmother of Tsugtsen named Trimalo, made a request to China for the continuation of the alliance through marriage. The demand of Tibet was accepted by the T'ang Dynasty. In 710, it was decided to send Princess Chin-Ch'eng, daughter of T'ang Prince Li Shouli, to Tibet as a bride. As the Emperor sent the royal princess Chin-Ch'eng Kung-chu to Tibet, he hoped tensions between Tibet and China would ease and border wars would decrease; but this hope did not come true (Shakabpa, 1984, p. 33).

During the period of Emperor Hsüan-tsung, the Tibetan and the Arab forces made alliances against to China at times. During this period, China increased its military operations in order to control the advance of the allied army. It is seen that Islamic historians describe Tibet as "*Tubbat*" and the King of Tibet as "*Tubbat Khan*" in the records of this period. So, Tibet has attracted the attention of early Islamic historians (Şeşen, 2017, pp. 67, 135).

According to Barthold and many other historians, the word "*Tüpiüt*" is found in the Orkhon Inscriptions. It is known that during this period, trade relations were established between Tibet and the Muslim world, especially due to the musk trade (Shakabpa, 1984, p. 34).

Tibet made a peace treaty with T'ang in 718 and did not come up with the act of hostility against China for five years approximately. However, after a long period of time, the Tibetans attacked the area called Hsiao-P'o-lü (Little Bolur)³¹ for an unknown reason around

³¹ Little Balür, called Hsiao P'o-lü (Little P'o-lü) in Chinese sources, is now located in the Gilgit region of Pakistan (Huang Chi-Huei, 1970, p. 17). The region named *Bru-sa* or *Bru-zha* in Tibetan chronicles is presumed

722. The ruler of the city sent an envoy to Chang-Hsiao-Sung, who is the Commander of the Pei-t'ing Garrison, and asked him for help. Thereupon, the Emperor of T'ang dispatched Chang-Szu-Li, who is the deputy commander of the Kashgar region, to the region with an army of four thousand men. The army of the Chinese commander had a force of about four thousand men composed of Turkish and Chinese soldiers; this military unit quickly came to Little Bolur. In the war that took place here, the Tibetan army was tightened by the army of the King of Little Bolur (Mo-Chin-Mang) on the one hand and the Chinese army on the other hand by the blockade, and consequently defeated. The Tibetan army retreated after suffering many casualties (Huang Chi-Huei, 1970, p. 79).

The Tibetan army attacked the city of Gilgit in 736. By the time, the Chinese attacked the Tibetans in the Koko-Nor region in 737. After that, conflicts started to widen. The Tibetans have begun to attack the Chinese borders again. Tibet, which captured the Chinese town of Xipa (in the Gilgit region), held it until 748. The Chinese were able to take back the city of Xipa only between 747 and 750, by sending a large army to the west (Kuzmin, 2011, p. 17).

The Tibetans made various military alliances during the time of Trisong Detsen. At that time there were small kingdoms in Southeast Asia. For example, with the merger of six "Tai" originated kingdoms in the region, the Nan-Ch'ao (Nanzhao) Kingdom, whose center is now called Yunnan, was established. Piluoge, the ruler of the small tribal state of Nanzhao, allied with China, which needed an ally against the aggressive Tibetans, while expanding its control over the remaining five neighboring kingdoms. In 750, Geluofeng, son of the former King Piluoge, appears to be in power (Shakabpa, 1984, p. 43). Although an alliance with China was established before, it is understood that the alliance broke down in the following years. As a matter of fact, China has attacked the Nan-Ch'ao Kingdom twice in 751 and 754.

to be the same region with the one known as Little Bolur (Balûr/Bolor?). In addition, according to Beckwith, Bru-za (or Bru-sha), is the Tibetan name of Little Balûr (Beckwith, 1993, p. 116; Hoffmann, 2008, p. 381).

However, these attacks have been repulsed (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2012). Thereupon, the king Geluofeng, who was oppressed by the continuous raids of China, asked the king of Tibet for help. Thus, an alliance was made between the two countries and King Geluofeng received the title of “little brother” from Trisong Detsen in 754. Having received the support of Tibet, the Nan-Ch’ao Kingdom repulsed the Chinese forces in 754. Besides, the Chinese army withdrew from the region due to the internal turmoil in China. After this date, the T’ang Dynasty had to deal with the uprisings within its country for a long time. Luckily the Nan-Ch’ao Kingdom did not have to deal with the Chinese threat in this process (Gumilev, 2019, p. 435; Shakabpa, 1984, p. 43).

At the end of 747, the Turkish General Kosu³² (Qosu) Han who was formerly deputy of General Wang Chung-ssu, was appointed as the military governor of the Lung-yu Garrison. Kosu Khan, on the orders of Emperor Hsüan-tsung, by leading a massive army of 63 thousand men from the garrisons such as Lung-yu, Ho-hsi, Shuo-fang and Ho-tung Garrisons³³ attacked to a Tibetan city named Shih-pao Ch’eng (in 749). Although the Chinese side gave great casualties in the war, it captured the castle-city. Tibetan General T’ieh-jen Stag-sgra and four hundred men of the Tibetan army were captured at the end of the war. Emperor Hsüan-tsung gave generous awards to Ko-shu Han and his family for their achievements (Beckwith, 1993, pp. 130, 134; The Cambridge History Of China Volume 3, 2008, pp. 425-426).

Meanwhile, Tibet has continued to lose on the battlefield. The Tibetans suffered serious losses on both fronts in the wars with the Chinese Army. Ko-shu Han, attacking the Hung-chi and Ta-mo-men cities of Tibet in the summer of 753, took over both cities. Thus, in

³² It is believed that Ko-shu (Qosu or Tutuk?) Kaghan, who is a tribal leader from the Nu-shih-pi branch of the Turgish clan, was a vassal of the China (Huang Chi-Huei, 1970, p. 100).

³³ The Emperor of China Hsüan-tsung established ten military garrisons within the framework of the military reforms he planned. Of these, Lung-yu Garrison is located in Southern Gansu, it was established against the threat of the Tibet (The Cambridge History Of China Volume 3, 2008, p. 467). The Ho-hsi Garrison is one of the ten military garrisons established by Hsüan-tsung. It is stated that the purpose of China in establishing this garrison was to cut the connection between Turks and Tibetans. The Shuo-fang Garrison, another of the ten garrisons, was established against the Turkish threat. Another garrison, Ho-tung Garrison, was established to reinforce the Shuo-fang Garrison (Gumilev, 2019, pp. 437-438).

753, Ko-shu Han, who again inflicted a great defeat on the Tibetans, took most of the area known as the nine bends region of the upper Yellow River (Beckwith, 1993, p. 141; The Cambridge History Of China Volume 3, 2008, pp. 432-433).

The T'u-yü-huns, who were expelled from their homeland by the Tibetans in 663, could not return to their country, despite the aid of T'ang Dynasty. When the city of An-Lo-Chou (where the T'u-yü-huns domiciled), was conquered by Tibetan forces around 757, the T'u-yü-hun people obliged to advance into the land of China, by crossing the Yellow River. The T'u-yü-hun community, who were expelled from their homeland by the Tibetans in 663, could not return to their country, despite the aid of the T'ang Dynasty. It is thought that the T'u-yü-huns have disappeared inside the Chinese community, after the ninth century (Huang Chi-Huei, 1970, p. 42).

Meanwhile, around 755, Tibet had major internal problems. This situation did not go unnoticed by the Chinese. In 755, the King of Tibet, Mes-Agtshom, died. Most Tibetan sources say that the king died after falling from a startled horse in a place called "Yardok Batsal". However, according to the inscription of the pillar called "Shol-do-ring" standing in front of the Old Potala Palace (in Lhasa) and erected during the reign of Trisong Detsen (755–797), the King Mes-Agtshom was assassinated by the two Tibetan ministers named Bal Dongtsap and Langme Zig. After the death of Mes-Agtshom, his son Trisong Detsen (Khri-srong-lde-btsan) became king in 755. It is known that; the Empire was at its peak during the reign of King Trisong Detsen. And the Tibetan Army had many successes by organizing expeditions to China. Like his father and grandfather, Detsen was the protector of Buddhism and he tried to stimulate the spread of religion. However, he faced with the opposition from some of his ministers who were devoted to the Bon religion (Shakabpa, 1984, p. 34).

As is known, there had been a turbulent period in China that started with the An Lu-shan rebellion in 755 and continued for a long time. In 755, An-Lu-shan, the Sogdian origin

Chinese General who controlled three of the north-eastern Commanderies of China, launched a massive revolt. The rebellion continued even after the death of An Lu-shan. Ultimately, the rebellion was suppressed in 763. The help from the Uighur Turks had a great effect in suppressing this rebellion. During this rebellion, the Chinese government, which pulled most of its garrisons on the Central Asian border from the front, left the vast Hexi³⁴ and Longyou regions vulnerable to attacks by Tibetans, who had long been in conflict with the T'ang. In addition, the Chinese had abandoned important positions in southern Manchuria while dealing with the rebellion. In addition, the Chinese Garrisons were withdrawn to defend the capital. Under the circumstances, Tibetan forces, taking advantage of the preoccupation of China (in suppressing the rebellions), took over all northwestern (present-day Gansu) regions (The Cambridge History Of China Volume 3, 2008, p. 17).

Tibetan King Trisong Detsen put an army of 200 thousand under the command of four generals called Shangyal Lhanang, Shangchim Gyalzig Shultheng, Takdra Lu khong and Lhazang Pal. He commanded them to command this army, pass through the T'u-yü-hun country and then attack China. With this incident, the tension between the two countries has reached a peak. Advancing towards China, the Tibetan army attacked the city of Ching-chou. Kao Hui, the governor of the city, surrendered to Tibetan forces. Shortly after that, the place named Feng-t'ien-huen in Pin-chou was captured by Tibetans. Thereupon, Emperor Tai-tsung (763–804) sent General Kuo Tzu-i with a large army to stop the advance of Tibetan army, but the Chinese army had to withdraw (Shakabpa, 1984, p. 39).

The Tibetans successfully occupied the Chinese capital (Ch'ang-an) in 763, and held it on hand for several weeks. Because they found it difficult to stay in the heart of China, then advanced their troops westward, then won even greater victories on the Silk Road. In the following two decades, almost all of the major oasis cities and towns in the Gansu Corridor

³⁴ The west of the Yellow River is called as Hexi region (Jidong & Yang, 1998, pp. 99-102).

came under the rule of the Tibetan Empire. A striking fact about this period is that Dun-huang is the place that has resisted the invasion of Tibet for the longest time, even though the city is farther from the capital Ch'ang-an than most Hexi cities. It provided shelter for many T'ang civilians and soldiers who survived the war or fled other states. Even more noteworthy is that, the Tibetans have been very tolerant. They did not force the inhabitants of Dun-huang to leave the area. They accepted the following wish of the community that is: the inhabitants would surrender if it's accepted to stay in their homes. This was a customary policy that the Tibetans followed in the places they conquered. Tibet dominated Dun-huang between 786 and 848 (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2019; Jidong & Yang, 1998, pp. 99-102). The following mural shows General Zhang Yi-chao and his army, celebrating his victory with the expulsion of Tibetan occupiers from Dun-Huang in 848:



Figure 5. Dun-huang, Cave 156, After a military victory (Jian, 1999).

Over the next decade, Tibetans attacked the Chinese borders every autumn. These raids created serious security, logistical and morale problems for China. The Tibetan threat has grown stronger due to the unpredictable attitude of the so-called friendly Uighurs. Tibetan forces captured most of the modern state of Gansu and remained there from 763 to 840. The Chinese border outposts in the Tarim and Dzungaria Basin have been disconnected from the

major cities. Later, these places were also invaded by Tibet (The Cambridge History Of China Volume 3, 2008, p. 36).

After the An-Lu-shan rebellion, the T'ang Dynasty lost control on most of the region it ruled. Not only did the country lose part of its land to Tibetans, Qarluqs and Uighurs, but also a large part of China gave up paying tax to the T'ang Dynasty. Again, in China, sometime after the suppression of the An-Lu-shan rebellion (765), there was another rebellion attempt in which the name of the Chinese General Pu-ku Huai-en of Turkish origin was mentioned. As a result of a series of events that took place after 763, P'u-Ku Huai-en was misunderstood by the T'ang Court and as a result, he was subjected to a number of accusations. General Huai-en, heartbroken when his superior services to the Chinese Empire were forgotten, began to cooperate with the enemies of the China in the following years (Onay, 2018, pp. 506, 509).

P'u-ku Huai-en, in the ninth month of 765, set off with an army of about 200 (or 300) thousand people from Tibet, Uighur, Nu-la, Tang-hsiang, Ch'iang and T'u-yü-hun tribes. And the army moved forward to south. According to his plan, the Tibetan forces would move from the north, the Tang-hsiang from the east, and the T'u-yü-hun and Nu-la tribes from the west. Uighur forces would follow the Tibetans and then join them at a predetermined location. Taking action in line with this plan, the army plundered Chinese regions close to the capital, such as Feng-t'ien and Feng-shui (Baykuzu, 2014, pp. 394-395). Thereupon, this event was heard in the Chinese capital and an atmosphere of fear and anxiety prevailed. The Chinese army had just emerged from the An Lu-shan rebellion, had lost a large number of soldiers, and was economically very weak. For these reasons, the rebellion initiated by P'u-ku Huai-en created fear. However, due to the untimely death of P'u-ku Huai-en, the rebellion did not succeed. Meanwhile, the Uighurs made a secret alliance with China in return for some economic benefits. According to the treaty, they were responsible to expel the army of General P'u-ku Huai-en from the occupied region. Five days after the alliance with China, the

Uighurs caught up with this army of fleeing Tibet and other tribes. In the steppe, there has been a war between the parties, near the Ling-t'ai town. At the end of the war between the parties, the rebels were defeated. The corpses of around 50 thousand Tibetans among the rebels have spread around. At the end of the war, thousands of people (different information on this number are available in various sources) were captured, and countless animals (such as horse, ox, sheep, camel) were captured. In addition, around 5 thousand Chinese prisoners held by the rebels were rescued. The Tibetan Ch'iang tribes inside the rebellion army of P'u-ku Huai-en, surrendered to the Uighurs (Baykuzu, 2014, pp. 398-399).

Nan-Ch'ao King I-mo-hsun asked Tibet for help against the Chinese threat in 778. After Tibet accepted this request for help, the kingdom went to war with China. In the war with China around Sichuan (Szechwan), Tibet and Nan-Ch'ao troops fought side by side against the Chinese. After the war, Tibetan troops remained in Nan-Ch'ao for about eight years. Later, when friendly relations were established between the Nan-Ch'ao Kingdom and China, Tibetan troops returned to their countries (Shakabpa, 1984, p. 43).

In 779 Chinese forces defeated Tibetan forces in the south. However, the northern regions of the Chinese, who were at war with the Uighurs around the same time, remained vulnerable. This situation caused the Tibetan forces to attack from the north. As a result, Tibetan forces captured Dun-huang in 780 (Gumilev, 2019, p. 486). By 781, settlements such as Hami City, Lanzhou, Ganzhou and Suzhou, Dun-huang District were all under the rule of Tibet. The T'ang Empire had lost its most important route to the west. According to the assessment of Chinese historians, the Helan-Shan Region, north of the Yellow River, stood out as a neutral zone (Kuzmin, 2011, p. 18).

A few years after the events, in 783, peace negotiations took place between Tibet and China. The negotiations resulted in the Ch'ing-shui (Qingshui) agreement, which determined the borders between the two countries. According to the treaty, all land in the Koko-Nor

region normally west of T'ao-chou and the Ta-tu River, were ceded to Tibet (Shakabpa, 1984, p. 41). Thus, the T'ang Empire recognized the de facto sovereignty of the Tibetans over the Helong region, while accepting that the control of the Western regions has been lost. After the Tibetans signed the treaty, they helped put down a rebellion (led by Zhu Zi) in China. China promised the Tibetans control over the An-hsi and Pei-t'ing regions in exchange for their aid, but did not keep this promise. Tibet, in turn, attacked the T'ang fortress in Ordos and approached the capital Ch'ang-an in 787 (Kuzmin, 2011, p. 19).

As the Chinese dynasty was concerned about the expansion of Tibet towards the northwest, it signed an alliance with the Uighur State in 788 to get defense support. The worries of China turned out to be true. After a while, Tibet declared war with its ally Nan-Ch'ao Kingdom against China in the Sichuan region. Wei Kao, the commander of the Chinese forces, thought it was difficult to defeat these two armies and made a plan. Thanks to successful plan of Kao, allied powers have fallen to each other. After this incident, the Nan-Ch'ao army withdrew from the war, and the Tibetan army, which was left alone, was defeated in 789 and had to withdraw from Sichuan (Gumilev, 2019, p. 492). Tibet also fought with the Uighurs and Arabs in the following years. As a result of these wars, it captured a significant part of East Turkestan around 791 (Kuzmin, 2011, pp. 18-19).

Towards the end of Trisong Detsen's reign, the domain of Tibet expanded into distant countries. Tibet was Expelled from the Four Garrisons of An-hsi (in 692) by the army of Empress Wu. However, in 790, it took over the garrisons again. The Tibetan army advanced to the west towards the Pamirs and reached the Amuderya River. To better understand the extent of the distance they have reached, it is sufficient to know that a lake to the north of the Amuderya River was named Al-Tubbat³⁵ (Hitti, 1970, pp. 208-209).

³⁵ The lake in the region was named "Al-Tubbat" Lake, meaning *the Little Tibet* Lake (Hitti, 1970, pp. 208-209).

A few years later, the Arab caliph, Hārūn al-Rashīd, realizing that the Tibetans were getting stronger, made an alliance with China to keep them under control. Attacked by allied Chinese - Arab forces, the Tibetans managed to survive without significant territorial loss, despite their defeat. In the period between 785 and 805, Tibet's military operations were directed towards the western regions. It is striking that the military interest of the Tibetans has shifted from the Chinese borders to the Arabian borders in the west. Thus, there are not many problems left in the borders of China compared to the past (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2019; Norbu D. , 2001, p. 133).

By the end of 789, Tibetan forces advanced in the direction of Pei-t'ing. This event is described in Chinese sources. In the Karabalghasun Inscription, there are detailed explanations about the Pei-t'ing Battle in the period 790-791. In the "*Uighurs*" and the "*Tibetans*" chapters of the Old T'ang Annals, there is information about these battles (Ecsedy, 1964, pp. 83-84).

By the year 795, after a series of battle and struggles, it is seen that the Uighur army thwacked the Tibetan forces in the region of Pei-t'ing. And the attacks of Tibet stopped, which had been struggling for supremacy in the region since the end of 789 (Gumilev, 2019, p. 496). Thus, the tough struggle between Tibet and the Uighur States, which had been competing for political and military supremacy in the Tarim and Dzungaria Basins from the middle of the 8th century, came to an end. During the rule of Alp Kutlug Bilgä Kaghan, the Uighurs defeated the Tibetans and pushed them to the south. By the year 797, it is seen that, Tibet was no longer be effective in Pei-t'ing (Klyashtorny, 1988, p. 280).

It can be said that the Kingdom of Tibet was at its peak in the late 8th and early 9th centuries. It is seen that the term *Bod Chenpo*, which means "*Great Tibet*", was used for Tibet of the period in Tibetan historical records. However, while this was the case, from the end of the 8th century, some cracks began to appear in authority of Tibet over other countries

(Kuzmin, 2011, p. 39). For example, the ruler of Nan-Ch'ao became the vassal state of the T'ang Dynasty, declaring that he would not obey Tibet from now on (Gumilev, 2019, pp. 492-493). At the same time, Tibet, was being squeezed from the north by the Uighur State, which made a “marriage alliance” with the T'ang Dynasty (Kuzmin, 2011, p. 19).

King Trisong Detsen retired from state affairs in 797 and went to Zungkar to live. Then he left the state affairs to his second son, Muni Tsenpo. According to sources, Trisong Detsen died in Zungkar the following year. According to another source, King Trisong Detsen was shot to death during a horse racing event he was attending with an arrow shot through the audience (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2019).

During the Trisong Detsen period, a policy of spreading Buddhism to the people was followed. Because at that time the majority of the people believed in the old religion. The King worked to spread Buddhism to a wider audience with the training given by the Buddhist monks he invited to his country. This process continued with the declaration of Buddhism as the state religion in 779 (Roux, 2001, p. 157).

During his reign, Trisong Detsen (Khri srong lde btsan) commissioned the translators in his country to translate medical texts incoming from India, Tazig and China. Besides, Trisong Detsen requested support from neighboring countries on this issue and invited some well-known doctors to her country. Thereupon, nine doctors from India, Kashmir, China, Iran (Tazig), Drugu (here refers to the *Turkish country*), Dolpo and Nepal came to Tibet. These doctors were recognized in Tibet as the “*Nine Doctors of the Empire*”³⁶. Although the doctors were offered to stay in Tibet permanently, after a while each of the nine returned to his/her country. When King Trisong Detsen fell ill and fell to bed, he thought he was nearing the end of his life. He then recalled the imperial doctors who had returned to their countries. But of

³⁶ Nine doctors of the empire are pronounced in the Tibetan language as “*rgyal po'i bla sman dgu*” (Garrett, 2007, p. 375).

the recalled doctors, only the Chinese Doctor “Stong-gsum gang-ba” has returned to Tibet (Garrett, 2007, pp. 373-377).

There is conflicting information about the period of time that King Muni Tsenpo remained in power. Some sources say it ruled for about a year and a half, while others say that it ruled for seventeen years. There are different discourses on this subject among Western historians. Some claim that Muni Tsenpo ruled from 797 to 804, while others claim he remained in power for only eighteen months between 797 and 799. However, given the large number of operations attributed to him (such as three social reforms), it appears that the eighteen-month period is too short to complete these tasks (Shakabpa, 1984, p. 46).

The exact date of the enthronement of his brother Tride Songtsen, who became king after the death of Muni Tsenpo, is unknown³⁷. However, it is known for certain that he was on the power as the king in 804. He was often referred to as “*Sadnalegs*” in Tibetan sources. During the reign of Tride Songtsen, the Tibetan army continued to harass the Arabs in the west. According to Al-Yaqubi, Tibet besieged Samarkand, the capital of Transoxiana. The second son of Harun al-Râshid, called Al-Ma’ mûn, came to a visit to make a treaty with the Tibetan Governor of Turkestan. A statue of gold and precious stones was presented to him as a gift (Shakabpa, 1984, p. 48).

King Tride Songtsen had five sons. These are: Tsangma, Darma, Tritsug Detsen (also known as Ral-pa-can), Lhaje and Lhundup. The firstborn son was a monk, and the last two died in childhood. When King Sadnalegs died in 815, the ministers did not see him as heir to the throne, as they thought that Darma, one of the sons of Sadnalegs, to be irreligious, rude and hot-tempered. Thus, the pro-Buddhist Tritsug Detsen (Ral-pa-can)³⁸ was appointed as the head of the country (Shakabpa, 1984, pp. 48-49).

³⁷ There are two different prediction about the enthronement date of Tride Songtsen as 799 and 804 (Shakabpa, 1984, p. 48).

³⁸ Ral-pa-can is counted among the three most important kings of Tibet. Its name is also known as Khri-Gtsug-lde-brtsan (Khangkar, 1993, p. 17).

During the reign of Ral-pa-can, three valuable Buddhist clerics from India were invited, having appointed two Tibetan translators (*Kawa Paltsek and Chogro Lui Gyaltsen*) to work with the Indian clergy who came to his country. The King gave them the task of correcting the errors in the Buddhist texts that were translated into Tibetan in ancient times. These experts have standardized the terms used to translate Buddhist concepts from Sanskrit. The first Sanskrit-Tibetan dictionary was compiled at that time. This dictionary is called *Mahāvvyutpatti* and is a mandatory tool for translators of Buddhist texts (Shakabpa, 1984, p. 49). After King Ral-pa-can ascended the throne, he sent his troops under the command of Hrangje Tsen to the Chinese border. The Buddhist monks in both countries (China and Tibet) did not want a war to break out. So, they demanded compromise. Upon this, both countries sent their representatives to the border. As a result of the meeting between the representatives of the two countries in 821, it was decided to make a peace treaty (Shakabpa, 1984, p. 49).

As it is known, the T'ang Dynasty was mortally wounded by the riots in the 8th century. For this reason, he never again took a strong presence against the Tibetans. The last China-Tibet treaty of the period was signed in 822, under oaths. Thus, the border between China and Tibet determined by Tibet was ratified and accepted by two states (Schaik, Tibet: A History, 2011, p. 42). The traces of the 821-822 treaty signed between Tibet and the T'ang Dynasty have survived. The famous pillar bearing the inscription of the Sino-Tibetan treaty stands in front of the "Ta Chao Ssu" temple in Lhasa. The treaty was first signed by the Chinese in 821 in Ch'ang-an and in 822 by the Tibetans in Lhasa with a ceremony. Although the 821-822 treaty does not contain precise information about the regional boundary between the two states, according to the treaty, the States of Tibet and China protected the territories and borders they had at the time (Li, 1956, pp. 6-7).

King Ral-pa-can died in 836³⁹ as a result of an assassination against him (Shakabpa, 1984, p. 51). It was recorded in the historical annals that King Ral-pa-can was strangled by his ministers named “Be” and “Chogro” (Schaik, Tibet: A History, 2011, pp. 45-46). In some sources, it is claimed that his brother Lang-Darma, who was the head of the anti-Buddhist party, was involved in the assassination of Ral-pa-can (Bell, 1997, p. 28).

After the assassination of King Ral-pa-can, the influence of Buddhism in the country weakened considerably. Buddhism was revived at the end of the 10th century, during the reign of the former King of Ngari, Ye-shes-'od.

Lang Darma was enthroned by pro-Bon ministers without any opposition. After the enthronement of the king, Be Gyaltore was appointed as Prime Minister, Be Taknachen as Minister of Internal Affairs, and Nanam Gyatsa Trisum as Minister of Foreign Affairs. The statesmen who came to power in the period of Lang Dharma made laws to abate the Buddhism doctrine. Darma was nicknamed “*Lang (Bullock)*”⁴⁰ by the public. Because the society did not like the way he treated people and religion. Wanting to eliminate Buddhism in Tibet, Lang Darma was only effective in the center of the country. The king of Tibet, who ruled a very large country, could not reach the distant corners of the country, so the same effect was not seen everywhere.

By 842, the persecution to the Buddhist religion increased so much that, a Buddhist monk, decided to do something about it (Shakabpa, 1984, p. 52). Lang Darma, who could only stay on the throne for three years, died in 842 as a result of the assassination by the monk (priest) named *Lhalung Palgye Dorje* (Gumilev, 2019, p. 547; Kuzmin, 2011, p. 21; Shakabpa, 1984, p. 52).

³⁹ The date of death of the King Ral-pa-can is shown as 838 in some of the historical sources (Vitali, 1996, p. 195).

⁴⁰ It is understood that the words *Glang* or *Lang* used in front of the name of King Dar-ma are nicknames. It is understood that the original of the word was read as “*Glang*” or “*Lang*” by different linguists while it was transferred from Tibetan to Latin. In various “Tibetan-English” dictionaries, it is seen that the words *Glang* and *Lang* are the equivalent of the English word “bullock”. The Turkish meaning of the word *bullock* is “genç boğa” (Bell, 1920, p. 61; Jaschke, 2003, pp. 80, 617).

3.2.4. Era of fragmentation and local principalities

The royal genealogy, which followed a steady sequence before the death of Lang Darma, seems to have ended with his death (Bell, 1997, p. 30). It is generally accepted that the Great Tibetan Empire began to collapse after the assassination of Lang Darma. Thus, the end of a long Dynasty has come. Chinese historians point out that the disagreement between competing generals who served on the frontiers, disrupted the unity of Tibet, as from the second half of the 9th century (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2019).

It was discussed that in the period of Lang Darma there was an attempt to eradicate the Buddhist belief in Central Tibet. However, with the collapse of Buddhism in the region, there is no evidence that the Bon religion has strengthened its influence. It would not be realistic to point out the battles for religion as the cause of the collapse of the Greater Tibetan Empire. The main reason for this collapse was the struggle for supremacy of the noble families selfishly without thinking about their country. These struggles did not benefit the local noble families. On the contrary, some of the long-established noble families of Tibet disappeared and a new generation of families emerged in their place. Thus, the history of Tibet changed its course as a whole and it turned into the history of religious groups and sects (Hoffmann, 2008, p. 392). After the death of King Lang Darma, internal riots broke out in the country. Darma did not have an heir, the statesmen who took advantage of this, after the death of the king, enthroned the three-year-old nephew of Chên, one of his concubines, meaninglessly. In historical annals, from a general named K'ung-Jê (*Khrom-bžer*, *Blon Gun bžer* or *Shang-K'ung-Jê*), who was the temporary governor of a town near Gansu Province during this period (was also a member of the “*Dbā*” clan), is frequently mentioned. Blon K'ung-Jê, who was originally tasked with suppressing the rebellions in the region, sent a manifesto to the surrounding tribes while working on duty. In the manifesto, it was stated that a person who was not of the lineage of kings took the head of the country and that the new administration

eliminated the honest statesmen of the country. For this reason, he declared himself the minister of the state, stating that the injustices should be put to an end. Blon K'ung-Jê moved the community to revolt against the king with this manifesto. It is understood that K'ung-Jê considers himself as a minister and introduces himself as a minister to everyone with his thought that he will be the king of the country in the future and his increasing ego. Therefore, in historical records, it is seen that the title "blon", which means "minister" in Tibetan language, was placed before his name. Blon K'ung-Jê gathered about ten thousand horsemen from the surrounding tribes who supported him. In addition, he pulled the commander-in-chief of the Koko-Nor Garrison into its ranks, initiating a rebellion in 842. In 847, taking advantage of the death of the Chinese Emperor, he made an alliance with Tangut and the Uighurs and attacked the Ho-hsi region of China. In the war, the Sha-t'o Turks were the pioneer force of the Chinese army commanded by Wang-Tsai. According to Chinese Annals, Blon K'ung-Jê and his collaborators were defeated and fled. K'ung-Jê fought several times with Zhang (Shang) Pei-Pei who was the Commander of the Shan-Chou District Garrison, in the following 848 and 849 years. Defeated in the last one of these wars, Zhang Pei-Pei fled to the west of Kan-Chou with about three thousand men, leaving the Shan-Chou District to his deputy named T'o-pa Huai-Kuang (Richardson, 1957, p. 72). Blon K'ung-Jê, who visited the T'ang Court in 851, hoped that the Chinese Emperor would recognize him as the King of Tibet, but this expectation failed. K'ung-Jê, who was welcomed at the Chinese Court like an ordinary embassy delegation, resented this situation and planned to attack China on the way back. As a matter of fact, he attacked to China, shortly after his visit to the Chinese capital. However, it is told in the historical annals that he failed and fled to Kuo-Chou (Huang Chi-Huei, 1970, pp. 188-191).

In the last decade of the 9th century, the Tibetan Empire began to lose land from its country. Meanwhile, the Chinese Empire took action to recapture the regions it had lost to

Tibet. Taking advantage of the internal turmoil in Tibet, the T'ang Dynasty occupied and took hold of ten towns where is inside the borders of today's Gansu city in 851. Thus, these lands came under the rule of China as before. Dun-huang city also left Tibet in 851 and tied up to the T'ang Dynasty. A Chinese governor of Tibetan origin has been appointed as head of the city (Kuzmin, 2011, p. 21). In 857, a Tibetan commander named Shang-Yen-Hsin took refuge in the T'ang Dynasty with tribes living in Ho and Wei provinces. In 861, the city of Liang-Chou was captured by the Chinese commander Chang-I-Ch'ao and taken back from Tibet. And then it came under the rule of China (Gumilev, 2019, p. 548).

In the meantime, the Wun-Mo tribe, a tribe once employed by the Tibetan People as slaves, gave tax to the T'ang Dynasty for the first time in 862. This means that the Tibetan Empire has become so weak that the slaves were able to unite into a tribe. Even they developed to the level to pay taxes to the Chinese Court (Huang Chi-Huei, 1970, pp. 191-192).

Meanwhile, Blon K'ung-Jê, who was in Kuo-Chou, aimed to attack China by bringing the surrounding tribes together. However, after the unsuccessful expeditions, he got lost its former power. Zhang-Pei-Pei left the garrison duty in Shan-Chou city to his assistant named T'o-pa Huai-Kuang while fleeing. After a while (in 866), Huai-Kuang has learned where Blon K'ung-Jê is hiding from its enemies. When the opportunity he expected came, he went to Kuo-Chou with about five hundred soldiers and captured K'ung-Jê there. Afterwards he executed him. After the execution, he sent the decapitated head of perhaps the last known high-ranking representative of the Tibetan Empire to the capital of T'ang Dynasty⁴¹. The surviving followers of Blon K'ung-Jê fled to China but were captured there. Beckwith says

⁴¹ The issue of the nationality of the person who killed Blon K'ung-Jê seems to be a controversial issue. Sorensen, in his testimony based on old Tibetan historical records (*Yar-lung Jo-bo'i chos- 'byung*), said that the person who killed K'ung-Jê was not *T'o-pa Huai-Kuang*. He was "*Pho-ku bTsun*" who was a General of Sog-po, instead of T'o-pa Huai-Kuang. In addition, he preferred to read the word "*Sog-po*" existed in the Tibetan text, as "*Uighur*" (Beckwith, 1993, pp. 169-172; Huang Chi-Huei, 1970, pp. 191-193; Richardson, 1957, pp. 76-77; Sorensen, 1994, pp. 422-423). However, Vitali uses the word Sog-po in Mongolian meaning (Vitali, 1996, p. 415).

that the word “T’o-pa” at the beginning of the name of T’o-pa Huai-Kuang mentioned in this incident is a common clan name among Tanguts. For this reason, he states that we can assume that Huai-Kuang, who killed Blon K’ung-Jê, was a Tibetan of Tangut origin (Beckwith, 1993, p. 170). However, in some historical sources, there are assertions that the person who killed Blon K’ung-Jê was a Uighur chief or general (Bushell, 1880, p. 526; Hoffmann, 2008, pp. 388-389; Sørensen, 1994, pp. 422-423).

For the Chinese, the last remaining trouble from the Tibetan danger, with the death of Blon K’ung-Jê was thus eliminated. The famous historian Ssü-ma Kuang says that after the murder of Blon K’ung-Jê (in 866), Tibetan power came to an end (Hoffmann, 2008, pp. 388-389; Huang Chi-Huei, 1970, pp. 192-193; Richardson, 1957, pp. 76-77; Sørensen, 1994, pp. 422-423).

When King Lang Darma died, a struggle for the throne broke out between his young sons namely *Ngadak ’Od-Srung* (*Khri gNam-lde ’Od-srungs*) and *Ngadak Yum-brtan* (or *Yumtan*). ’Od-Srung had a son named Pelkortsan⁴² (*dPal-’khor-btsan*). When Pelkortsan (881-910) was only 13 years old, his father ’Od-Srung passed away. Unfortunately, Pelkortsan, who could not either live a long life himself, could stay on the throne for 18 years. He assassinated when he was 31 years old by someone of his public. Thereupon, the control of the region named “*dbUs gTsang*”⁴³ was lost (Roerich, 1949, p. 37; Vitali, 1996, p. 543).

It would also be appropriate to mention the continuation of the lineage of Yumtan (or Yum-brtan), one of the sons of Lang Darma. The son of Yumtan is *Khri-lde mgon-po*⁴⁴. The

⁴² There is different information about the birth and death dates of Pelkortsan in the sources. You can also look at the following resources on the subject: (Jahoda & Kalantari, 2015, p. 79; Sørensen, 1994, p. 438; Vitali, 1996, p. 543).

⁴³ Tibet was divided into three main regions in ancient history. One of them is *dbUs-gTsang*. The other two are Amdo and Kham. The *dbUs* region covered the *Yarlung* and *’Phyong-rgyas* valleys south of the Brahmaputra (Tibetan: Tsang-po) River, with the *Skyid-chu* valley sequence where Lhasa is located. This entire region is where the great Tibetan Empire ruled. To the west of “*dbUs*” was the province of *gTsang*. This province includes several valleys that later joined to the Brahmaputra River (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2008).

⁴⁴ The son of Yumtan is mentioned in various sources with names such as *Khri- [s]de mgon-snyan*, *Khri-lde mgon-mnyen*, *Khri-lde mgon-snyan*, *mGon-spyod* and etc. (Sørensen, 1994, p. 440).

son of Yumtan had two sons, the older was Rig-pa-mgon, the younger was Nyi-ma-mgon⁴⁵ (Sørensen, 1994, p. 440). Nyi-ma mgon had a son named Nyi-'od dPal-gyi-mgon (or Nyi-'od dPal-mgon). The lineage continuing from Nyi-'od dPal-mgon has expanded in Klung-shod⁴⁶, 'Phan-yul⁴⁷ and mDo-Khams⁴⁸ regions. Khri-lde Rig-pa-mgon, the owner of the throne, had two sons, the eldest of which was (*Khri*)-lDe-po and the youngest one was rDo-rje-'bar. According to Buddhist historiography, the royal lineage continuing from Yumtan is considered less legitimate, besides it is also considered the usurper of the rulership of the Central Tibetan Empire. And it is accepted as partly responsible for the disintegration of Tibet. The royal lineage of Yumtan is less studied and researched than the royal lineage of 'Od-Srung, who was considered the legitimate heir of the previous king. In addition, this issue remains controversial, because some of the historical sources contain different genealogical information about Yumtan (Sørensen, 1994, pp. 440-441).

3.2.5. Western Tibet Kingdoms

It is known that after the death of Lang Darma, the Tibetan Empire entered the process of dissolution. During the period of internal revolts and throne fights, it is seen that one branch of the royal family went to West Tibet and founded successor kingdoms there. In history, the Western Tibetan Kingdom (Ngari Khorsum)⁴⁹ mentioned in the 10th and 11th centuries, and the subsequent Kingdoms of Pu-hrang, Gu-ge and Ladakh, had largely ruled in the region where is now divided between China and India. A small part of its territory is in the present-day Nepal.

⁴⁵ An inconsistency can be observed in the transmission of this person in the historical sources. According to the *Nyang-ral* and the two versions of *lDe'u*, this person is lacking in the line (Sørensen, 1994, p. 440).

⁴⁶ The Klung-shod region is located along the sKyid-shod (in the gTsang area) region in the northeast of Lhasa (Sørensen, 1994, pp. 146, 440). Skyid-chu is the northern branch of the Brahmaputra River and is a river that passes through the Lhasa valley. The river is the most prominent feature of the sKyid shod region, a historically important region in Central Tibet (Powers & Templeman, 2012, p. 648).

⁴⁷ 'Phan-yul is a place name in the north of Lhasa (Buswell & Lopez, 2014, p. 566).

⁴⁸ Mdo-Khams (Do-kham): It is the name given to the eastern and northeastern parts of ethnic Tibet comprising the Khams (Dotod) and Amdo (Domed) regions (Shakabpa, 1984, p. 333).

⁴⁹ Ngari Khorsum is called as "*mNga'-ris skor-gsum*" by Tibetans. The area is a vast region in Western Tibet stretching from the Himalayas to the Kunlun Mountains (Powers & Templeman, 2012, p. 449; Shakabpa, 1984, p. 334).



Figure 6. The Western Tibet (Ngari Khorsum) (Ryavec, 2015, p. 91)

According to the Old Tibetan Chronicles, Pelkortsen had two sons. These are Khri bKra-sis rtsegs-pa-dpal and sKyid-lde Ni-ma-mgon (Roerich, 1949, p. 37; Tucci, 1956, p. 60). According to sources, control was lost in the dbUs and gTsang regions after the assassination of King Pelkortsen. Thereupon, Khri bKra-sis rtsegs-pa-dpal stayed in the Upper gTsang

region, while sKyid-lde Ni-ma-mgon went to mNga'-ris⁵⁰ and founded a small kingdom there in the early 930s (in 929, according to Sa-skyapa sources) (Petech, 1980, p. 85; Roerich, 1949, p. 37). It is stated that Ni-ma-mgon came to the mNga'-ris territory in ahead of an army of one hundred thousand cavalry during the revolts (869-910) in Central Tibet. The king established a small kingdom at first. However, he was later invited to the Pu-hrang area. He came to the region upon invitation and erected a castle in the city of Nyi-zungs. Later, he started working here to take over the whole of Western Tibet (Hoffmann, 2008, p. 394; Sørensen, 1994, p. 452). In historical sources, it is stated that King Ni-ma-mgon dominated almost all of Western Tibet in the last quarter of the 10th century. The Kingdom of Western Tibet was founded by Ni-ma-mgon of the Pu rGyal (sPu-rgyal) Dynasty and lasted ruling until the late 11th century. The lands of the kingdom known as Ngari Khorsum included mainly the Pu-hrang, Gu-ge and Mar-yul regions, together with the smaller regions such as Zanskar⁵¹, Spiti⁵², Upper Kinnaur (Khu-nu)⁵³. As from the 12th century, the heirs of the kingdom have been the regional lordships (Jahoda, 2019, p. 202). King Ni-ma-mgon had three sons from the wife who was descended from the 'Bro clan (of the Zhang-zhung lineage). These are: *dPal-gyi-mgon* (dPal-gyi-lde rig-pa-mgon), *bKra-shis lde-mgon* and *lDe-gtsug-mgon*. The sons of Ni-ma-mgon are known as "three sTod-mgon" in general. In the sources, it is stated that King Ni-ma-mgon, who widened the borders of the country considerably, divided his country among his three sons. However, Tibetan sources could not reach a consensus on how this sharing happened. According to one view, the two and third sons of the

⁵⁰ Mnga'-ris is in Western Tibet. It is the region commonly referred to by the Tibetans as "*mNga'-ris skor gsum*" and extends from the Himalayas to the Kunlun Mountains (Powers & Templeman, 2012, p. 449).

⁵¹ Zanskar (Zangs dkar) is located at the western end of the Tibetan Plateau and forms the southern part of the ancient Buddhist Kingdom of Ladakh (Pearce, 2020, p. 474).

⁵² It is called *Spiti*, which means "*middle land*" because it is surrounded by mountains on all sides. It is a wide valley that runs through the middle of the mountains called the Trans-Himalayas. In addition, the Spiti River and its branches extend through the Spiti valley. Today, it is a region of the Province of Himachal Pradesh (of India), borders to China (Tibet) in the east, to Kinnaur in the south, to Kullu in the west and to Ladakh in the north (Kapadia, 1999, p. 26).

⁵³ The place known as Khu-nu (Kinnaur) in Tibetan language is a place in Bashahr (Bashahar) region in Eastern Tibet (Peter, 1977, p. 33). In the present-day, it is the part of the Indian state of Himachal Pradesh.

king divided their paternal lands, which would later form the beginning of the Gu-ge⁵⁴ and Pu-hrang⁵⁵ Kingdoms. His eldest son, often referred to as dPal-gyi-mgon, took the Ladakh⁵⁶ region; hence his father seems to have given him a theoretical right of sovereignty⁵⁷.

However, it can be said that the dPal-gyi-mgon conquered the region himself, thus obtaining the right of sovereignty himself. Petech hypothesized the establishment date of the Ladakh Kingdom around 950. Lha-c'en⁵⁸ dPal-gyi-mgon was the true founder of the Kingdom of Ladakh. In the chronicles the boundaries of the kingdom are given in a sketchy manner. The main source of Ladakhi history is *Chronicles of Ladakh* (or *La-dvags rgyal-rabs*), which probably compiled in the 17th century (Petech, 1977, pp. 1, 17-18).

The sharing of Western Tibet between the sons of Ni-ma-mgon was as follows, according to mNga.'ris rgyal-rabs (abbr. MNRSGLR), one of the old Tibetan Chronicles: bKra-shis-mgon was the first registered king of the Gu-ge Pu-hrang Kingdom. It is understood that bKra-shis-mgon, known to stay in Pu-hrang, ruled in the Gu-ge territory, as well. His eldest son, often referred to as dPal-gyi-mgon, received the hold of Mar-yul⁵⁹ (i.e., Ladakh) region. According to the chronicle named *La-dwags (Ladakh) rGyal-rabs*, King dPal gyi-mgon has a wide territorial sovereignty that includes the Mar-yul region and the west of Rut-hogs⁶⁰. He is recognized as the founder of the Kingdom of Ladakh. The other son, namely lDe-gtsug-mgon, dominated in the Zhang-zhung area. The domain of the lineage

⁵⁴ Gu-ge is located south of the Rut-hogs region, southeast of Ladakh and west of Lake Ma Pham (Manasarowar) (Francke, 1926, p. 95). It can be said that the region corresponds roughly to the ancient Zhang-zhung Kingdom in Western Tibet (Powers & Templeman, 2012, p. 253).

⁵⁵ Pu-hrang is a Tibetan province east of Lake Ma Pham (Manasarowar) and west of Blo-bo (Glo-bo or Lho-bo, a region east of Gu-ge) (Francke, 1926, pp. 94, 285).

⁵⁶ Ladakh is a word of Persian origin, the original in Tibetan language is *La-dvags* (or *La-dwags*). Ladakh refers to the central parts of the Western Tibetan Kingdom (Francke, 1926, pp. 93, 296). It is the region between mNga' ris and Baltistan in the Indus Valley (Jaschke, 2003, p. 540).

⁵⁷ In the Blue Annals, one of the Old Tibetan Chronicles, it is said that the eldest son of Ni-ma-mgon conquered Mar-yul. In Ladakh Chronicles again, it is said that dPal-gyi-mgon went to Mar-yul (Roerich, 1949, p. 37; Tucci, 1956, p. 60).

⁵⁸ Lha-c'en was the title used by the Ladakhi kings in the ancient times (Petech, 1977, p. 17; Tucci, 1956, p. 60).

⁵⁹ Mar-yul in the early periods, represented approximately the region in the westernmost of the today's Ladakh. The oldest name of the region in the Old Annals is Mar-yul (Sørensen, 1994, p. 452).

⁶⁰ Rut-hogs (Ru-thog, Ruthok or Rodakh) is a region in Tibet, adjacent to Ladakh. It is also the name of a wide plain to the east of Pan-kon Lake. Rut-hogs (*Byan-than*) is a place famous for its salt and wool (Francke, 1926, p. 95; Jaschke, 2003, p. 531).

continuing from lDe-gtsug-mgon has expanded to include local kingdoms in the Zangs-dkar (Zanskar) and Spiti regions (Hoffmann, 2008, p. 394; Sørensen, 1994, pp. 451-454; Tucci, 1956, pp. 53-60). Therefore, it is seen that the dominance of the branch of the Pu-rGyal (sPu-rgyal) genealogy that ruled in the Central Tibet, which continues with the 'Od-srung and its descendants, continues in Western Tibet. The royal genealogies found in the chronicles of different authors differ in some parts. For this reason, it becomes difficult to separate the history of the kingdoms each other, that continued from Ni-ma-mgon and ruled in Western Tibet.

In the historical records, it is mentioned that the King of Gu-ge Pu-hrang, bKra-shis-mgon had two sons named 'Khor-re and Srong-nge (Khri-lde Srong-gtsug-btsan). Of these, Srong-nge is the one who took the name Lama Ye-shes-'od⁶¹ in the following years. It is seen in the sources that Srong-nge is associated with the Gu-ge region and 'Khor-re with the Pu-hrang region (Vitali, 1996, pp. 145, 171). According to the Tibetan Chronicle named *dPaogtsug ap'-reñ-ba* (abbr. *PT*), 'Khor-re and Srong-nge are not the sons of bKra-shis-mgon. On the contrary, they are the sons of lDe-gtsug-mgon⁶² who is the other son of the King Ni-ma-mgon. It is known that Srong-nge married in the first part of his life (before becoming a monk) and had two sons named Nāgarāḍsa (Na-ga ra-tsa or Nāgarāja) and Devarāḍsa (Dhe-ba ra-tsa or Devarāja), who would later become Buddhist monks⁶³. According to the same source, Srong-nge would continue his life as a Buddhist monk in the second part of his life. And, he would be ordained under the ecclesiastical name of Ye-shes-'od. It is known that

⁶¹ According to the royal genealogy table given by Tucci based on the source “The Blue Annals”, the King bKra-shis-mgon’s son named Khor-re, (not Srong-nge), is the one who ordained himself a Buddhist monk and took the name of Lama Ye-shes-'od (Yeshe Od) afterwards (Roerich, 1949, p. 37; Shakabpa, 1984, p. 56; Tucci, 1956, p. 53).

⁶² In the Blue Annals, it is stated that Srong-nge and Khor-re are the sons of bKra-shis-mgon, not of lDe-mgon (Roerich, 1949, p. 37; Sørensen, 1994, p. 454; Tucci, 1956, p. 53).

⁶³ Based on the Tibetan Chronicle called the Blue Annals, Roerich says that, contrary to the information in some historical sources, the children named Nāgarāja and Devarāja are the sons of 'Khor-re, not the sons of his brother named Srong-nge (Roerich, 1949, p. 37).

after the king became a Buddhist cleric, he didn't transfer all his royal authority and he was called as the Priest King Ye-shes-'od (Sørensen, 1994, pp. 453-454; Tucci, 1956, pp. 51-54).

Srong-nge, observed that the practice of Buddhism in Western Tibet was beginning to degenerate and he sent a delegation of twenty-one people to Kashmir to learn Sanskrit and to study the Buddhist doctrine. Two of these people would later become famous translators; these were Rinchen Zangpo and Lekpe Sherab. While the Tibetan delegation was returning to the country, they invited Indian Buddhist pandits to their country. The year 978, when the Buddhist scholars who accepted the invitation came to Tibet, is regarded as the beginning of the Renaissance age in terms of Buddhism. Obviously, the famous Buddhist scholar and translator Lotsawa⁶⁴ Rinchen Zangpo (958-1055) had a big role in the spread of Buddhism into the interior of Ladakh (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2019; Karmay, 2007, pp. 238-239; Petech, 1977, p. 165).

According to a 15th century Tibetan Chronicle named "*mNga.'ris rgyal. rabs*" the years that Srong-nge (Ye-shes-'od) was born are described as the years when the society behaved contrary to traditions and Buddhism was abandoned. Ye-shes-'od firstly issued a kind of constitution⁶⁵ in 988, consisting of a set of rules governing religious and secular life. In addition, on this date he abdicated and became a Buddhist monk. In all sources on the subject, it is stated that Ye-shes-'od was an important and very influential person in the early period of Western Tibet. Ye-shes-'od made built the monastery named *Tho-ling dPal-dpe-med lhun-gyis grub-pa* in 996. This shows that, Ye-shes-'od removed the capital city of the Kingdom from Pu-hrang (sPu-rangs) to the region of Gu-ge. Meanwhile, the Pu-hrang region was the one where Ni-ma-mgon lived during his reign. It is known that the monastery, built in 996, was expanded later and took its final status in 1028 (Vitali, 1996, p. 312). The older brother of Ye-shes-'od, 'Khor-re, made built the Buddhist temple named *Kha-char* in Pu-

⁶⁴ Lotsawa (or Lo-tsa-ba) means the translator. The lotsawa particularly translates the texts and works related to Buddhism (Jaschke, 2003, p. 552).

⁶⁵ This constitution is known as "*chos. rtsigs*" (Vitali, 1996, p. 307).

hrang area. He also got the translators to do translation of very important Buddhist texts and the four groups of tantras. In the meantime, Ye-shes-'od is thought to have lived for 78 years, according to a document found in the monastery called the Gung-thang. According to the information Roberto Vitali obtained from three different Chronicles, Ye-shes-'od lived between the years 947 and 1024. As indicated in some of the Tibetan Chronicles, he has died in Tholing (Jahoda & Kalantari, 2015, p. 102; Jahoda, 2019, p. 199; Sørensen, 1994, pp. 455-456; Vitali, 1996, pp. 179-185, 234-236, 239).

According to the Tibetan chronicle named PT (*dPao gtsug ap' reñ ba*), Khor-re had a son named Lha-lde. Afterwards, Lha-lde had three sons named bKra-shis 'od (Byang-chub 'od), Zhi-ba 'od and 'Od-lde. Again, according to this source, it is seen that the royal lineage continues from 'Od-lde (Tucci, 1956, pp. 51-59). During the reign of the King 'Od-lde, the Kashmiri Buddhist scholar Jñānaśrī was invited to Tibet. Besides, according to the Chronicle of Ladakh, the *dPe-thub (Spituk) Monastery* was built by 'Od-lde in the 11th century (Tucci, 1956, pp. 51-54; Vitali, 1996, pp. 301-302). King 'Od-lde was captured after an unsuccessful military expedition in Bru-zha⁶⁶, but still managed to escape from captivity. However, he died of iron poisoning in Shi-gar⁶⁷ shortly after this incident. Although in some sources his death was attributed to his poisoning, there is no certainty about this. There are also some allegations that he died in captivity.

The expedition⁶⁸ of King 'Od-lde to the land of Bru-zha was not due to his eagerness for war, as described in the Tibetan Chronicle (*mNga' ris rgyal-rabs*). The reason for this expedition is that he had to protect the northwestern border of his country from its aggressive Muslim neighbors (Peteck, 1997, pp. 109-110; Vitali, 1996, pp. 286-287). After the King

⁶⁶ Bru-zha (or Bru-sha) is the name of a country in ancient times, west of Tibet and on the Persian border (Jaschke, 2003, p. 381).

⁶⁷ Shi-gar is a large town and administrative center near the capital of Baltistan, "*Skar-rdo (or Iskardo)*" (Francke, 1926, pp. 85, 105, 305). Shi-gar, which is also the former capital of Baltistan, is on the road from Bru-zha to Ladakh (Vitali, 1996, p. 281).

⁶⁸ According to the records, King 'Od-lde married a Bru-zha princess. When the Turkish Ruler (Yabghu) attacked the Bru-zha region, it was very likely that King 'Od-lde has joined the operation to support the allied Bru-zha country as a result of the responsibility of the marriage alliance (Vitali, 1996, p. 286).

'Od-lde, who was thought to have died in 1037⁶⁹ his brother Byang-chub 'od, who was also a monk, was temporarily ascended to the throne. This was possibly because the heir to the throne "rTse-lde (Phye-tsha rTse-lde)" was too young to ascend the throne. Byang-chub 'od abdicated the throne after a while, leaving the rulership to his brother's son rTse-lde. It is understood from a speech recorded in the chronicle *mNga' ris rgyal-rabs* and determined to belong to Byang-chub 'od that Byang-chub 'od was the person who transferred the rulership to rTse-lde in 1057. Bla-ma Byang-chub 'od said that, "*Now it's the turn of rTse-lde, from now on I have to complete my unfinished sacred duties*", in this speech. After Bla-ma Byang-chub 'od ceded rulership to his nephew rTse-lde, he became the king of Gu-ge Kingdom in charge of religious affairs. When Bla-ma Byang-chub 'od passed away, his brother Zhi-ba 'od took over his post and became the person responsible for religious affairs. Zhi-ba 'od was one of the three sons of Lha-lde ('Od-lde, Byang-chub 'od, Zhi-ba 'od). He was appointed as a Buddhist priest in 1056, with his new title *Bla-ma Zhi-ba 'od (1016–1111)* he began to be known. Bla-ma Zhi-ba 'od built the monastery Tho-ling gSer-khang with his nephew, the King of Gu-ge, rTse-lde. Information about the architecture of this monastery, famous for its unique three-storey structure, is explained in the Tibetan Chronicle called as *mNga' ris rgyal-rabs*. It is stated that Zhi-ba 'od lived another 34 years after the death of his older brother Byang-chub 'od. According to the Tibetan Chronicle (in MNRSGLR), it is thought that the date of death of Bayang-chub 'od is 1078 (Vitali, 1996, pp. 146-147, 295-296, 311). As mentioned above, it is thought that rTse-lde came to the throne around 1057. King rTse-lde is recognized as the organizer of an important Religious Council that took place in Ta-bo in 1076. The Council was named as *Tho-ling čhos 'khor*⁷⁰. And a total of 120 Buddhist clergy from India and Tibet was invited to the council (Roerich, 1949, p. 70; Vitali, 1996, pp. 319-320).

⁶⁹ Vitali says that this information is found only in *mNga' ris rgyal-rabs* among the Tibetan chronicles (Vitali, 1996, pp. 294-295).

⁷⁰ Tho-ling čhos 'khor: It can be translated as Tho-ling Religious Council (Powers & Templeman, 2012, p. 753).

Before the Qarluq (Gar-log) invasion, the first blow to the stability of the Kingdom of Gu-ge was the assassination of King rTse-lde. According to the chronicles, it is stated that the person who killed the king was any of his subjects. Moreover, it is mentioned that the murder took place as a result of internal turmoil and unrest in the country. Typical throne fights followed the death of the king. bTsan-Srong (Blog-rtsa bTsan-srong), one of the brothers of the deceased King rTse-lde, left the country after the events that resulted in the death of his brother rTse-lde. Then he went to the area of Pu-hrang and ruled there. Conflicts within the country resulted in the descendants of King rTse-lde losing control in two important regions, Gu-ge and Pu-hrang. Thus, the Gu-ge-Pu-hrang union disappeared. Considering the estimated date of death of King rTse-lde, it is thought that the division of Gu-ge and Pu-hrang took place in the years after 1083 and between 1090 and 1092. It is striking that political assassinations continued after this incident. Indeed, Lha-bTsun dBang-'od, son and heir of the late King rTse-lde, was killed by bSod-nams-rtse⁷¹ at a place named Tho-ling Thang-gi 'od. The killer was the son and successor of Gu-ge ruler named Bar-lde (dBang-lde), who ruled after King rTse-lde. Therefore, it is seen that Bar-lde⁷² (dBang [-phyug]-lde) prevails after rTse-lde. The most tragic consequence of the forcible seizure of the throne by Bar-lde was the separation of Gu-ge and Pu-hrang union. In addition, this division weakened the power of the old kingdom so much that the Qarluqs invaded the Gu-ge Kingdom shortly after.

The new king (Bar-lde), the usurper of the throne, left the city of Tho-ling⁷³ and chose the city of Dun-bkar (Dung.dkar) as his capital (or *rgyal.sa*⁷⁴). Dun-bkar became the capital city of the Kingdom of Gu-ge and presumably remained so until the late 14th century. King Bar-lde also financially supported the translation work of the famous translator rNgog

⁷¹ The name of this person (bSod-nams-rtse), who is the successor of Bar-lde, is mentioned as “bSod-nams-lde” in the chronicle of *lDe'u chos-'byung*, unlike the chronicle called *mNga.'ris rgyal-rabs* (Sørensen, 1994, p. 460).

⁷² Vitali, in his work based on the chronicle named *mNga.'ris rgyal-rabs*, it is especially stated that there is no statement that Bar-lde is the son of rTse-lde anywhere in this chronicle (Vitali, 1996, p. 339).

⁷³ The city of Tho-ling was the capital of the Gu-ge Kingdom in Western Tibet. It was established by Lha Blama Ye-shes-'od (959-1036) as the capital (Powers & Templeman, 2012, p. 660).

⁷⁴ *Rgyal.sa*, means capital city in Tibetan language (Jäschke, 2003, p. 618).

Lotsawa Blo-ltan shes-rab. Blo-ltan shes-rab (1057-1107) translated many Buddhist texts. rNgog Blo-ltan shes-rab joined the Tho-ling Religious Council in his youth, according to the chronicle called MNRSGLR. Later, he went to work in India under the auspices of the then-king rTse-lde. When the translator rNgog Blo-ltan shes-rab returned from Kha-che, he saw that Bar-lde was on the throne instead of the King rTse-lde. Tibetan sources indicate the year 1092 as the date when the translator was put under patronage of the new king. Thus, probably the year Bar-lde (dBang-lde) ascended the throne, would be between the year 1083 when the previous King rTse-lde fought against the kingdom of rGya⁷⁵ and the year 1092 when the Lotsawa Blo-ltan shes-rab returned to Tibet (Vitali, 1996, pp. 320, 335-344). Lotsawa rNgog Blo-ltan shes-rab is believed to have died in 1107 (according to some sources: 1109) after a chock-full life devoted to the spread of Buddhist doctrine (Kramer, 2007, pp. 43-44; Vitali, 1996, p. 320).

According to MNRSGLR, his son bSod nams-rtse⁷⁶ ascended the throne, after Bar-lde. bSod nams-rtse resolved the heir problem after killing Lha-bTsun dBang-'od, son of the late King rTse-lde, thus ending the struggle for the throne in the Kingdom of Gu-ge. bSod nams-rtse had three sons namely; bKra-shis-rtse, Jo-bo rGyal-po and 'Od-'bar-rtse. His eldest son, bKra-shis-rtse, ruled in Gu-ge-Lho-Byang and lived in Dun-bkar. His middle son, Jo-bo rGyal-po, became king of Khu-nu. The youngest son, 'Od-'bar-rtse, was appointed king to Gu-ge Rong-chung. For those who came after bSod nams-rtse, while local struggles did not cause much trouble; they were faced with a more dangerous external threat. As a matter of fact, a devastating Qarluq invasion occurred in the period of the sons of him. Again, according to the narration of MNRSGLR, bKra-shis-rtse was killed in gNyi-gong-phu during

⁷⁵ "rGya" is a place in Mar-yul region (Vitali, 1996, pp. 123-124). Francke states that the city was the capital of Ladakh around 804 (Francke, 1926, pp. 183, 302).

⁷⁶ Unlike the MNRSGLR, in the DTHNGP (Deb-ther sngon-po), bSod-nams-rtse does not come after 'Bar-lde in the royal genealogy. Besides, in between bTsan-p 'yug-lde and his brother Grags-btsan-lde, bKra-sis-lde ascended the throne (Roerich, 1949, p. 37; Tucci, 1956, p. 53).

the Qarluq attacks. His youngest brother 'Od-'bar-rtse was kept in captivity in Sog-po-yul⁷⁷. Jo-bo rGyal-po temporarily ascended the throne of Gu-ge and ensured the continuity of the lineage (Vitali, 1996, pp. 348-349). He ruled the kingdom for a short time as the deputy of the king, expelled the Qarluqs from the country and regained the sovereignty of the Gu-ge. After a while, he ceded the throne to rTse 'bar-btsan, the son of bKra-shis-rtse, who died during the Qarluq attack. It is estimated that, after the death of bKra-shis-rtse, his son, rTse-'bar-btsan, came to power in the second quarter of the twelfth century with a rough estimate. After the death of King rTse-'bar-btsan, the kingdom of Gu-ge divided into the kingdoms of *Byang-Ngos* and *lHo-stod* (Vitali, 1996, pp. 354, 357-360). Also, the chronicles called lDe'u chos-'byung (abbr. DCHBY) and mkhas-pa lDe'us (abbr. GBCHBY) mention the royal lineage continuing with bSod-nams-rtse. However, in these sources, the names of two of the sons of the old king are recorded different from MNRSGLR. In these two sources the names of the sons of the old king were recorded namely bKra-shis-rtse, mNga'-thang-skyong (*although this does not seem like a true name*) and 'Od-'bar-lde. In the two historical sources mentioned (in two lDe'u), a large difference is encountered when the section on the Qarluq invasion is compared with the MNRSGLR. Accordingly, "bKra-shis-rtse" and "Jo-bo rGyal-po" were killed by the Qarluqs during the war. The youngest son of the king was captured as a prisoner and was taken to the Qarluq country. Therefore, according to the two lDe'u sources mentioned, the three sons of the king all of them, did not be able to rule in the regions they controlled. As a result, according to both of the lDe'u sources, the Gu-ge royal lineage ended after the Qarluq invasion. However, according to MNRSGLR, it continued with rTse-'bar-btsan, son of bKra-shis-rtse (Sørensen, 1994, p. 460; Vitali, 1996, pp. 347-348).

⁷⁷ According to Tibetan-English dictionary *Sog-po* means "a Mongol", and *yul* means "place, province, land or country". *Sog-po-yul* (or *Sog-yul*) means "land of the Sog-po people" (Jäschke, 2003, pp. 512, 579; Vitali, 1996, p. 415). However, there are also historians who associate the name *Sog-po* with the Turks (the *Qarluq* or the *Uighurs*) (Beckwith, 1993, pp. 169-172; Sørensen, 1994, pp. 423, 457).

In some of the Tibetan Chronicles (such as *Bu-ston's CHBY* and *Nor Chronicles*) the list of Gu-ge kings ends with 'Bar-lde (dBang-p'yug-lde)⁷⁸, who took the throne after the King rTse-lde. In Tibetan Chronicles such as DTHMP, GBYTSH, GLR, YLJBCHBY, the kings who ruled after rTse-lde in the Gu-ge Kingdom followed a sequence as follows: 'Bar-lde⁷⁹, bKra-shis-lde, Bha-lde (Lha-lde, Bha-re, Bha-e)⁸⁰ and Nāga-lde (Nāgadeva)⁸¹. These kings ruled in the regions of Gu-ge, Pu-hrang and Mar-yul (Vitali, 1996, pp. 335-336).

It was previously mentioned that bTsan-srong (Blog-rtsa bTsan-srong), brother of the assassinated former Gu-ge King rTse-lde, ruled in Pu-hrang. As it is known, the union of the Gu-ge Pu-hrang Kingdom ended with Bar-lde's⁸² usurpation of the throne. bTsan-srong started ruling Pu-hrang after his brother was assassinated. So, the pedigree of the Pu-hrang Kings can be started with bTsan-srong. According to MNRSGLR, after King bTsan-srong, Khri btsan-lde became the next ruler. Moving down the royal lineage, it is seen that, at first the son of Khri btsan-lde named bTsan-phyug-lde (bTsan-p'yug-lde) came to power after his father. Later, his younger son, Grags btsan-lde ascended the throne (Vitali, 1996, p. 144).

About the King bTsan-p 'yug-lde⁸³, who is known to have ascended the throne after Nāgadeva, the expressions are contained in the Tibetan Chronicles⁸⁴, such and such; “went to Ya-ts'e”, or “was the lord of Ya-ts'e”, or “went to Ya-ts'e⁸⁵ and became the king there”.

⁷⁸ In different Tibetan Chronicles, the name of the King 'Bar-lde written in various forms such as 'Bar-lde, dBan-p 'yug-lde and dBan-lde. But only in Bu-ston chronicle it was written such a long name as K 'ri bKra-sis-dban- p 'yug Nam-mk 'a'-btsan. According to Petech, Bu-ston might have confused this name with the name of someone else (Petech, 1980, p. 86).

⁷⁹ In some sources, *Bar-lde*, who came to power after *rTse-lde*, is recorded as *Bha-le* (Vitali, 1996, pp. 335-336).

⁸⁰ The name of Bha-lde appears in different in genealogical tables in various historical sources. Petech says Tucci defines this situation as “attempts to adapt a foreign word to the Tibetan language”. He also states that he himself agrees with this view (Petech, 1980, p. 86).

⁸¹ Although there are differences in the names of the kings who ascended the throne in these sources, it can easily be understood that at some point they all followed almost the same sequence.

⁸² Vitali, in the work he wrote by examining the chronicle named MNRSGLR, states that there is no statement anywhere in this chronicle that Bar-lde is the son of King rTse-lde (Vitali, 1996, p. 339).

⁸³ Btsan-phyug-lde, which is shown as the successor of Nāgadeva in some sources, is one of the sons of Khri-bTsan-lde according to the MNRSGLR (Tucci, 1956, pp. 54, 56; Vitali, 1996, p. 146).

⁸⁴ This matter is mentioned in chronicles such as, DTHNGP (*Deb-ther sngon-po* or *the Blue Annals*), GLR (rGyal-rabs gsal-ba'i me-long), and DTHMP (*Deb-ther dmar po*) (Petech, 1980, p. 87; Tucci, 1956, pp. 53-59).

⁸⁵ Professor Tucci states that the city of Ya-ts'e is the same place as *Semjā* mentioned in the inscriptions. He also says that, the city Ya-ts'e is the capital city of the Malla Dynasty. Sija is thought to be the same place with Semjā

According to the chronicles mentioned, it is seen that the heir (or son) of Nāgadeva, bTsan-p 'yug-lde, came to the Ya-ts'e region and ruled here. It is a fact that the later rulers of the Ya-ts'e dynasty felt themselves as a continuation of the ancient Tibetan Yarlung dynasty, uninterruptedly (Petech, 1980, p. 89; Sørensen, 1994, pp. 460-461; Tucci, 1956, pp. 53-59). According to MNRSGLR (*mNga' ris rgyal-rabs*), the Pu-hrang lineage extended towards Ya-ts'e along with Grags-bTsan-lde, who is the younger brother of bTsan-phyug-lde. And then Grags-bTsan-lde became the first king of Ya-ts'e. Based on the evidence in the sources regarding the events predicted to have taken place in the 12th century, it can be said that bTsan-phyug-lde conquered Ya-ts'e and then sent his younger brother to rule there. Hence, according to MNRSGLR, the Ya-ts'e royal lineage issued from the Pu-hrang king bTsan-phyug-lde. According to the Tibetan chronicle YLJBCHBY written by Shākya Rin-chen-sde, the Ya-ts'e royal lineage issued from the Pu-hrang king bTsan phyug-lde. Therefore, YLJBCHBY is the only source after MNRSGLR that states this situation expressly. According to Vitali, Shākya Rin-chen-sde was the only historian after the 13th century who correctly understood this genealogical relationship. As mentioned above, bTsan-phyug-lde and Grags-bTsan-lde take place in the royal genealogy of Pu-hrang at the same time. This probably occurred sometime in the second half of the 12th century. Grags-bTsan-lde probably ruled both in Pu-hrang and Ya-ts'e after the death of his older brother, according to MNRSGLR. After his (Grags-bTsan-lde) death, the Ya-ts'e fraction leaves the Pu-hrang genealogy (Vitali, 1996, pp. 139-144, 462).

3.2.6. From 12th century to present-day

The assassination of Lang Darma in 842 led to the division of the royal lineage and the subsequent decentralization of authority. This assassination was followed by civil disorder, and then Tibet was divided into several principalities. Therefore, the period between 842 and

mentioned in the inscriptions. Sija (or Lamathada) is a small village in present-day Western Nepal (Petech, 1980, pp. 86-87; Tucci, 1956, p. 107).

1247 marks a period in Tibet that is far from central authority. During this time, the country consisted of many small power centers, constantly fighting or allying with each other as circumstances required (Shakabpa, 1984, p. 54).

In the middle of the 11th century, when the famous Buddhist cleric Atiśa came to Tibet and started working on Buddhism, a new era started. And, after a while a few new Buddhist sect emerged. These sects competed with each other, until about the second half of the 13th century in other words, until Mongol influence grew in the region. Central Tibet was occupied in 1240 by a powerful Mongol army of thirty thousand men under the command of Leje and Dorta Darkhan. The Mongols came till to Phanpo, north of Lhasa. Prince Godan, the grandson of Genghis Khan, granted the Sa-skyas⁸⁶ Lama with temporary powers in 1247. And he appointed him symbolically, as the deputy ruler over Tibet. Mongolian ruler Kublai Khan (r. 1260-1294) overthrew the Sung Dynasty in China and dominated China completely. Kublai Khan founded the Yuan Dynasty (1279-1368), which is the twentieth dynasty of the Chinese Empire. During this period, Tibet was directly ruled by the Yuan Dynasty as a part of the Chinese Empire (Kuan-Chun Lin, 2012, pp. 123-125; Özgüdenli & Prazniak, 2016, pp. 88-89). With the collapse of the Yuan Dynasty (1368), the authority of Sa-skyas-pa that lasted eighty years in Tibet also disappeared (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2019). Subsequently, Tibet regained its independence from the Mongols during the time of Chang-chub Gyaltsen (1302-1364), a prince from the noble Phamodru-pa family (Richardson, 1962, pp. 35-36; Shakabpa, 1984, p. 73). Chang-chub Gyaltsen and his successors ruled the Ü-Tsang (Outer Tibet) region for about 97 years (until 1434) under the name of the Phamodru-pa Dynasty. The following century has passed with struggles between the provinces of “Ü” and “Tsang”, whose leaders are the Ge-lug-pa and Kar-ma-pa sects respectively. After the end of the Phamodru-pa Dynasty, the Rinpung-pa (1481-1565) and Tsang-pa (1565-1642) periods came respectively.

⁸⁶ Sa-skyas-pa is a sect of Tibetan Buddhism, named after the great Sa-skyas (Sakyas) Monastery founded in 1073, about 80 kilometers north of the Mount Everest. It was politically dominant in Tibet, during the Mongol Emperors time of China (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2015; Shakabpa, 1984, pp. 60, 334).

There is no information that any of these three dynasties that came to power in Tibet had submitted to the Ming Dynasty of China (Norbu D. , 2001, pp. 56-58; Richardson, 1962, pp. 35-36; Shakabpa, 1984, pp. 73-90). It seems that this situation has changed in the 18th century. As a matter of fact, China captured Tibet (in 1720) during the Qing Dynasty (1644-1912). Then he started to rule the country directly by placing his soldiers in the region. In this process, the walls of Lhasa were demolished and a Chinese Garrison was established in Lhasa. In addition, Kham province was joined to Sichuan province of China. China established a local government in Tibet in 1751. Thus, through a government subordinate to him, he established a large-scale dominance over Tibet. This is how the Chinese patronage over Tibet began, which would last until the end of the Qing Dynasty (Kuan-Chun Lin, 2012, pp. 123-125; Richardson, 1962, pp. 43-50; Stein, 1972, p. 85). With the collapse of the Qing Dynasty in 1912, movements against China started in Tibet. With the start of the Chinese Revolution, the Chinese State started to deal with its own internal problems. Taking advantage of this situation, the Tibetan people revolted, expelled the Chinese soldiers from the country during the Second World War. Tibet functioned as a de facto independent government from that date until 1951. However, the new People's Republic of China re-occupied Tibet in October 1950, and soon officially took it under its sovereignty. It was signed a treaty between China and Tibet on 23 May 1951, called the "17-point Agreement on Measures for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet" (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2019; Kuan-Chun Lin, 2012, pp. 123-125; Promises and Lies: "The 17-Point Agreement", 2011, p. 27). The spiritual and temporal leader of Tibet, the 14th Dalai Lama, fled to India after China besieged the holy city of Lhasa (1959). Here he established the Central Tibetan Administration with thousands of Tibetan refugees who came with him. He was the Head of the Central Tibetan Administration for a long time. In 2011, the 14th Dalai Lama proposed a change in order to remove his position of rulership within the administration of the Tibetan Government in exile.

Besides, he wanted to devolve his political power to a new elected leader. Upon this, the exiled Tibetan Parliament first abolished the executive authority of the Dalai Lama. Then he went to the election. As a result of the election attended by many Tibetans who are living in various parts of the world, Lobsang Sangay was elected as the President of the Central Tibetan Administration in 2012.

“Dalai Lama” term refers to a spiritual leader from the past to the present, has a very important place in the history of Tibet. Gedun Truppa (*Dge- 'dun-grub-pa*)⁸⁷ born in the late 14th century is considered the first Dalai Lama (Shakabpa, 1984, pp. 91-92). Ge-lug-pa (*dge-lugs-pa*) is a Buddhist sect called as Orthodox Yellow Hats, founded by Tsongkhapa Lobsang Dragpa in the early 15th century. Gedun Truppa met with Tsongkhapa in 1415 and became one of his students and followers (Shakabpa, 1984, pp. 85, 91-92). People with the title of *Dalai Lama*, the head of the dominant *Ge-lug-pa*, a sect of Tibetan Buddhism, have been regarded as the spiritual leaders of Tibet from past to present. At the same time, they continued to serve as the temporal rulers of Tibet until 1959. The 14th Dalai Lama Tenzin Gyatso, who is still alive, has been living in the Dharamsala town in the Himachal Pradesh State of India (Encyclopædia Britannica, 2019).

To summarize, the People’s Republic of China officially annexed Tibet in 1950, which it regarded as an integral part of the Chinese territory. The following year (1951), it recognized it as a local state and granted autonomy. The political status of Tibet has remained the same since May, 1951 until present-day (Kuan-Chun Lin, 2012, p. 124).

⁸⁷ Gedun Truppa, considered to be the first Dalai Lama in Tibetan history, lived between 1391 and 1474 Gedun Truppa founded the great monastery of Tashilhunpo in 1447 (Shakabpa, 1984, p. 91).

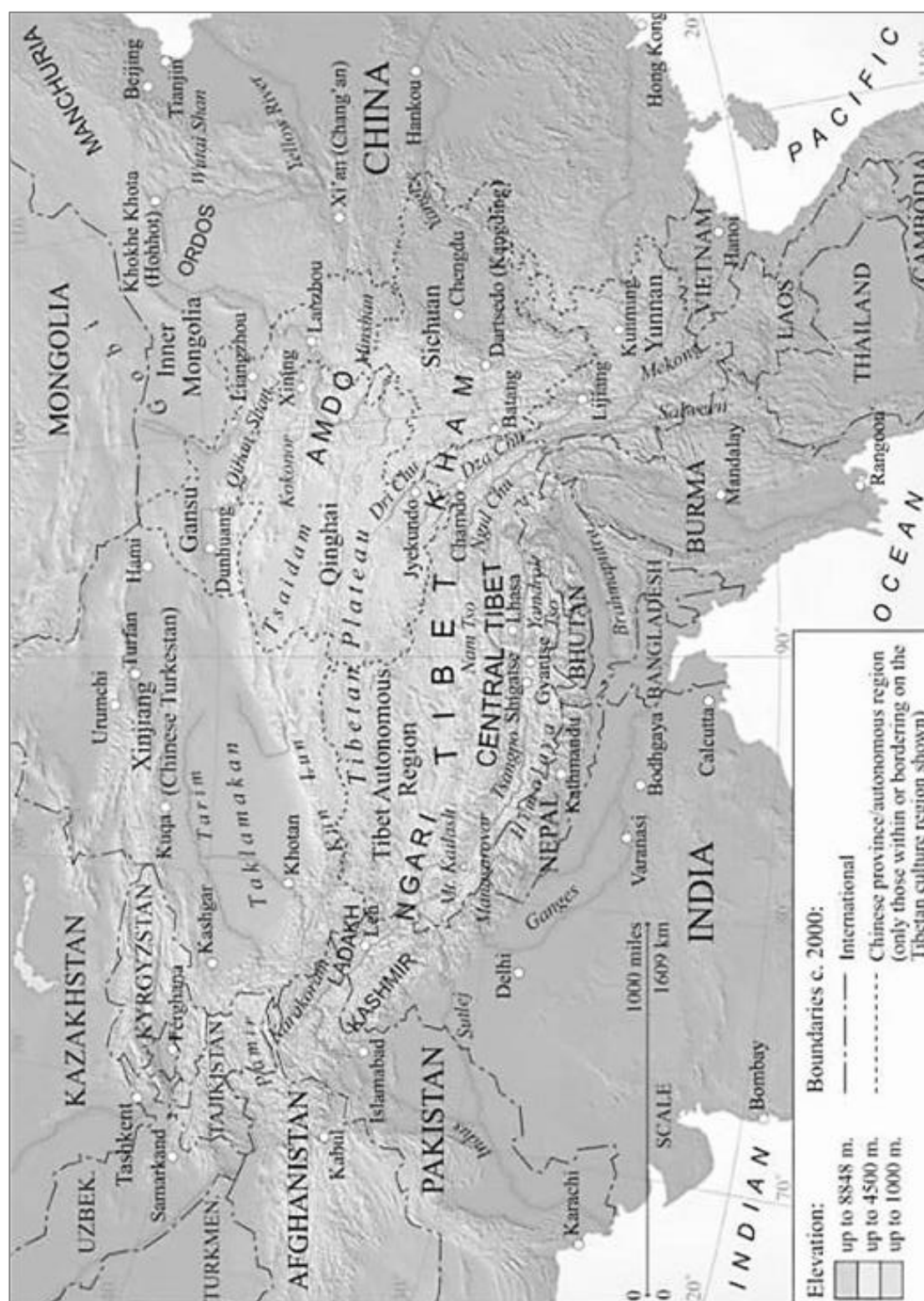


Figure 7. Tibet Autonomous Region, Present-day (Ryavec, 2015, p. 21)

4. TIBETAN-TURKISH RELATIONS (UNTIL THE 11TH CENTURY)

4.1. Relations with the Ancient Turks

With the limited documents and resources available, we do not have much information about early Turkish-Tibetan relations. One reason for this is that systematic archaeological excavations have not yet been carried out in Tibet and its surroundings. There is some information about the early history of Tibet in Chinese sources. However, in Chinese historiography, all the tribes about which there is not much information were gathered under one heading, which creates difficulties in accessing reliable information. The most important evidence of the prehistoric period of Tibet is the megalithic monuments made of large stones spreads in a wide territory. They start from Western Tibet, they extend along the plateau to the north of the trans-Himalayas, then to the region of the great salt lakes and parts of the Byang-thang. They last as far as A-mdo territory in northeast Tibet (Hoffmann, 2008, pp. 371-372). In China, around 1050 B.C., the Zhou Dynasty (1050-256 B.C.) was established. The center of the dynasty was around Hsi-an-fu. Nomadic Turks and Mongols and semi-nomadic Tibetans were living around the city of Hsi-an-fu. During the Chou Dynasty, it was established a second center of government in Lo-yang of Henan (or Honan) Province. The main group that made up the Zhou Dynasty was a small tribe. Therefore, it is quite clear that the ancestors of the Huns and Tibetans played an important role in the establishment and rise of the Zhou Dynasty. It can be said that the dynasty got its power from the auxiliary tribes. They received support from the auxiliary tribes against the attacks of the nomadic Turkish and Mongolian communities. However, when the state expanded, the auxiliary tribes remained far from the center. Nevertheless, auxiliary armed forces were coming from the vassal overlords against the attacks from outside. However, after a while, there was no support from the overlords who focused on their own internal affairs. Thereupon, they had to fight alone against the attacks of the Turkish and Mongolian tribes on the borders. In 771 B.C. a vassal

principality called “Shen” made alliance with a Tibetan tribe. Later on, the Huns were participated in this alliance as well. And then a raid was carried out by the alliance on the lands of Zhou Dynasty. It is reported in the sources that the Chinese were in a difficult position in the face of the raid, and one of the Zhou princes was barely rescued from the raid and taken to Lo-yang (Eberhard, 1995, pp. 38-39). Thus, the continuation of the dynasty was provided. This event is presumed to be the first known Tibetan-Turkish alliance in history.

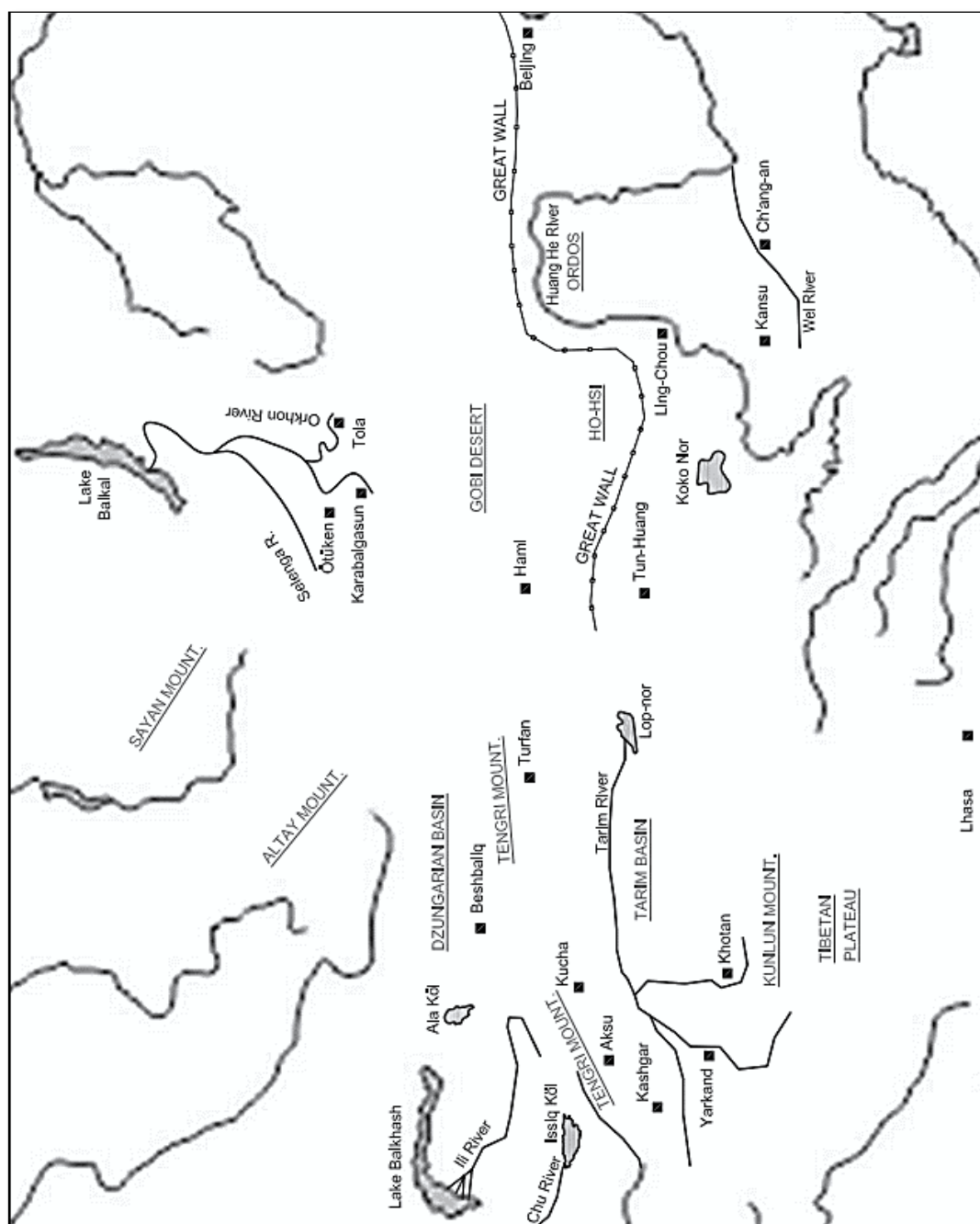


Figure 8. Turkestan in the Early Period

4.2. Relations with the Great Hun Empire

It is clear that in ancient Chinese sources, for a long time, information about the ancestors of the Huns and Tibetans was intertwined, and it was not clear that which information belonged to the Huns and which to the Tibetans. The Chinese mistakenly listed the knowledge about the Tibetan society in the section devoted to the ancestors of the Huns in the *Dynastic Annals* (Ögel, 2019, p. 21).

Wei River runs through Gansu and Shaanxi (or Shensi) provinces of north-central China, and is the western branch of the Yellow River. It is estimated that the ancestors of the Tibetans lived on the springs of the Wei River. These were composed of scattered tribes that could not establish a political union yet. The Yellow River is a passage connecting the east of China to its west. While the southern parts of the river are covered with high mountains, the northern parts open to the steppes of Central Asia. For this reason, the Yellow River is the places where Tibet and Hun communities came across in history. The Hun community was spread across the plains of the Gansu territory while Tibetans lived in its highlands. This situation shows that for a time the Hun and Tibetan peoples were neighbors around Gansu (Ögel, 2019, pp. 8-9).

The Ch'iang people, the ancestors of the Tibetans, lived in areas around western and southwestern borders of China in the early Han dynasty. While the most densely populated was probably in the high plains of Tibet and Qinghai, some individual groups were scattered across the Western Regions, Gansu, Yunnan, and Sichuan. In fact, from antiquity to the Qin and Han times, there has been a significant Ch'iang migration from northwest to southwest. According to the *Hou-Han shu* of the Chinese Annals, by the Han period there were less than one hundred and fifty Ch'iang tribes of various sizes. Records from the year 94, reports us that the population of the *Great Tsang-i* tribe, who lived beyond the Sichuan (Szechwan) border, exceeded half a million. In the annals, it is told that during the reign of Emperor Shun-

ti (125-144), in the Lung-hsi⁸⁸, another tribe called *Chung* was able to field an army of more than one hundred thousand soldiers. If we rely on an early Han estimate that the total population of the Huns is no more than the population of a large county, it can be concluded that the numerical power of the Ch'iang community probably exceeded the numerical power of the Huns. However, unlike the Huns, the Ch'iang people were never able to form a tribal federation. On the contrary, there was a clear tendency toward fission among the Ch'iang community. As a people, they neither established a "lord-subjects" relationship nor developed a system of control and solidarity among themselves. When a group of several tribes grew to a certain point in population and power, they would split into several tribes, each led by a powerful chieftain. In other case when another group of several tribes fell out of power, they would find and affiliate with a powerful tribal group to follow (The Cambridge History of China Vol 1 The Ch'in and and Han Empires, 221 B.C.-A.D. 220, 2008, pp. 422-423).

The Chinese General Chao Ch'ung-kuo expressed this situation in 63 B.C. as follows: It is relatively easy to control the Ch'iang, because they are divided into many warrior tribes within themselves and they always attack each other. Therefore, their nature does not allow uniting and acting together (The Cambridge History of China Vol 1 The Ch'in and and Han Empires, 221 B.C.-A.D. 220, 2008, p. 423).

At the beginning of the Han (206 B.C. – A.D. 220) Period, the Ch'iang people were an important ally of the Huns. Although Chinese sources claimed that the Emperor Mao-tun was trying to drive the Ch'iang people away, the similar cultural elements between the two communities meant that the Ch'iang community was closer to the Huns, perhaps more than the Han China. The expansion of the Han Army into the Ho-hsi region (the Gansu corridor) under Emperor Wu-ti was not only meant to drive the Huns out of the Western Regions. The

⁸⁸ Lung-hsi is the place, where the Chinese military garrison was established in southeast of Gansu province (The Cambridge History of China Volume 1, 2008, p. 136).

Chinese also aimed to distance the Huns from the Ch'iang community (The Cambridge History of China Vol 1 The Ch'in and Han Empires, 221 B.C.-A.D. 220, 2008, p. 424).

As it is known, the Chinese army captured the Gansu Region (around 121 B.C.), which is a very precious land for the Huns, located in the west of the Hun country (Baykuzu, 2018, pp. 21-26, 103-111). It was not in China's interests that the Huns and Tibetans got along. For this reason, the Chinese, who did not want the Gansu region emptied by the Huns to remain empty, wanted to establish a buffer state between the Huns and the Tibetans. Although the Chinese offered to place Wu-suns in the buffer zone, they did not receive a positive response from them. Upon this, China established the Chiu-ch'üan (Su-chou) Commandery in the vacated area and cut off the contact of the Huns with the allied Ch'iang tribes. The Han Dynasty entered the Western Regions for the first time with the establishment of this commandery. The age of the Huns over the Western Regions was over (Yü, 2008, pp. 130-131).

As a result, the attempt of China to cut relations between the two communities has not been very successful. The Tibetans revolted against China in 112 B.C. with a force of 100 thousand people. They sent envoys to the Huns just before the rebellion. As a result of the negotiations, after the two sides reached an agreement, the Hun-Tibet alliance was established. Due to the conditions of the agreement, the Huns attacked from the north while the Tibetan forces were uprising. Attacking the Wu-yuan province of China, the Hun forces defeated the Chinese forces, killed the governor of the province (Ögel, 2019, pp. 69-70).

In 88 B.C., a powerful Tibetan tribe named the Hsien-ling, sent an envoy to the Huns to form a military alliance. Soon the Huns sent an envoy to respond to the Hsien-ling tribe. The answer of the Huns, who seemed to accept the alliance offer is described in the sources: The Ch'iang people suffered because of the expeditions of the Han armies. The regions of *Chang-i* and *Chiu-ch'üan* were actually ours and the lands in that region are fertile. If the two

of us make an alliance and make a joint attack on that region, it would be our right to settle in the place we have captured (The Cambridge History of China Vol 1 The Ch'in and Han Empires, 221 B.C.-A.D. 220, 2008, p. 424).

Even two centuries later (122, 138 and 140), we see the Hun forces allying with the Ch'iang tribes in wars with the Han Dynasty. The Later Han Dynasty was also fully aware of the relations established between the two neighbors. Before the Chinese secured the Gansu Corridor (Ho-hsi) and its surroundings, the Western Regions served as the meeting place for the Huns and Ch'iang tribes. According to the Chinese sources, Emperor Wu-ti (156-87 B.C.) established border commanderies in *Dun-huang*, *Chiu-ch'üan* and *Chang-i*, particularly to break off the relations between the Ch'o-Ch'iang⁸⁹ people and the Huns.

The population of the Ch'o-Ch'iang tribe shrunk, it declined to only one thousand seven hundred and fifty people in the middle of the 1st century, thus losing its importance. However, in the early years of the Han Dynasty, they had been in full activity in an extremely wide territory in the Western Regions. Their king bore a unique title *ch'ü-Hu-lai*, meaning “the king who changed sides (from the Huns to the Han Empire).” This situation shows that the Ch'o-Ch'iang tribe changed sides after the Han Empire expanded towards the northwest. After the Ch'o-Ch'iang tribe changed sides, it joined the side of the Han army to fight against Huns in wars. Not only that, but they supported the Chinese army even in their punitive campaigns against the other Ch'iang tribes (The Cambridge History of China Vol 1 The Ch'in and Han Empires, 221 B.C.-A.D. 220, 2008, pp. 424-425).

As it is known, the Hun State was divided into two as Northern Hun and Southern Hun State in 48. The Huns remained in a divided condition during the 2nd century. And the power struggles between the opposite groups led to a decrease in their power. The weakening of the Huns allowed the Tibetan Ch'iang people, living on the northwestern frontier (in present

⁸⁹ It was a strong tribe within the Ch'iang community. Besides, it is also described as the first southwestern state on the road from Yang Passage to the west (The Cambridge History of China Volume 1, 2008, p. 424).

day's Gansu province), to escape from Hun domination and to form political coalitions that could challenge China's hegemony (Di Cosmo, 2009, pp. 205-206).

The Chinese organized a military campaign over the Northern Huns in 89 and as a result, they were victorious. It is seen that the Southern Huns supported the Chinese campaign with a military force of 30 thousand people. It is remarkable that, they fought against the army of the Northern Hun State. In fact, during the Chinese campaigns against the Northern Huns in 73 and 89, the Huns did not only fight with the Chinese forces. In these battles, the Chinese army was also assisted by the Tibetan Qiang (Ch'iang), Wu-huan and Hsien-pi cavalry together with the Southern Hun cavalry (Yü, 2008, p. 148). The success of the Chinese General Tou Hsien is striking in these two campaigns. Tou Hsien organized an expedition to the Northern Hun Land again, in 91. In the battle with the Chinese, the Huns were defeated. This defeat is accepted as the end of the Northern Hun State. After the dissolution of the Northern Hun State, the Hsien-pi people became the dominant power in the lands of the Huns. T'an Shan-yü (or Ch'an-yü), who was at the head of the Northern Huns after 98, helped the Chinese Army to reopen the Silk Road that was cut by the Ch'iang tribes (Taşağıl, 2020, pp. 224-225, 238).

The Han Army suppressed a massive Ch'iang rebellion in Hsi-hai and Yü-ku in 102. Cao (Ts'ao) Feng suggested the establishment of military colonies in Yu Valley in order not to encounter such events again from now on. According to Feng's proposal, commanderies and governorships would be established in areas far from the center, thus tightening the control of local and administrative units and establishing agricultural garrisons in the region. Chinese officials considered the commander's proposal to be the most effective measure to "cut off all communication" between the Ch'iang and the Huns. Cao Feng, whose proposal was accepted by the Emperor, was appointed as the Western Region commander of Jincheng province and sent to the region. The initiative was successful at first, but after the great

Ch'iang rebellion (A.D. 107-118) that began in 107, the newly established military commanderies were abandoned (De Crespigny, 2007, p. 41; *The Cambridge History of China Vol 1 The Ch'in and Han Empires, 221 B.C.-A.D. 220*, 2008, p. 424).

Tibetan Ch'iang tribes started an uprising in Liang-chou province of China in 107. Although the incident began as a local uprising, it spread throughout Northwest China. Although the events were suppressed in 118, the environment of internal conflict that lasted for more than ten years devastated the region. The conflicts reached as far as the capital Ch'ang-an and spread to the north. And at one stage the Southern Huns also joined this uprising. The interruption of contact between China and the far west for years during the Ch'iang rebellion (107-118) created the opportunity for the Northern Huns in Dzungaria Basin to be located around Turfan and Tarim Basin. As a result, in 118, while the last Ch'iang rebels who rose up against Han were destroyed, the Huns were frequently attacking to the northwest of Liang province with their allies (De Crespigny, 2006, p. 17).

In 140, a rebellion movement emerged within the Southern Huns. Leading the rebels was Wu-ssu and Ch'e-niu. There were also those who supported the rebels such as the Ch'iang tribes of Liang District, some of the Hsien-pi and Wu-huan tribes. The revolt ended when the incumbent South Hun ruler committed suicide along with his brother. Ch'e-niu, who was one of the leaders of the rebellion, ascended the throne as "shan-yü" with the support of Ch'iang and Hsien-pi tribes. Ch'e-niu Shan-yü ruled the country between of 140-143. Ordos Region came under the rule of Huns during his period (De Crespigny, 2007, p. 59; Taşağıl, 2020, p. 239).

In the early 140s, the Han Dynasty had to leave more and more border garrisons, partially or completely, due to the raids of Ch'iang and other tribes extending towards inner China. Although the regions in question were ostensibly in sovereignty of the Chinese Empire, in reality Chinese control was very weak in those regions. The evacuation of both

An-ting and Pei-ti garrisons from Liang-chou towards the Kuan-chung area is particularly indicative of the scale of the Ch'iang threat. The northwestern frontier area, stretching from Yün-chung and Wu-yüan in Ordos to Han-yang in Gansu (an area over 800 kilometers), was conquered by Ch'iang and Huns (The Cambridge History of China Vol 1 The Ch'in and Han Empires, 221 B.C.-A.D. 220, 2008, p. 432).

Meanwhile, the rebellion of the Yellow Turbans (184-204) that broke out in China in 184 and lasted for about twenty years, prepared the end of the Han Period. This was actually a joint rebellion movement of the Chinese, as well as the Yüeh-Chih, Ch'iang, and Hun peoples against the Han Empire. In order to suppress the rebellion, the ruler of the Southern Hun State sent his son Yü-fu-lo with the military unit under his command to support the Chinese forces (Taşağıl, 2020, p. 240; The Cambridge History of China Vol 1 The Ch'in and Han Empires, 221 B.C.-A.D. 220, 2008, p. 434).

By the end of the *2nd century A.D.*, the Han Empire almost disappeared. When the Yellow Turbans and similar riots were suppressed, three independent centers of political power emerged. Thus, the “Three Kingdoms (Sanguo)” Period (A.D. 220-280), a turbulent period full of diplomatic intrigues and bloody wars, started in China. Hundreds of thousands of Huns and other non-Chinese nomads settled from the south of the Great Wall towards inner parts of China in the 2nd and 3rd centuries. The Three Kingdoms Period, in which three kingdoms named Wei, Shu-Han and Wu ruled in various regions of China, is a period in which the kingdoms were fighting each other. These kingdoms did not last long. After a short time (265), the Qin Dynasty came to power. But after a while it is seen that this state was also split into Western and Eastern Qin. After the destruction of the Three Kingdoms that ruled in China, many small kingdoms were established whose founders were not of Chinese origin. This period is called the Age of the Sixteen Kingdoms (A.D. 303-439) (Pletcher, 2011, pp. 85-86). In Chinese history, among the founders of the Sixteen Kingdoms, those who were not of

Chinese origin were named *Wu Hu*, which means “*Five Barbarians*”. The five semi-nomadic tribes called *Wu Hu*, which established states in the north and northwest of China, can be listed as; the *Hsiung-nu*, *Ch’iang*, *Hsien-pi* (*Xianbei*), *Di* (*Ti*) and *Jie* tribes. Although the ethnic origins of some of these tribes are not known exactly, it is thought that those other than Turks are most likely of Tibetan and Mongolian origin. During the Sixteen Kingdoms period, millions of Northern Chinese, including rich and high-ranking Chinese, fled to south of the Yangtze River due to war and occupation (Corradini, 2006, p. 166; McGeary, 2020, pp. 1-3; Otkan, 1989, p. 773).

The Huns are the founders of four of the states established during the Sixteen Kingdoms period. These are Former Zhao (304-329), Later Zhao (329-352), Xia (407-431) and Northern Liang (397-439) States (Taşağıl, 2020, p. 247). It was stated that four of the states established during the period of the Sixteen Kingdoms were founded by the Huns. Besides, the Former Qin, the Later Qin and the Later Liang Kingdoms were founded by the Tibetans (Balci, 2018, p. 21).

During the Sixteen Kingdoms, the North China Plain entered into a conflict environment created by tribes and groups at war with each other. Meanwhile, numerous short-lived dynasties were established. The first invasion in northern China was made by the Huns, who founded the Former Zhao Dynasty (304-320). The second came from the west, from the Di (Ti) and Ch’iang tribes, the ancestors of the Tibetans. Apparently, the Hun and Xianbei (Hsien-pi) tribes establishing a state in China encouraged the Tibetans as well. Taking advantage of the setting in which the Later Zhao Dynasty, founded by the Huns, began to disintegrate, Fu Chien, the leader of the Tibetan Fu Clan, gathered all the Tibetans around him and conquered most of the north. And then in 351, he established the Former Qin Dynasty (351-394) and declared himself the ruler of the kingdom (Eberhard, 1995, pp. 146-147; McGeary, 2020, pp. 1-3).

Some information, although scanty knowledge, about Tibetan-Hun relations during the Sixteen Kingdoms period is learned from Chinese sources. During the reign of Liu Yao (319-329), who was the last ruler of the Former Zhao Dynasty it is seen that, the kingdom was in a long-lasting war with the Tibetan tribes who rebelled in the west (Baykuzu, 2004, p. 20).

Shih Lo (or Shih Le) defeated Liu Yao, eliminating the Former Zhao Kingdom. Having declared himself ruler in 330, Shih Le founded the Later Zhao Dynasty (329-352). Among the subjects of the Later Zhao, there were Tibetan tribes. The Fu family was one of the powerful families of one of the Tibetan Ti tribes. When internal turmoil arose in the Zhao Kingdom, Fu Chien, the head of the Fu clan, took advantage of this environment and gathered all Ti tribes around him. Thus, Fu Chien, who declared his sovereignty in 351, established the Former Qin Dynasty (351-394) in the territory of the destroyed Later Zhao Dynasty (Balci, 2018, p. 49; Yıldırım, 2012, p. 2732).

The ruler of the Former Qin, who ascended the throne in 357, the Second Fu Chien, was at war with the Former Yen State around the year 365. At the same time, the Huns living in the north started uprising as well. Meanwhile, the Yen Kingdom was also dealing with internal turmoil. Finding allies from within, the Tibetans captured the Yen Kingdom in 370. Later, the Tai Kingdom (315-376) established by the Tabgatchs⁹⁰ was also eliminated by Fu Chien (in 376). As a result of these developments, the sovereignty of Northern China has been completely taken over by the Former Qin State of Tibetans. However, after a while, the failures of Fu Chien (especially the southern China expedition) triggered internal revolts. Yao Ch'ang, who murdered him and his family, declared his sovereignty in 384 and established the Later Qin Dynasty. Apart from these two kingdoms, the Tibetans established also the

⁹⁰ The Tabgatchs (or *T'o-pa* clan), who started to be mentioned for the first time in the period of 160-170, came to Inner Mongolia in the authority vacuum that emerged with the weakening of the Hun power. Later, they moved to the south, came to the Shan-hsi and Ho-Pei region, where they established the Tabgatch Tai Kingdom in 315. There is no consensus on its origins. However, the states they established are thought to be dominated by the Turks. According to the sources, the "Tabgatch" identity emerged with the coming together of many tribes from various peoples (Yıldırım, 2012, pp. 2711-12).

Later Liang Dynasty (386-405) in the west of Gansu (Balci, 2018, pp. 50-51; Corradini, 2006, pp. 214-215).

The Tabgatch Tai State (315-376) was struggling with the Hun leader Liu Wei-ch'en⁹¹ in the 370s. Tabgatch Ruler Shih-i-chien attacked Liu Wei-ch'en again in 374, and the Hun leader, who did not have enough military power, fled to the south. In the struggle of the Hun leader with the Shih-i-chien (circa 375), it appears that he sought help from the Former Qin Dynasty. Tibetan Fu Chien, who wanted to destroy the Tai Kingdom, welcomed the Hun leader's request for help and sent an army to attack on Tabgatch Tai Kingdom. As a result, the Tabgatch Tai Kingdom was eliminated in 376 by the Former Qin Dynasty. While leaving the country of Tabgatch with his army, Fu Chien divided the country between T'ieh-fu⁹² leader Liu Wei-ch'en and T'u-ko (Tu-ku)⁹³ leader Liu K'u-jen, who could not get along with each other (Balci, 2018, pp. 74-76; Yıldırım, 2012, pp. 2734-2735).

According to some historians, there is no real Turkish-Tibetan cultural contact until the period of kingdoms (about the period between A.D. 850-1370) established by the Uighurs in the regions today called Gansu and Xinjiang (Scharlipp, 1995, p. 52). It is understood that the Tibetans could not yet establish a political union during the reign of the Hun State. However, as can be clearly seen from the Chinese sources, the Huns have relations with the Tibetan Ch'iang and Ti tribes.

⁹¹ Liu Wei-ch'en belonged to the T'ieh-fu tribe of the Huns. In addition, he was also the father of Ho-lien P'o-p'o, the founder of the Hsia State (Balci, 2018, p. 74).

⁹² T'ieh-fu is the name of a Hun tribe and at the same time the family surname. According to the sources, Ho-lien P'o-p'o, the founder of the Hsia State, changed the family name of "T'ieh-fu" as "Ho-lien" when became the king (Köymen, 1944, p. 54).

⁹³ T'u-ko is the name of an important Hsiung-nu (Hun) tribe that bred ruler ("shan-yü"). According to some historians, it is the royal dynasty of the Huns and the lineage of the Hun Emperor Mou-tun is also based on this dynasty (Köymen, 1944, pp. 51-52).

4.3. Relations with the Gok-Turks

4.3.1. The first Gok-Turk Empire

When talking about Tibetan-Turkish relations during the Gok-Turks period, the first event that comes to mind was around 552. Participants in the funeral ceremony held after the death of Gok-Turk ruler Bumin Kaghan are described in the Orkhon Inscriptions as follows:

“Above the humankind, my ancestors, my grandfathers Bumin Kaghan, Istemi Kaghan were enthroned. Sitting on the throne, they ruled and regulated the state (and) laws of the Turkish people. ... (later) they just passed away themselves. So many people came to join their funerals such as Koreans, Tabgatchs, Tibetans, Avars, Kyrgyzs, Three Kurikans, Thirty Tatars, Khitans, Tātäbi and Byzantine people and etc., for mourning and weeping. They mourned, because the decedent Gok-Turk Kaghans were such famous rulers.” (Tekin, 2018, p. 63).

Upon the death of Istemi, who was the ruler (yabghu) of the Western Region of the State during the Bumin Kaghan period, in 576, his son Tardu became the yabghu of the Western Regions. Although Tardu was loyal to the center of the State in the early years, he was eager to ascend the throne of the Qaghanate by ruling both of the west and east of the country himself. The Chinese ambassador, who was sent to Tardu by China, presented the wolf-headed flag he brought with him and declared that he was recognized by China. As seen in this incident, the provocations of the Chinese, who were pursuing various intrigues to weaken and eliminate the Turk State, yielded results. Supported by China, Tardu, encouraged by the developments, rebelled against the Turk ruler Isbara Kaghan. This was followed by the domestic disturbance, the Turk Qaghanate was divided into two as the Eastern and the Western Turkish States in 582.

The first ruler of the State is Tardu Kaghan. In the reign of Tardu, the Western Turkish State was ruling over Ötükän, Northwest Mongolia, Lake Aral and its surroundings, Kashgar,

Mâverâünnehir Region and the parts of Khorasan extending to Merv (Donuk, 1985, pp. 11-13). After some troublesome events, Tardu had to flee the country. It is thought that he took refuge in T'u-yü-hun State around 603. Thereupon, Taman Tegin, whose mother is of Chinese origin, became the head of the state with the title of Ch'u-lo Kaghan. Ch'u-lo was given the title of *Hosana* by the Chinese court due to his success in the Korean expedition (613). However, it is known that after a while, it received public reaction due to some wrong state policies. After Ch'u-lo came to power, he defeated Toles tribes, which were not dependent on the state, and bound them to tax. However, heavy taxes created unrest among the Toles tribal union. Meanwhile, China was preparing to embark on an expedition over the T'u-yü-hun State in 611. The Emperor of China had sent an envoy to Gok-Turks and asked Ch'u-lo Kaghan to come along the military expedition. As it is known, the ruling family of the T'u-Yü-Hun State is of Xianbei (Hsien-pi) origin, but the majority of its people are Tibetans. Ch'u-lo Kaghan was eager to join the military expedition. However, this issue was discussed and not accepted in the state assembly. Therefore, it is understood that there is a return at the last moment from the possible unjust attack, against the State of T'u-yü-hun (Taşağıl, 2003, pp. 89-90). Ch'u-lo Kaghan, in 612, took shelter in the Sui Dynasty and abdicated the Western Turk throne (Taşağıl, 2018, p. 149).

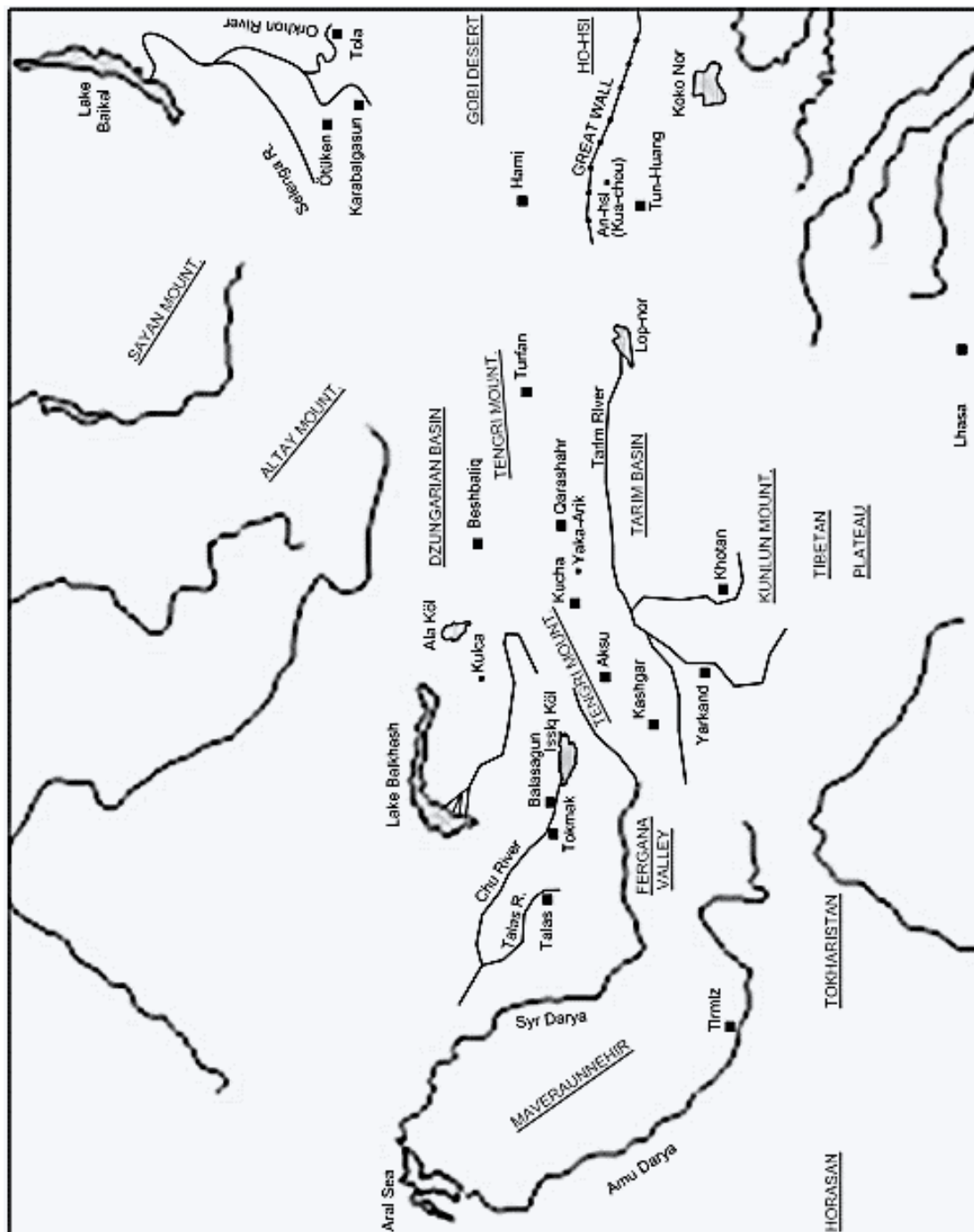


Figure 9. Turkestan between the 7th and 9th Centuries

As it is known, the Eastern Gok-Turk State collapsed in 630, and the Western Gok-Turk State collapsed in 658. The year 630, when the Eastern Turks lost their independence and in addition internal turmoil began in the Western Turkish country, was the beginning of a difficult period that lasted more than fifty years. While the “interregnum” period of the Gok-Turks continued, an important development that took place in Central Asia was the

extraordinary development of the Tibetan Empire. The expansion that started under the rule of the great Tibetan King Srong-btsan-sgam-po continued uncontrollably even after his death in 650. Tibetan power was harassing neighboring regions from all sides. It was extending west of the Tibetan plateau, into the borders of Yunnan and Sichuan, into inners of Nepal, northward to the inners of Tarim Basin and even into the fertile pastures of the modern Tsing-hai province that was controlled by the “T’u-yü-huns”. The Western Gok-Turk State collapsed in 658. Upon this, China established local governments in the territory of the destroyed State. Thus, a structure known as the Four Garrisons was established by the Chinese Emperor T’ai-tsung, which included the cities of Kucha, Khotan, Kashgar and Tokmak. The emperor declared that from now on this area would be under the control of the An-hsi Protectorate Governorship. Four Garrisons established by China had posed a threat to Western Turks since the day it was founded. In fact, the protectorate of Pei-t’ing, which was established in 702 by China as a supplement to the Four Garrison, brought many difficulties for the Turkish tribes in the region. Turkish tribes were besieged by the Pei-t’ing Garrison consisting of 20 thousand soldiers in the east and Four Garrisons with a military unit of 24 thousand people in the south. It is known that Four Garrisons were completely destroyed by Tibetan forces in 787. However, it can be said that, solely after the defeat of China in Talas battle (in 751), the devastating effect of the Four Garrisons had disappeared (Salman, 1990, pp. 921-924, 933).

The Tibetan army was at war with the Tu-yü-huns between 660 and 663. As a result, by the year 663, they defeated the Tu-yü-huns and drove them from their homeland to around Koko-Nor. While Tibetan army destroyed the only buffer state between China and the Tibetan states, Chinese Emperor could not do anything. The Tibetans, who defeated the Tu-yü-huns, gained the opportunity to freely enter and exit the Gansu border regions and also the Tarim Basin. By the year 670, the Tibetan State had begun to encroach on the various border

provinces that the T'ang Dynasty had previously established in the tribal lands bordering Sichuan. Farther west, they allied with the Kung-yüeh, one of the resurrected Western Turk tribes, and made massive raids into Chinese lands in the Tarim region. The Emperor of China assigned his general named Su-Hai-Cheng to organize an expedition to Kucha around the end of 662. General Su-Hai-Cheng sought military support from Western Turkish chiefs A-shih-na Mi-she and A-shih-na Pu-chen before starting the campaign. Both Turkish chiefs accepted this request and joined the war alongside the Chinese General with their armies. However, Pu-chen, who had an enmity with Mi-she, the chief of the five Turkish tribes in the east of Tokmak, provoked the Chinese General against him by claiming that Mi-she would revolt against China. As a result, General Su-Hai-Cheng and A-shih-na Pu-chen, who set a trap for Mi-she, killed her and her friends. Two Turkish tribes affiliated with A-shih-na Mi-she escaped from there. However, these tribes could not avoid being caught by the Chinese General and his collaborator. While General Su-Hai-Cheng, A-shih-na Pu-chen and the troops were returning from the campaign, at south of Kashgar, they encountered Tibetan forces summoned by the Kung-yüeh tribe of Western Turks. The Chinese General, who thought he was not capable of fighting the Tibetan army, managed to eliminate a possible danger of war by helping the Tibetans with weapons. Meanwhile, the On Oq tribes, who were upset over the death of one of the Turkish chiefs, A-shih-na Mi-she⁹⁴ did not want to be under the rule of A-shih-na Pu-chen. However, when Pu-chen died also, a short time later (666 or 667), they were left headless⁹⁵. Around 671, the Emperor of China declared A-shih-na Tou-chih from the Western Turks as Fu-yen Commander. However, A-shih-na Tou-chih brought together the Turkish tribes around and declared himself the Kaghan of "On Oq" tribal confederacy and later established political contact with the Tibetans. According to Chavannes, A-shih-na Tou-

⁹⁴ A-shih-na Mi-she, who ruled the five tribes of On Oqs living in the east of Tokmak, received the title of Hsing-Hsi-Wang from the Emperor Kao-Tsung in 657 (Huang Chi-Huei, 1970, p. 45).

⁹⁵ In some sources, it is stated that the On Oq chiefs named A-shih-na Tu-chih and A-shih-na Li-Che-fu attached to Tibetans along with the remaining tribes (Huang Chi-Huei, 1970, p. 46).

chih, who formed an alliance with the Tibetans, attacked the Kucha (An-hsi) of China with them and destroyed the region (Huang Chi-Huei, 1970, pp. 45-46; Taşağıl, 2004, p. 76).

The Kung-yüeh tribe of the Western Turks allied with the Tibetans and the Kashgar King in 665 to attack Khotan Kingdom. The army of this tripartite alliance, which took action, passed through the Tarim Basin to shorten the route south. Meanwhile, the governor of Hsi-chou⁹⁶ who was aware of the impending danger, took action with his army to save Khotan from the occupation on the orders of the Chinese Emperor (Huang Chi-Huei, 1970, p. 46).

The Tibetans organized another expedition to East Turkestan in 670 and occupied the Four Garrisons. Tibetan forces attacked north with the help of the king of Khotan and captured Kucha and Karashahr, the headquarters of the An-hsi Protectorate-General. The Chinese were forced to withdraw from the Tarim Basin where is in the west of Turfan, and the An-hsi safe zone. In addition, they were forced to abandon the Four Garrisons that controlled the indigenous kingdoms of the Tarim Basin. As a result, in the first half of 670, the Tibetans captured the cities of Kucha, Khotan, Karashahr and Kashgar, known as the Four Garrisons of China (The Cambridge History Of China Volume 3, 2008, pp. 227, 285). By the end of 670, Tibet took control of almost the entire Tarim Basin and the southwestern mountains. The Chinese have lost their outposts in East Turkestan (Kuzmin, 2011, p. 15). As can be seen, China lost its effectiveness in the Four Garrisons in 670. Upon these developments, the Chinese government sent an army headed by General Hsüeh Jen-kuei and Turkish-origin commander A-shih-na Tao-chên to attack Tibetans. Besides, the army assigned to relocate the T'u-yü-huns to their former homeland. But the Chinese army which is including the Turkish troops, was defeated by the Tibetan forces in the Ta-fei valley west of Koko-Nor (Chavannes, 2007, p. 206; The Cambridge History Of China Volume 3, 2008, p. 286).

⁹⁶ Hsi-chou (Qocho, Kara-khoja), a province name during the T'ang Dynasty, was located in today's Turfan (Huang Chi-Huei, 1970, p. 46).

A-shih-na Tu-chih, who was the head of one of the Western Turk tribes, started to gather its people around him since 671. In 671, the Emperor of China gave Tu-chih the following titles in order to get him regularized his people: the “General of the left guards” and the “Military governor of Fu-yen territory”. Meanwhile, it was mentioned that A-shih-na Tu-chih and A-shih-na Li-Che-fu along with the On Oq confederacy who remained headless were subordinated themselves to the Tibetans. According to Chinese sources, they left the Tibetan rule at the year-ends of 673 and then visited the Chinese Court⁹⁷. Ultimately A-shih-na Tu-chih declared himself the Kaghan of the On Oq tribal confederacy in the period around 676-678. Following these developments, they (On Oqs) began to develop political relations with Tibet (Huang Chi-Huei, 1970, p. 48; Taşağıl, 2017, pp. 187-188).

By the year-ends of 670, almost the entire Tarim Basin was controlled by the Tibetan Empire. However, according to the former owners of the territory, it was not safe the territory to be under control of the Tibetans. During the period of 673-675, the kings of the city-states of Kashgar, Khotan and Karashahr, who were at odds with Tibet and their Western Turk allies, re-submitted their allegiance to the T’ang Dynasty. After that, the An-hsi protectorate-general was re-established (The Cambridge History Of China Volume 3, 2008, pp. 285-286). Meanwhile, the Chinese had strengthened their influence on the alternative road to the west, running along the Ili Valley north of the range of the Dzungaria Basin and Tien-shan Mountains range. They continued their influence until the Tibetans re-occupied the Tarim Basin in 677 with the help of the Western Turk Kaghan (The Cambridge History Of China Volume 3, 2008, pp. 285-286). In the short introductory article about Tibet in the T’ang Annals, it is informed that around 676/677, the Tibetan troops united with the Western Turks (during the A-shih-na Tu-chih period) and attacked Kucha. It is understood that those referred

⁹⁷ These people, whom one of is thought to be the head of the Kung-yüeh (*from the Western Gok-Turks*) tribe and the other one is thought to be the head of Kashgar people became vassal to the Tibetans after the death of A-shih-na Mi-She (Huang Chi-Huei, 1970, pp. 46, 48).

to as Western Turks was On Oq tribal confederacy, and they attacked to Kucha of China with the allied Tibetan army (Chavannes, 2007, p. 88; Gumilev, 2019, p. 316).

There is some information about the period between 676 and 677 in the biography of P'ei Hsing-Chien, one of China's important statesmen. Accordingly, in 677 the kaghans of On Oq tribal confederacy, A-shih-na Tu-chih and Li Che-fu revolted by drawing other tribes to their side. The An-hsi people and the Tibetans joined them and they made an alliance. These events are recorded in the biography of P'ei Hsing-Chien in the T'ang Annals.

Because of the Western Turks (or On Oqs) attacking Kucha by allying with the Tibetans against China, the Chinese Emperor assigned the minister named P'ei Hsing-Chien to punish them. As a result, the Kaghan of On Oq namely A-shih-na Tu-chih was captured in 679 by P'ei Hsing-Chien along with his brothers and relatives as a result of the deception and traps of Chinese statesmen (Taşağıl, 2017, p. 188). Subsequently, P'ei Hsing-Chien also forced another tribe leader, Li Che-fu, to surrender. In this process, P'ei Hsing-Chien captured the commanders of each of the ten Western Turk tribes and the city of Tokmak in West-Central Asia. While returning to the Chinese capital with his captives, he ordered the second-in-command Wang Fang-i, whom he left in Tokmak, to build a fortress there. Although this triumph of the T'ang Dynasty in the north of the Tien-shan Mountains resonated in the Tarim Basin kingdoms, which were apparently under Tibetan control, Chinese sources do not mention this. In addition, Tibet was ignored in all of the historical sources where the expedition of P'ei Hsing-Chien was described, since it was allied with the Western Turks and seemed invincible at that time. Meanwhile, Tibet seized An-jung⁹⁸ fortress, a strategic T'ang fortress on Tibet's eastern border, in 680, consolidating its control over the entire western border of China (Beckwith, 1993, pp. 45-46; The Cambridge History Of China Volume 3, 2008, p. 286). Between 671 and 691, the T'ang Dynasty organized several military

⁹⁸ An-jung is a fortress located in northwest Sichuan. It is a strategically important place that China uses to maintain tight control over the tribes living along the Sichuan and Yün-nan border (The Cambridge History Of China Volume 3, 2008, p. 286).

expeditions to reclaim the Four Garrisons. Meanwhile, the Emperor of China Kao-tsung left the routine duties related to the country to Empress Wu-Hou starting 660 due to health problems. After Empress Wu-Hou came to power (in 684 or 690), she began to follow a harsher policy towards Tibet. These policies would yield results by the year 692. Western Turks appointed A-shih-na Suei-tsu as Kaghan in 692. In the autumn of 692, General Wang Hsiao-Chieh together with the Chinese General A-shih-na Chung Chieh, attacked to Tibetan forces in An-hsi and defeated them. Thus, he expelled them from the Four Garrisons. Thus, the Four Garrisons (Kucha, Kashgar, Khotan and Tokmak)⁹⁹ which have been in the hands of the Tibetans for 22 years, have again passed into the hands of the Chinese (Huang Chi-Huei, 1970, pp. 55-57).

As it is known, A-shih-na Ku-to-lu (Qutlugh) Kaghan established the Second Gok-Turk State in 682 by declaring his rule with the title of “Elteris Kaghan”. It is known that the state has shown a rapid development within ten years after its establishment. Tibet, which lost the control of the Four Garrisons to the Chinese, after a while asked the Gok-Turks help to take back the Four Garrisons. Tibet’s attempt to maintain control over the Tarim Basin was halted by the T’ang armies in two major battles (in 694) that took place along the borders of Central Asia by the Chinese. The commander of the Chinese Army, Wang Hsiao-Chieh, defeated the Tibetan Khotan Governor namely Po-Lun-tsan¹⁰⁰ and his ally namely A-shih-na Suei-tsu (a Western Turkish Kaghan) who were attacking from the north in Ling-ch’uan and the Ta-ling Valley. According to Chinese sources, more than thirty thousand Tibetans and Turks died in the war. The Tibetan commander, whose name is recorded as Po-Lun-tsan in Chinese Sources, is thought to be a statesman belonging to the famous Gar family of Tibet

⁹⁹ When Turgish Kaghan namely Su-lu captured the city of Tokmak in 719, the number of Four Garrisons decreased to three. Thereupon, Four Garrisons were completed with the garrison established in the city of Karashahr (Salman, 1990, pp. 921-922).

¹⁰⁰ Looking at the Chinese sources, it is seen that the word “*Po-Lun*” is present at the name of the Tibetan commander. Essentially, the word *Po-lun* is not the name of a person, it possibly corresponds to the Tibetan title *blon*. As it is known, the word, which is also mentioned in Turkish Inscriptions and read as “*bölön/bölün*” by linguists, is interpreted by many historians and linguists as the equivalent of *blon* word in Tibetan (Aydın, 2018, pp. 93-94).

and he is supposed to be the person who is recorded as Gar Tsenyen Sungton in Tibetan sources. In the Tibetan Chronicles, it is recorded that Gar Tsenyen Sungton was executed due to a defeat in 694, accused of treason by the king of Tibet (Li, 1957, pp. 141-142).

Meanwhile, the Commander of China's Suyab¹⁰¹ Garrison, Han Ssu-chung, fought with the leader of the western wing of On Oq Confederacy namely Ni-shu Erkin who came towards the city with a military power of over ten thousand. Ni-shu Erkin was defeated along with Gok-Turk origin Shih-ssu-han, Hu-lu and others who were with him. Han Ssu-Chung, who was victorious in this war and captured more than ten thousand people, seized and vandalized Ni-shu-Mei-Ssu, a Tibetan fortress. Thus, T'ang inflicted serious damage on the Tibetans in two of the most strategic positions; these are: Koko-Nor and Pamirs firstly and southwest of Tien-shan Mountains, secondly (Beckwith, 1993, p. 56; Huang Chi-Huei, 1970, pp. 59-60; Taşağıl, 2017, p. 188).

The Tibetan army sought to retaliate against the Chinese after its defeat in 694. To this end, in the seventh month of 695, they attack Lin-T'ao, a Chinese town located in the east of Gansu. In early 696, Empress Wu commissioned General Wang-Hsiao-Chieh and his deputy Commander-in-Chief Lou Shih-te, who he appointed as his assistant, to prevent Tibetan attacks. Indeed, in the war between the Chinese and Tibetan forces in the third month of 696, on Su-Lo Han-Shan Mountain¹⁰² in T'ao-chou borders, the Chinese suffered a heavily defeat against the Tibetan forces under the rule of Gar Triding Tsendro (Blon Ch'in-Ling) and his brother¹⁰³. The name of this war is recorded in Chinese Resources as "Su-Pien Expedition".

In Tibetan sources, it was recorded with a meaningful expression as battle of *Stag La Rgya*

¹⁰¹ Suyab is an old settlement, thought to have been founded in the 6th century, located in the north of today's Kyrgyzstan, east of the Chu River Valley. It has been the capital of the Turgish Qaghanate and then the Qarluq Qaghanate, so it is an important place in terms of Turkish history. Barthold discovered the remains of a historical center called "Akbesim" near Tokmak and on the south bank of the Chu River. Clauson states that this center is the city known as Suyab (Clauson, 1961, pp. 1-4; Goryacheva, 2003, pp. 1-2).

¹⁰² Su-Lo-Han Shan is the name of one of the mountains inside the Tien Shan Range (Huang Chi-Huei, 1970, p. 60).

¹⁰³ According to the *HTS*, one of the Chinese Annals, the Chinese side won the war. Therefore, the Tibetans who lost the war attacked China's Liang-chou region after the defeat (Huang Chi-Huei, 1970, p. 60).

Dur (means: Chinese Graveyard at Tiger Pass), expressing that the Chinese suffered heavy casualties. Due to this defeat, Wang Hsiao-Chieh, the commander-in-chief of the Chinese Army, was punished by being demoted. Shortly after the war, seeing himself in a strong position due to his victory, Tibet had sent an envoy to the T'ang Court with a peace proposal that included a political marriage. The Tibetan administration undoubtedly thought it was the right timing when making this offer. Because at that time, the Eastern Gok-Turks had just gained their independence from China and were struggling to regain their old power. For this reason, several movements had begun on the Chinese frontiers (Beckwith, 1993, pp. 57-58; Huang Chi-Huei, 1970, p. 60).

Unable to get back the seized Four Garrisons by war, the Tibetans wanted to negotiate peace with China. Thereupon, Empress Wu sent Chinese Minister Kuo-Yüan-Cheng, a cunning diplomat and general, to meet with Tibetan statesman Gar Triding Tsendro. During the meeting, issues such as the Four Garrisons and the Western Turks were on the agenda of the Tibet side. The Chinese side asked the Minister of Tibet like this: *"During your father's (Lu-Tung-Tsan) period, friendly relations had been established between Tibet and China. However, nowadays you are constantly attacking to the Chinese frontiers. Why don't you stick to your father's policy?"* The Tibetan minister Blon Ch'in-Ling said that: *"You are right about this. However, Empress Wu accepted our offer of peace talks. In this case, both Tibetan and the Chinese side should withdraw their troops out of the Four Garrisons and the On Oq People. Let the Four Garrisons free and let the On Oq People establish their own state by declaring their independence"* (Huang Chi-Huei, 1970, p. 61).

The Chinese envoy, Kuo-Yüan-Cheng, did not receive the offer of the Tibetan ambassador favorably. As a matter of fact, China was maintaining its control over the western countries through Four Garrisons. The Ambassador Cheng stated that the roads connecting China with the west pass through the Four Garrisons and the On Oq country. He stated that

the On Oq People and Tibet were already allies with China and they wanted it to remain that way. Upon this answer, the ambassador of Tibet stated that the five Tu-lu clans living in the east of Tokmak city of On Oqs were far from Tibet but close to the An-hsi region of China. However, he said that there was a great desert between the five Nu-shih-pi clans who were living in the west of Tokmak and the Tibet country. The Tibetan envoy stated that the Nu-shih-pi raiders reached Tibet easily, thus posing a threat to Tibet. Therefore, the Tibetan ambassador told the Chinese that they wanted to dominate the region where the five Nu-shih-pi clans live. Chinese Ambassador Kuo-Yüan-Cheng did not respond to the Tibetans on this issue, but returned to the Chinese Court with the Tibetan ambassador to inform Empress Wu about this offer. The proposal of the Tibetan ambassador was discussed in the Chinese palace. In Kuo Yüan-Cheng's view, if the King of Tibet wanted to make a peace treaty with China, he should first render up the lands he seized from T'u-yü-hun people and then the lands he seized in Koko-Nor region. If all these conditions were applied, the T'ang Dynasty might think of leaving the regions west of Tokmak (Nu-shih-pi territory) to Tibet. Wu approved the opinion of his envoy (Kuo Yüan-Cheng) and responded to the ambassador of Tibet accordingly. The proposal of the Chinese side has not been accepted by the Tibetan authorities. During the bilateral talks, the internal turmoil arose in the Tibet country. This situation was also heard in the Chinese Court. Thereupon, the talks with the Tibetan side were interrupted (Beckwith, 1993, pp. 58-60; Huang Chi-Huei, 1970, pp. 61-63).

Immediately after the Chinese Minister P'ei Hsing-Chien returned to China, a serious revolt broke out among the Eastern Turks. P'ei Hsing-Chien was appointed as the commander of the armies sent to suppress the rebellion. The Chinese commander was successful in suppressing the revolts of 680 and 681. However, this time in the spring of 682, news was heard that the tribal confederacy of On Oq revolted under the rule of Arsila¹⁰⁴ Ch'e-pu (*Kiu-*

¹⁰⁴ Christopher Beckwith says that the name of the oldest dynasty family of Turks is "A-shih-na" according to Chinese sources. Beckwith identifies the word A-shih-na with the word "*Arsila*", which is pointed out as *the*

pou-touo). It is known that Turgish State also supported the revolt of the On Oq tribal confederacy (Salman, 2002, pp. 412-420). Thereupon, P'ei Hsing-Chien died at the age of 64 when he was on his way to suppress the rebellion of the On Oq confederacy. Due to the untimely death of P'ei Hsing-Chien, his former assistant Wang Fang-i was commissioned to suppress the rebellion. Wang Fang-i attacked the On Oqs (Western Turks) who besieged the city of Kōngül (Kung-yüeh)¹⁰⁵ and defeated them near the Ili River. Many people were killed on the battlefield. Wang Fang-i, after hard struggle, has set up camp in Issyk-Kul region. In the meantime, the “three-surnamed Yen-mien Turks¹⁰⁶”, who formed an alliance with Ch'e-pu, started a counterattack from the direction of Issyk-Kul Lake with an army of one hundred thousand. Upon this, Wang Fang-i, who set out with the cavalry unit, suddenly surrounded the Yen-mien unit on an unexpected side and caught the enemy off guard. The Turkish forces that panicked, have dissolved. As a result, about three hundred people, including the leaders of both Turkish groups, were caught. Thus, T'ang managed to preserve its dominance over the Western Turks in the north of the Tien Shan Mountains. Meanwhile, at the end of year 682, Eastern Gok-Turks of the A-shih-na tribe origin rebelled against China. This time they have been successful. As a result, the Eastern Gok-Turks established the Second Gok-Turk Empire under the rule of Elteris Kaghan (Beckwith, 1993, pp. 47-48; Chavannes, 2007, pp. 90-91; Salman, 2002, pp. 412-420).

4.3.2. The second Gok-Turk Empire

As it is known, the Second Turk Qaghanate which gained its independence in 682 under the leadership of Kutlug Kaghan, made its power felt in Central Asia in a short time.

oldest dynastic family of the Turks by the famous Byzantine historian and writer Menandros Protector. This theory of him is viewed by the famous historian Petech as a theory with good chances of being right (Beckwith, 1993, pp. 206-207; Petech, 1989, p. 155).

¹⁰⁵ When the information obtained from different sources is compared, it becomes possible that the cities of Kōngül and Kung-yüeh may be the same place (Beckwith, 1993, p. 47; Chavannes, 2007, pp. 90-91).

¹⁰⁶ It can be thought that Beckwith meant the Qarluqs with the term “*Three-surnamed Yen-mien Turks*”. As a matter of fact, there is a definition such as “uc qarluqs” or “yabghu of three tribes” in many local and foreign sources about Qarluqs, which are known to be formed by the union of three Turkish tribes (Beckwith, 1993, pp. 47-48; Taşağıl, 2014, p. 78).

Elteris Kutlug Kaghan put an end to fifty years of captivity of the Gok-Turks in the Chinese country (Sinor, 2008, pp. 310-311). He expanded the borders of his country, by connecting the Turkish tribes around him to the state in a ten years period together with Bilgä Tonyukuk who was his closest man. Upon the death of Kutlug Kaghan, who was the ruler of the Ötükän-based state until 692, Qapghan Kaghan ascended to throne of the Gok-Turk State (Taşağıl, 2004, pp. 18-20).

Meanwhile, the Chinese army led by Wang Hsiao-Chieh recaptured the Four Garrisons from the Tibetans in 692. The Tibetans attacked China in the second month of 694 by allying with the Western Turks. However, the Tibetan-Turkish alliance was defeated by General Wang Hsiao-Chieh. Not discouraged by this defeat, Tibetan forces attacked Lin-T'ao (T'ao-chou), a Chinese town located in the east of Gansu, in 695. Empress Wu-Hou assigned General Wang Hsiao-Chieh to prevent these attacks. As a matter of fact, in the war that took place in the third month of 696, the Chinese suffered a heavy defeat against the Tibetan army under the command of Tibetan Prime Minister Gar Triding Tsendro (Blon Ch'in-Ling) and his brother. Due to this defeat, General Wang Hsiao-Chieh was punished by being demoted (Huang Chi-Huei, 1970, pp. 60-61).

Under the rule of Qapghan Kaghan (692-716), the Eastern Turks started to organize regular raids to the Chinese borders. The Gok-Turks attacked the Liang-Chou region, close to the Tibetan territory of China, in the autumn of 696 and captured the city's governor Hsü-Ch'in-Ming¹⁰⁷. The event developed as follows: While Hsü-Ch'in-Ming was inspecting his soldiers, he suddenly came face to face with the Gok-Turk army in front of the city. Thereupon, the governor did not surrender the city directly and fought within his means. However, he could not escape from falling into the hands of the enemy (Beckwith, 1993, p. 58; Huang Chi-Huei, 1970, pp. 60-61).

¹⁰⁷ It is stated from Chinese sources that the ones attacking the region in the Annals named TCTC are Gok-Turk forces. However, according to some of the Chinese Annals, it was the Tibetans, not the Gok-Turks, who attacked the Liang-Chou region in the ninth month of 696 (Huang Chi-Huei, 1970, p. 60).

As is known, in 696, the Chinese forces suffered a great defeat in the face of the Tibetan army. After this defeat, peace talks started between the two countries. However, no result could be obtained from this. In fact, the Chinese statesman Kuo Yüan-Cheng presented the Chinese side's offer, but the Tibet side did not accept these conditions. During the negotiations, peace talks were interrupted due to the internal turmoil in Tibet. Meanwhile, the Turks were constantly attacking the regions at the northern tip of China, and these raids were putting pressure on the T'ang Government. Empress Wu-Hou, in the face of this difficult situation, decided to make a peace between the two countries by making an alliance agreement with the Turk Kaghanate through marriage (Beckwith, 1993, p. 60).

Meanwhile, in 699 there was a significant political turmoil among Western Turks. That year, the Kaghan of the Turk Empire, Qapghan, appointed his younger brother as “şad¹⁰⁸” over the five tribes in the east. In addition, he officially appointed his nephew¹⁰⁹ who was the son of İlteris, as *shad* over the five tribes in the west. Later, he appointed his son Bögü as “Little (or *T'o-hsi*) Kaghan” to a higher post on these two şads. Bilgä, who was assigned to a higher position than the standard şad position, was also made the leader of the On Oq Tribal Confederation. Nevertheless, despite the efforts of the Eastern Turks to establish authority over the Western Turks, the Turgish Qaghanate seemed to have already taken control of the Western Turk lands (Beckwith, 1993, pp. 61-62; Taşağıl, 2004, p. 28).

It was also at that time (early 700) that T'ong Yabghu Kaghan, known to the Chinese as A-shih-na Suei-tsu, came to the Tibetan palace. There is no definite information about the mission of T'ong Yabghu, who was sent to Turkestan in the summer of that year. Meanwhile,

¹⁰⁸ Şad (*shad*, *śad* etc.) is an administrative title. It comes after *Yabghu* in the hierarchy (Gömeç, 2000, p. 941).

¹⁰⁹ Taşağıl clearly states that the nephew of Kapghan namely Bilgä was appointed to this position. Beckwith also states that the person mentioned here is not Kül Tegin, but Bilgä Kaghan who is the other son of İlteris Kaghan (Beckwith, 1993, p. 62; Taşağıl, 2004, p. 28).

in the autumn of 700, Tibetan King Dusong Mangje¹¹⁰ (676-704), personally led the campaign of the Tibetan army on Ho-chou (Beckwith, 1993, pp. 62-63).

The Tibetans joined the Eastern Turks in a large-scale and successful raid on Liang-chou in 701. That summer, Tibetan King Dusong Mangje personally led his armies, this time in raids on places called Sung-chou and T'ao-chou. These raids were repeated the following spring, but there is no information about the consequences of the raids. The raids were the main reason why Kuo Yüan-chen was appointed as Governor-General of Liang-chou and Grand Commissioner of the armies of Lung-yu province in late 702. The task of the Governor-General was to protect this strategic city from the Tibetans and the Eastern Turks. According to Chinese sources, Kuo Yüan-chen has been significantly successful in this post through five years (Beckwith, 1993, pp. 63-64).

Tibetan King Dusong Mangje died in 704. His seven-year-old son Tride Tsugtsen became emperor in his place. However, since the emperor was young, his grandmother Trimalo assumed the regency of the king. In 709, the Tibetans sent their embassy delegation to the Chinese palace with gifts. The envoy conveyed the regent Trimalo's request to get the Tibetan king marry with a Chinese princess to the Emperor of China. Emperor Chung-tsung (705-710), who welcomed this request, chose the daughter of one of his relative namely Li Shouli to marry the king of Tibet. As a result, in 710, the daughter of Li Shouli, one of the T'ang princes, took the title Chin-ch'eng Kung-chu (Princess Chin-ch'eng) and was sent to Tibet as a bride (Huang Chi-Huei, 1970, pp. 70-71; Shakabpa, 1984, p. 33). It is certain that Chung-tsung's giving a Chinese princess to the King of Tibet as a bride had its repercussions in the Gok-Turk State. As a matter of fact, the Turkish ruler of the period, Bilgä Kaghan, would reproach on the matter a Chinese ambassador, who visited him in the following years (circa 725) (Togan, 2006, p. 304).

¹¹⁰ The Tibetan King named Khri'dus-srong Mang-po-rje is called Dusong Mangje in some sources because it is more understandable with today's language.

Upon the death of Qapghan Kaghan (716), Bilgä Kaghan (Mo-chü, Mo-chi-lien) with the title of Kiçig Šad (in Chinese: *Hsiao-sha*)¹¹¹ ascended the throne as the Kaghan of the Second Gok-Turk Qaghanate. Bilgä Kaghan (683-734) offered a peace agreement to the Chinese after coming to power. However, Emperor Hsüan-tsung refused. Around the year 718, the Chinese Emperor seemed to be planning a joint attack on the Gok-Turks with the help of the Khitan and Hsi tribes from the east and the Basmil, the Kyrgyz and various other Turkish groups from the north-west (The Cambridge History Of China Volume 3, 2008, p. 436).

Meanwhile, Tibet had severed its ties with the Eastern Gok-Turk Qaghanate in accordance with the terms of the peace treaty signed with China in 718. This situation can be seen in the letter of Tibetan Emperor Tride Tsugtsen to Chinese Emperor Hsüan-Tsung. The relevant section in the letter is as follows: "...Moreover, you (uncle) suspect that we are too close to our (nephew) Eastern Tu-Chüeh (Gok-Turk) Kaghan A-shih-na Ku-To-Lu (or Kutlug). We had a good relationship with them in the past. From now on, if the Uncle-Nephew state establishes the old sincere relationship, we will cut off our friendly relationship with them (ie, the Eastern Turks)" (Huang Chi-Huei, 1970, pp. 77-78). The Tibetan Empire did not attack China for the following five years (until 722), based on the peace agreement it made with China (Huang Chi-Huei, 1970, p. 79).

Tibet was planning an attack on China in the late 720s due to problems at the borders. For this reason, he approached the Turks while seeking an alliance. However, Bilgä Kaghan refused Tibet's request for alliance. At that time, China had opened a large-scale border market in Shuo-fang where Chinese silk was traded. Taking advantage of this market, the Gok-Turks may have rejected Tibet's request for alliance in order not to disrupt the trade environment (The Cambridge History Of China Volume 3, 2008, p. 436). Thus, China and

¹¹¹ There is an expression about Bilgä Kaghan in Chinese sources as "*his people would call him Kiçig (or Küçük, means: little) Šad*". However, there is no information about this title in the Old Turkic Inscriptions (Togan, 2006, p. 288).

Tibet began to fight again in the autumn of 722 (Huang Chi-Huei, 1970, p. 79). While its conflict with T'ang continues, it seems that the Tibetans continue their quiet alliance with the Eastern Turks. It is known that Bilgä Kaghan sent his ambassador to Tibetan Court in 720 (Beckwith, 1993, p. 92).

Meanwhile, the Chinese Emperor Hsüan-tsung (r. 712-756) has thought that the Eastern Gok-Turk Qaghanate was growing gradually and posed a danger to China. As stated on the previous page, Hsüan-tsung, who made a secret alliance with the Basmıl, Hsi (Tätäbi), Khitan, Kyrgyz and many similar tribes and their leaders, made a plan to attack the Gok-Turk Qaghanate. The army of the Chinese and their allies reached about 300 thousand people. The army under the command of General Wang Chün took action against the Gok-Turks in the winter of 720. However, the Chinese Emperor's simultaneous attack plan on the Turkish military camp went awry. The Basmıl Turks came before the other groups and attacked the center of the Gok-Turks, but they were defeated by the Gok-Turks because they came with a relatively weaker force. The Gok-Turks, who defeated the Basmıl Turks, later entered the Chinese settlements on the Gansu border and plundered them. They also raided the Pei-t'ing (Beshbaliq) Garrison in the west. They then defeated the Ho-hsi (Gansu) Military Governor and continued to raid against Kan-chou and Liang-chou, and to rob the settled Ch'i-pi Turkic tribes. It is not known whether Tibet was involved in this incident. However, the Tibetan army captured a Chinese fort called as "Sog-son" in the winter of 720-721 (Beckwith, 1993, p. 92; Taşağıl, 2018, pp. 167-168; The Cambridge History Of China Volume 3, 2008, p. 436).

Meanwhile, the Gok-Turks started raiding the Chinese settlements on the borders of Gansu, besides the Pei-t'ing Garrison in the west. After winning the war with the Chinese, the Gok-Turks sent an ambassador to the Chinese palace in 721 and wanted to make peace with the T'ang Dynasty. The result of the struggle between the Eastern Turks and the Chinese was a predicament. Hsüan-tsung accepted the peace offer of the Gok-Turks around 721-722.

Although the request of the Gok-Turk Kaghan to marry a Chinese princess was not rejected during the peace talks, this marriage was never realized. In addition, Bilgä Kaghan asked the Chinese Emperor to adopt him. This request of Bilgä Kaghan was accepted by Hsüan-tsung. The Turkish ambassador, who returned to his country at the end of the peace talks, was given plenty of gifts to take to his country (Huang Chi-Huei, 1970, pp. 81-82; Togan, 2006, p. 301).

Although there was no formal agreement between the two sides, at least the Emperor Hsüan-tsung acknowledged the mutual benefit of trade between the two countries in a letter he wrote. The relevant section in the letter is as follows: “While we buy Turkish sheep and horses, the Turks buy also the Chinese silk. The needs of both parties are met in abundance” (Beckwith, 1993, pp. 92-93).

The Emperor of China had planned to go on a tour of the eastern regions in 725. However, he was worried that the Gok-Turks, taking advantage of his absence, would organize an expedition to China. Therefore, he sent the Minister of Foreign Affairs namely Yüan-Chên for a meeting with the Gok-Turk Kaghan. The Chinese ambassador appeared before the Gok-Turk Kaghan in the fourth month of 725. Bilgä Kaghan had been seated in his marquee (Turkish: otağ) in a circular shape, together with his daughter, his brother named Kül Tegin, his vizier Tonyukuk and his other entourage, at the banquet he gave in honor of the Chinese minister in the Kaghanate. The Turkish Kaghan said to the Chinese minister: “The T’ang Empire gave Chinese girls as a bride to the Tibetans who came from the dog generation. While the Tātābis and Khitans were former slaves of the Turks, a kung-chu¹¹² bride was given even to them. The Turks demand a kinship in any case, but the T’ang Dynasty is withholding this grace only from us, what is the reason for this?” (Avirmed, 2011, p. 51; Togan, 2006, p. 304).

¹¹² It is thought that the word “kung-chu”, which means princess in Chinese, was borrowed by the Turks. As a matter of fact, this word of Chinese origin, which was pronounced as *konçuy* in the Gok-Turks period, is used to mean princess (Togan, 2006, p. 97).

The Chinese Minister Yüan-Chên replied to Bilgä Kaghan as follows: “Kaghan, you accepted to be the adopted son of the Emperor. So how can a father be a father-in-law at the same time?” In response to this answer, Bilgä Kaghan:

“You said it right. However, the rulers of Tātäbi (Hsi) and Khitan were able to marry Chinese princesses who still had the same surname, although they got granted the royal surname (Li) of the T’ang Dynasty from the Chinese Emperor. In this case, why shouldn’t our request be possible? We also heard that not all of the princesses who married them were the Emperor’s own daughters. It doesn’t matter whether the princess to be married is the own daughter of the Emperor or not, but we have demanded it of you several times. How do we look at the faces of other neighboring nations if our request is still not accepted?” he said (Togan, 2006, p. 305).

Upon this response, the Chinese ambassador said that he was dead right and said that he would convey his demands to Emperor Hsüan-tsung (Huang Chi-Huei, 1970, pp. 82-83). The Tibetan army was severely defeated by the Chinese army in the winter of 726 in a place called Ta-fei-ch’uan. Thereupon, the Tibetan forces had begun preparations to avenge this defeat. The Tibetans, who needed support, had sent a letter to Bilgä Kaghan asked him for help. However, this call was not welcomed positively by Bilgä Kaghan. Bilgä Kaghan sent this letter to Chinese Court through his minister named Mei-lu-ch’o (Buyruk Cur), instead of politely rejecting the offer of Tibetans and staying silent. The letter of the Tibetans reached the Emperor of China on October 6, 727. Emperor Hsüan-tsung was delighted that this letter was delivered to him. The Emperor of China has given the Turks concessions, undoubtedly for this reason. Accordingly, they would trade horses in exchange for silk and other commodities, in the place called Hsi-Shuo-chiang-ch’eng in Shuo-fang (Huang Chi-Huei, 1970, pp. 85-86). This issue is explained as follows in Chinese sources:

At that time, T'u-fan, namely Tibetans, sent a letter to Bilgä Kaghan and stated that they wanted to organize raids against China together. Bilgä Kaghan sent this letter with his envoy to the attention of Chinese Emperor (Togan, 2006, p. 312).

The Tibetans, whose requests for help were rejected by the Turks, nevertheless organized an expedition to China and besieged the Ch'ang-Lo town around eighty days. However, they could not capture the town and retreated. Thus, the relations between Tibetans and Eastern Turks were interrupted (Huang Chi-Huei, 1970, p. 86).

Kül Tegin, one of the sons of Elteris Kutlug Kaghan, the founder of the Second Gok-Turk Kaghanate, passed away in 731 when he was 47 years old. Thus, the Gok-Turks lost a courageous ancestor. The funeral of Kül Tegin was held in November 731 and a large number of representatives from China, Tibet, Persia, Kyrgyzstan, Sogdiana, Bukhara, Khitan country, Tātābi country, Turgish country and similar countries attended the ceremony in addition to the Gok-Turks. His brother Bilgä Kaghan, who was deeply saddened by this loss, had a Stone Inscription erected in memory of his brother in 732. There is a Chinese text on the west side of the inscription, and in addition Turkish text on the other three sides. The Kül Tegin Inscription which content of text was prepared by Bilgä Kaghan, was written by his nephew Yollug Tegin with the technique of carving on stone (Taşağıl, 2018, pp. 25, 61-62). The word Tibet is used in three different parts of the Kül Tegin Inscription, which is one of the most valuable inscriptions in terms of Turkish history. The word Tibet found on the south side of the inscription is briefly as follows: "I have dispatched an army till to the Toquz Ersin in the south, I stopped shortly before coming at Tibet" (Tekin, 2018, p. 35).

On the eastern front of the Kül Tegin Inscription, Tibet is clearly emphasized among the nations that came to the funeral of the deceased ancestors of the Gok-Turks. This section is briefly as follows: "So many people came to join their funerals such as Koreans, Tabgatchs, Tibetans, Avars, Kyrgyzs, Three Kurikans, Otuz-Tatars, Khitans, Tātābi and Byzantine

people and etc., for mourning and weeping” (Orkun, 1994, pp. 30-31). These two sections in which Tibet word included are totally the same with the Bilgä Kaghan Inscription.

Lastly, the word “Tibet” appears once again somewhere in the northern side of the Kül Tegin Inscription. Here Bilge Kaghan tells that his brother passed away and officials from various countries came to attend his funeral: “They came to condolences from neighboring states. Isiyi Likeng came as a representative of the Chinese Emperor. Also, Blon (in inscription: Bölön) came as the representative of the Tibetan Khan” (Ergin, 1989, pp. 29-30; Tekin, 2018, pp. 49-51).

It is thought that the word mentioned in the above text and transcribed from the Old Turkish Runic alphabet into the modern language in the form of *bölön/bölün* is identical to the Tibetan word “blon”. Scharlipp read the word in the old Turkish Inscription as *bölän*. He also says that this word is the Turkish pronunciation of “blon”, which means “senior government officer” or “minister” in Tibetan. In H. A. Jäschke’s dictionary, the meaning of the word “blon” is given as “to give advice, to counsel”, “to make arrangements” and “v. the following”. In the dictionary, “blon-po” phrase is defined as “officer, counsellor” or “high officer of state, minister, governor”. In the part where representatives coming to attend the funeral from various countries were introduced, the person coming from Tibet was stated as “bölön”. Therefore, it is quite possible that the word *bölön* was used here as a personal title and it is supposed to describe the person who came from Tibet and was the high representative of the king (Aydın, 2018, pp. 93-94; Jäschke, 2003, p. 385; Scharlipp, 1995, p. 50). The eldest son of Ilteris Kaghan, Bilgä Kaghan, the Great Turkish ruler, was poisoned by one of his ministers when he was 50 years old. After this incident, Bilgä Kaghan, who lied ill for a while, passed away after a short time (734). His funeral took place in June 735. Bilgä Kaghan wrote the content of the inscription erected in his name as well (Taşağıl, 2018, pp. 26, 62-63; Togan, 2006, p. 314). The Bilgä Kaghan Inscription has undergone a greater

deterioration than the K l Tegin Inscription, over the years. Most parts of the text have been erased through the years and become unreadable. As mentioned in the previous section, the word “Tibet” is used in two different places in the Bilg  Kaghan Inscription (Aydın, 2018, pp. 90-91).

As it is known, after the death of Bilg  Kaghan, the kaghans were not as successful as he was. As a matter of fact, after a while, riots started in the country. Basmil and Uighur forces started a rebellion in 742, taking the Qarluqs with them. The rebels defeated the Gok-Turk army. As a result, the rebellion movement initiated by various Turkish communities and supported by China laid low the Second Gok-Turk Empire (in 745). And a period has come to an end.

The manuscripts of historical, philological and literary value found in the Mogao Caves (or Caves of the Thousand Buddhas) near Dun-huang in China are called as Dun-huang Manuscripts. Among them, the Tibetan text number 1283 (Pelliot Tib tain 1283) is very important for Turkish historiography as it contains many information about Turks. Until today, important academicians such as Pelliot, Bacot, Ligeti, and Moriyasu have worked on this text. One side of the manuscript number 1283 of the Pelliot Collection contains a text on Buddhism written in Chinese. On the other side of the manuscript there are two Tibetan texts, both written in the same handwriting. The first of these is much longer, probably written for educational purposes and consists of a dialogue between a senior monk and a novice. A fragment of the Tibetan manuscript called as “P.T. 1283” can be seen in the picture below:

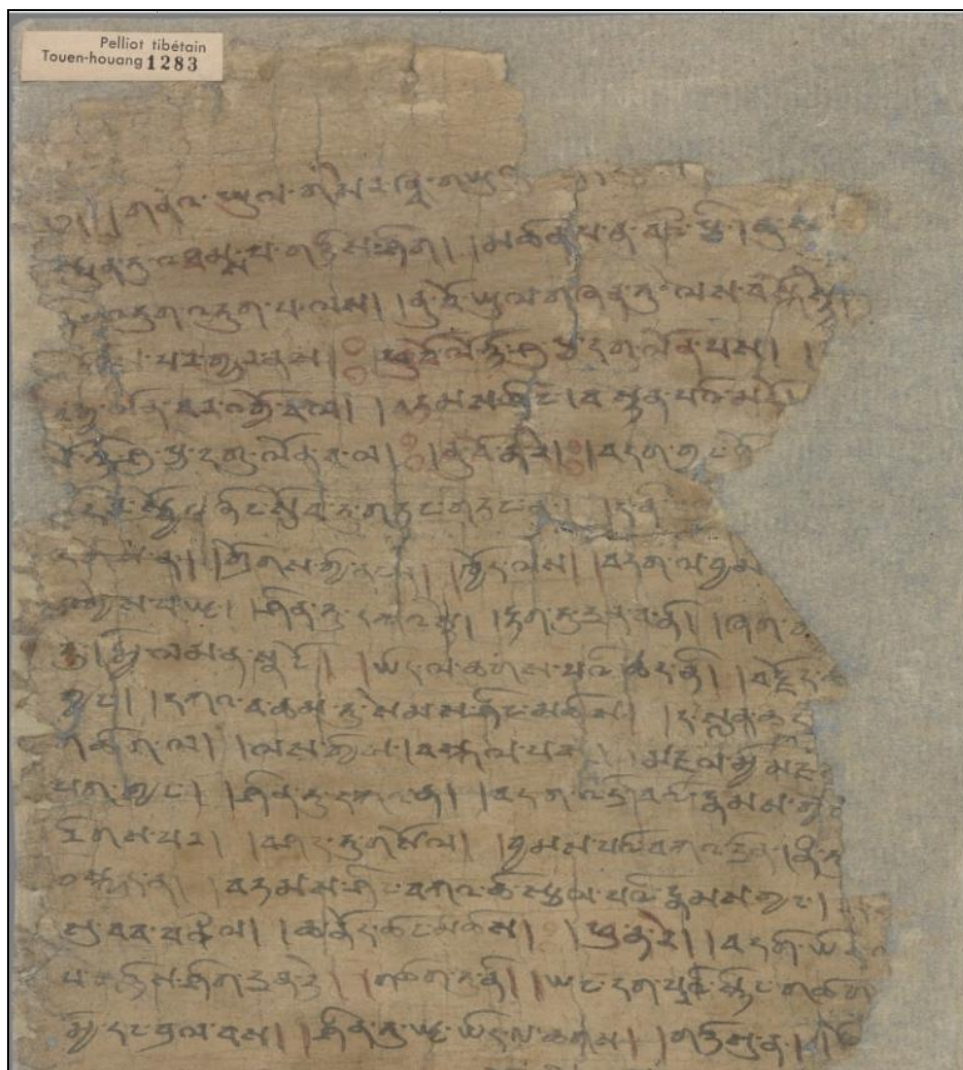


Figure 10. Dun-huang Manuscripts, Pelliot Tibetan Collection (BNF, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, 2009)

The second text is entitled “Report on the status of the rulers and tribes living in the north”.

So, this part of the text contains a report on the travel of five Uighur envoys¹¹³. In the Tibetan text, the event that led to the collapse of the Second Gok-Turk Empire is summarized. It is as follows according to the translation of Venturi: “On the north of that, there were five Basmel tribes which united with Hor and Gar-log tribes in a confederation. They overthrew together

¹¹³ Stating that the first and genuine title in the Tibetan text is “Byang phyogs na rgyal po du bzhugs pa’i rabs kyi yi ge’o” Venturi translates this title into English as “Text on the sequence of however many kings live in the North”. Examining the text, Bacot translated the title into French as “État des roi et tribus demeurant dans le Nord”. Tezcan translated the same title into Turkish as “Kuzeyde yaşayan hanların ve oymakların durumu” (Erkoç, 2018, p. 71; Tezcan, 1975, p. 304; Venturi, 2008, p. 3).

the rule of the kaghan, who was the ruler of ‘Bug Chor¹¹⁴. The Basmel chief ascended the throne with the title of *kaghan*, but the Hor and the Gar-log killed the Basmel kaghan. The Basmel tribe disbanded and became slaves” (Venturi, 2008, pp. 4, 28).

In the paragraph above, it is seen that the term ‘*Bug chor*’ is used for the Eastern Turks. In some sources, there is a theory that the word ‘*Bug chor*’ is the Tibetan equivalent of Mo-ch’o¹¹⁵ word, which is the Chinese transcription of Qapghan Kaghan (Beckwith, 1993, p. 58; Erkoç, 2018, p. 72). From the historical events described in the text, it is supposed that the ‘Bug chor’ phrase refers to the Eastern Turks. It may have been used to describe some of the tribes subjected to the Eastern Gok-Turk Empire, in some parts of the text (Ekrem, 2020, p. 968; Venturi, 2008, p. 4). In the following part of the text, there is a sentence as follows, “There are 12 tribes of the ‘Bug Chor Turks above the country which the Chinese call Ji ‘ur and the Turks call Ba-ker Pa-lig (Baqir Baliq)” (Venturi, 2008, p. 20). Afterwards, the names of these twelve tribes are counted in the text. Although not certain, it could be identified names of the some of the twelve tribes whose names are mentioned in the text. Academics such as Pelliot, Bacot, and Clauson have worked on this. For example, Clauson proposed that *A-sha-sde* may be “A-shih-te” tribe. Pelliot recommended *So-ni* to be identified with the “Su-ni” tribe of the Turks. And unidentified *Lo-lad* tribe was reconstructed as “Nu-la” by Pelliot (Venturi, 2008, p. 21). Czeglédý says that in the Tibetan manuscript number 1283 of the Pelliot Collection, it is clearly seen that “twelve tribes” of the Eastern Turks are mentioned. In addition, in Chinese sources, firstly in the documents belonging to the year 742, and laterly in a report on the An Lu-shan rebellion from the period between 750 and 760, it was mentioned about the twelve tribes of the Eastern Turks (Czegledy, 1972, p. 276). According to Chinese sources, it is stated that the Turkish Princess Hsien-li Bilgä died in the Chinese capital

¹¹⁴ It is understood from the historical flow of the events that the word “Hor” in the narration represents the Uighurs, the word “Gar-log” represents Qarluqs and the word “Basmel” represents another Turkish tribe, Basmils. Also, Eastern Turks seem to be identified with ‘Bug chor (Venturi, 2008, p. 28).

¹¹⁵ It is known that Mo-ch’o (Qapghan) Kaghan, is called as *Böğü* in Tonyukuk inscriptions (Venturi, 2008, p. 20).

Ch'ang-an (in 723) and her grave was found there. In the inscription on the tomb of the princess, "My father was the kaghan of the thirty tribes, and Toquz Oghuzs. And twelve clans were subordinate to my father Mo-ch'o Kaghan" is written (Ekrem, 2020, p. 969). Another important information about the Gok-Turks in Tibetan texts should definitely be mentioned here. The name *Zha ma Kha gan* is mentioned in three different section of the Tibetan text numbered "P.T.-1283" of the Dun-huang collection. According to Clauson, the kaghan mentioned here is Ozmis (or: Wu-su-mi-shih)¹¹⁶ Kaghan, the last kaghan of the Second Gok-Turk Empire. The ruler mentioned in the text may be Ozmis Kaghan, but he is not the last kaghan of the Gok-Turks. Ozmis Kaghan, after being killed by Uighurs, Qarluqs and Basmils who rebelled in 744, his son "Pai-mei" ascended the Gok-Turk throne. However, the end of Pai-mei Kaghan was similar to his father, he also was killed by the Uighurs in 745 (Taşağıl, 2018, p. 174; Venturi, 2008, pp. 20, 27, 29).

During the Gok-Turk Empire, bilateral relations were established with Tibet, but bilateral alliances were rarely seen. As it is known, after the collapse of the First Gok-Turk Empire, the Gok-Turks were divided into two as Western and Eastern Gok-Turks. Western Gok-Turks mostly allied themselves with the Tibetans and took the same side against China. However, the Eastern Turks followed a different policy. During the Second Gok-Turk Empire, Tibet's request to establish an alliance against China was not only rejected by Bilgä Kaghan, but also this alliance proposal was reported to Chinese Emperor. Bilgä Kaghan obtained various privileges for his people from the Chinese State in return of his notice about the letter. There is not much information about the course of Tibetan-Turkish relations in the approximately twenty years that passed from this incident with Bilgä Kaghan (726) to the collapse of the Second Gok-Turk Empire (745).

¹¹⁶ The name of Gok-Turk ruler Ozmis Kaghan is mentioned in the Tariat and Šine-Usu Inscriptions (Aydın, 2018, pp. 39, 49-50).

4.4. Relations with the Turgish Kaghanate

Western Gok-Turks went to a new organization in 635 and divided the country into ten separate tribes called “On Oq (means: ten arrows)”. Five of the tribes living in the east of the country are called Tu-lu tribal confederacy, and the remaining five in the west are called Nu-shih-pi tribal confederacy. The Turgish is the fourth tribe called Tou-k’i-che, one of the tribes in the five Tu-lu clans of the On Oq tribal confederation. In the historical records, their names are mentioned since 651. Therefore, the origin of the Turgish is based on the Western Turks. One of the important Turkish States in the Pre-Islamic Turkish history was founded by the Turgish tribe. Turgish has been recorded as “Tou-k’i-che” and “Tou-kiue” in Chinese sources, “Türkeş” and “Türkiş” in Islamic sources, “Türgiș” in Old Turkic Inscriptions and “Türgiș” in the Uighur documents (Salman, 2002, p. 412; Taşağıl, 2012, p. 471).

It is predicted that the word, which is mentioned in the Tibetan text number 1283 and transcribed as “Du-rgyas” by philologists, is used in the meaning of “Turgish” (Venturi, 2008, p. 30). The similar transcription is seen in other sources as “Dur-gyis” (Hoffmann, 2008, p. 382). According to the information we received from Chinese sources, under the leader who has the title of Ho-Lo-Che Cor, Turgish people were living along the Borotala River, which flows into Ebinor Lake. Some of the Turgish people migrated to the Lake Issyk-Kul region after 656 (Taşağıl, 2012, p. 471). According to the sources, Turkic Turgish tribe lived in a wide region from the middle of the 7th century to the middle of the 8th century, from the west of the Altai to the Syr Darya River. It is known that they are densely found on the banks of the Ili River, Lake Issyk-Kul and its vicinity, the valley of the Chu River and the banks of the Talas River (Salman, 2002, pp. 412-413).

When A-shih-na Ho-lou (Ho-lu), the last kaghan of the Western Gok-Turk State, was defeated by the Chinese in his struggle to gain the independence of his country (656-658), the tribes that were vassal to Turks were also taken under captivity. Among them, the Turgish

tribe also had to submit to China in 657. The Chinese occupation showed itself in the form of direct administration in the region. As a requirement of this form of management, local governments directly affiliated with China have been established in the region. Meanwhile, two local governments were established in Turgish land. This new Chinese administrative system showed itself firmly until 665. However, the Tibetans, who got stronger after this date, started to force the Chinese Empire from the west. With the collapse of the Gok-Turks, struggles began between China, Tibet, Arabs and Turks to fill the authority gap in the region. The aim of this struggle was to dominate Turkestan. Meanwhile, China has sometimes allied itself with Tibet and sometimes with the Turks. In the eighth century, four powerful states, such as the Arab Caliphate, the Chinese Empire, the Eastern Turkic Qaghanate, and the Tibetan Empire, were fighting a fierce struggle for the sake of domination of East and West Turkestan. This period was such a period, while the Turgish People were fighting on one front, they had to keep the continuation of friendly relations on other fronts. Because the Turgish people alone were not in a position to settle accounts with all of the powerful States in question, at the same time. It is known that after the Eastern Gok-Turk State lost its independence, it was ruled by the “puppet” administrators appointed by the Chinese Empire. After this date, the Chinese focused on Western Turks. The Chinese ruler, who did not want the existence of powerful states around him, wanted to strengthen his authority in those regions by establishing military garrisons in the territory of the country far from the center. An-hsi protectorate-general administration with the title “Pacify the West” was established in Turfan (Hsi-chou) in 640 with the advice of leading statesmen. The An-hsi administration was later moved to Kucha (in 652). Additionally, the Four Garrisons under the An-hsi administration were established in West Turkestan. These were: Kucha, Khotan, Tokmak¹¹⁷ and Kashgar (Huang Chi-Huei, 1970, p. 40).

¹¹⁷ Turgish ruler Su-lu Kaghan captured the city of Tokmak in 719. Upon this, four garrisons were completed by including Karashahr in place of Tokmak (Salman, 1990, p. 922).

China has prepared a strong ground for establishing hegemony in all western countries through the garrisons it has established. However, the Tibetans, who would unexpectedly shake the balance of power in the region, started raids in the East Turkestan region in the 670s. By getting stronger, Tibet kept the Chinese armies under control in the Tarim Basin from the 670s to the 692s and cut the possibility of China's intervention in the West (Gibb, 1923, pp. 22-23). Its struggle with Tibet, the new rival of the T'ang Empire, spread to all of the western borders of China and to the Tarim Basin, rapidly. It is seen that the Tibetans have grown stronger since the 670s and sometimes cooperate with the chiefs of Turkish tribes against China. As it is known, the Eastern Gok-Turks gained their independence in 682 under the leadership of Kutlug Ilteris. Their headquarters were again Ötükän. At the same period of time, the remaining Turkish tribes after the collapse of the Western Turkic State were in a scattered situation. In 686, the Emperor of China appointed A-shih-na Börü Šad Hu-se-lo under his command as the kaghan to rule the Western Turks living in dispersed form. Hu-se-lo was harsh on his people, so he was not liked very much. In addition, Hu-se-lo fled to China in fear in the face of the attack of the Eastern Gok-Turk Kaghan Kutlug. After this incident, Wu-chih-le, one of the Turkish chiefs who had the opportunity, united around 690, around all his tribes. Uniting the Western Turks around itself, Wu-chih-le established a new state under the leadership of the Tu-lu tribal union (Salman, 2002, pp. 412-420). This State, whose center was the city of Tokmak, was called the Yellow Turgish State¹¹⁸. Wu-chih-le had two centers, one in Tokmak where was in Nu-shih-pi land, the other in Tu-lu land, in Kung-yüeh north of Ili (Chavannes, 2007, p. 311).

Having gained its independence from China, the Eastern Gok-Turk Kaghan, organized expeditions to China in the east, on the other hand, he sent an army under the command of Tonyukuk against the Turgish tribe who did not recognize their authority in the west. The

¹¹⁸ In Chinese Sources, they are referred as the "yellow-bone" branch of Turgish and are also stated to be a "very special tribal group" (Salman, 2002, pp. 412-420).

Gok-Turks defeated the Turgish in the war that took place in the place called Bolçu. As a result of this victory, all of the On Oq tribes recognized the sovereignty of Kapghhan Kaghan in 698. Meanwhile, with the death of Wu-chih-le Kaghan in 706, his son Suo-ko (Saqał)¹¹⁹ came to power (Chavannes, 2007, pp. 311-312; Taşağıl, 2004, p. 28). One of the important events in the Saqał's rule is related to the commander named Kül Cur¹²⁰ one of the Turgish Generals. Kül Cur, who has an ambition to be on the throne of Turgish, has entered into cooperation with T'ang Dynasty. Kuo Ch'ien-kuan, a T'ang General, and the Western Turk General A-shih-na Kül Cur Chung-chieh joined forces to invade Ferghana during the period of approximately 705-706. Kül Cur, was previously on the side of Wu-chih-le Kaghan. However, after becoming enemies with Suo-ko, son of Wu-chih-le Kaghan, he left the Turgish and became allied with the T'ang Dynasty. General Kuo Ch'ien-kuan and Kül Cur's original intention was to recruit soldiers to eliminate Suo-ko. And then it was to make a pro-T'ang person from the A-shih-na family the ruler of On Oq tribal confederacy. Kuo Ch'ien-kuan and Kül Cur could not conquer the Ferghana Region, but they harassed the people of the region with their looting and robberies. Thereupon, the people of the region called the Tibetans and the Western Turks for help. The kaghan of the Western Turks, A-shih-na Sui-tsu¹²¹ and Tibetan troops, who came to the region at the request for help, drove Kül Cur and his ally General Kuo Ch'ien-kuan out of the Ferghana. They pursued them, possibly through passageways over Kashgar, till to the Tarim Basin. After this, it is seen that Tibetan-Turkish alliance completed their victory with the raids on the territory of the Four Garrisons (Beckwith, 1993, pp. 71-72; Salman, 2002, pp. 412-420; Taşağıl, 2004, p. 20). It is known that Qapghhan Kaghan acted very harshly against his people in the last years of his rule.

¹¹⁹ It is seen that the name of Suo-ke (Kaghan) is used as *Saqał* in some sources. Beckwith states that the Chinese transcription of the word is So-ko (Beckwith, 1993, p. 74).

¹²⁰ The title "Kül Cur" used with the name of the Turgish General indicates that he comes from the Hu-lu-wu tribe, the second subgroup of the Tu-lu branch of the On Oqs and is even the chief of that tribe (Beckwith, 1993, p. 71; Taşağıl, 2017, p. 142).

¹²¹ According to the sources, it is seen that the Western Gok-Turk Kaghan A-shih-na Sui-tsu (T'ui-tzu) was also among those who have been called for help by the people of the region. A-shih-na Sui-tsu is the person who was chosen as the Kaghan by the Western Gok-Turk tribes in 692 (Taşağıl, 2002, pp. 323-367).

Turgish tribe was also among the tribes that rebelled in this period. The Gok-Turk State sent an army to the Turgish who rebelled. Turgish people were defeated in the battle that took place in Bolçu. The ruler of Turgish namely Suo-ko, his brother Che-nu, and the leading politicians (e.g., yabghu and śad) of Turgish confederacy were killed in the battle. As a result, the Yellow Turgish confederacy, who was defeated, surrendered to the Gok-Turk State. The Turkish ruler Qapghan Kaghan placed them in a place called Tabar. It can be said that after this date, confederacy of Yellow Turgish disappeared (Taşağıl, 2017, p. 147).

Meanwhile, the Turgish people began to regain their old power around 715 under the command of a leader named Ch'e-pi-shih Su-lu who was from the Kara Turgish branch and bears the title of "Cur". The scattered Turgish tribes were quickly reorganized and united by Ch'e-pi-shih Su-lu. The Chinese transcribed the name of this person who attracted their attention as "Su-lu". However, as he had a tough competition with the Arabs in the following years, he would be recognized by them as "the father of competition" or as "Abû Muzâhim", which means "troublesome" (Beckwith, 1993, pp. 84-85; Karayev, 2008, p. 59).

Su-lu Cur, who reestablished the Turgish union, sent a delegation of envoy to the Chinese court in 714 or 715. Therefore, it has been seen that the power of Turgish confederacy under the leadership of Su-lu has increased rapidly. Su-lu, who relaxed after the death of Qapghan Kaghan in 716, declared himself "kaghan" at the end of the summer of 716. Having an army of 200 thousand people in a short time, Su-lu Cur was trying to re-establish the superiority of the Turgish confederacy in the region. By the summer of 717, the Turgish people had regained most of their former power.

The Chinese Empire occupied the city of Pei-t'ing in 712 and then established a military frontier command there as well. The command they established here caused the interruption of the tax revenues received by the Turkish tribes living in Pei-t'ing and its surroundings from caravans coming from the north (Salman, 1990, p. 932).

There was a longstanding border problem between the Turgish and the Chinese Empire. Since its establishment, the Four Garrisons have been a barrier between the Chinese Empire and the Turkish states. And it was doing a lot of damage to the Turkish states in terms of trade. At that time the Tibet Empire was a fierce enemy of the Chinese Empire. This situation provided a great advantage for the Turgish Qaghanate. Su-lu took advantage of China's struggle with Tibet and began preparations to capture the Four Garrisons.

Su-lu Kaghan, who established the Turgish State by declaring himself as a ruler in 716, was not in good terms with China. In 717, the army of triple (Tibet, Arab and Turgish) ally, led by the Turgish, surrounded and captured Po-han (Yaka Arik) and Aksu (Ta-shih-ch'eng), both north of the Tarim Basin. Thereupon, Assistant Grand Protector General of the Pacified West of the T'ang namely Chia-huei, ordered A-shih-na Hsien¹²² to lead the troops of the "three-surnamed Qarluqs" to abolish the siege. The forces led by A-shih-na Hsien forced the allied Tibet, Turgish and the Arab army to withdraw. In this war, it is striking that nearly all of the T'ang army consists of Turks, albeit from different Turkish tribes. The Arabs under the rule of Al-Yaskurî moved towards Tashkent and fled to the Islamic lands. At the same time, a Tibetan army was severely defeated by the Lung-yu Military Governor, Kuo Chih-yün, at the "Bends of the Yellow River". Thus, an early attack aimed at the re-conquest of the Tarim Basin, although well-coordinated, could not succeed (Beckwith, 1993, p. 88; Huang Chi-Huei, 1970, pp. 75-76).

Although it is claimed in Chinese sources that A-shih-na Hsien gained success as a result of this war in 717, it is known that China had to leave Tokmak and many surrounding cities in the period until 719. Therefore, it can be said that A-shih-na Hsien achieved only regional successes. Tokmak was one of the Four Garrison cities. It was also a strategic center

¹²² A-shih-na Hsien was commissioned by China to lead the On Oq Confederacy in 702, being given the title of General of the Brave Guardians of the Right (Taşağıl, 2017, p. 144).

through which the Silk Road runs. The Qaghanate of Turgish, by seizing this city, also captured the Northern Silk Road (Salman, 2002, pp. 412-420).

Although the Turgish raids on the Chinese borders continued, the Emperor of China benefited from diplomacy as well as military struggle in the fight against them. For example, in 723 Emperor Hsüan-tsung gave Princess Chin-ho who is the daughter of A-shih-na Huai-Tao (leader of the one of the Western Turk tribes who became vassal to China before) to Su-lu as a wife. Meanwhile, Su-lu did not loosen up with the titles given by China, did not deviate from his goal and continued a foreign policy as he had planned before (Bielenstein, 2005, pp. 408-409; Taşağıl, 2017, p. 147).

As it is known, the Turgish Qaghanate took hold of the city of Tokmak from the T'ang in 719. In the same year, the king of Bukhara sought help from the Chinese court. Upon this, the Emperor of China asked the Turgish kaghan to help the people of Transoxiana in their struggle with the Arabs (Beckwith, 1993, p. 90).

According to the sources, in 724, T'ang appointed an unpopular person named Tu Hsien as the military governor of the Western Region. Tu Hsien's arbitrary and harsh policies came to light in the official market place in Kucha in the autumn of 726. Su-lu's wife, named Chin-ho, sent a Turgish envoy together with 1000 horses to the joint market in Kucha for trading. When the envoy of the Turgish Kaghan conveyed Princess Chin-ho's commercial offer to Tu Hsien, Military Governor Tu Hsien dismissed the envoy by saying, "Who did give to an A-shih-na woman the courage to teach me my job". The governor not only spoke sharply to the Turgish envoy, but he kept the envoy in captivity and got him beat with a stick. In addition, many of the horses that the messenger brought with him, forgotten under the heavy snowstorm, died by freezing. Su-lu was very angry with these events (Beckwith, 1993, pp. 97-98; Chavannes, 2007, pp. 96-97).

Su-lu, who was very angry with the Chinese, made a secret alliance with Tibet after a while. The parties that mutually agreed, combined their military forces and attacked the Four Garrison (726 or 727). Allied forces first surrounded Turfan and plundered and then attacked Kucha. It is seen that the Military Governor of Kucha, Tu Hsien, could not defend the city well, against the siege. Probably for this reason, he was given a different task and summoned to the Chinese court. After these, T'ang Emperor appointed his officer named Chao I-cheng as the General Military Governor of Kucha. Although the new governor took defensive cautions against the siege, he could not escape from defeat. The allied army of Turgish-Tibet plundered the town Kucha they captured. The people of the city were taken prisoner, the granary was unlocked and the interior was plundered, and all the livestock and food stocks of the people were seized as spoils. The incident is described in Chinese Sources as "In 727 Turgish Kaghan Su-lu and his ally Tibet besieged An-hsi, but Governor Chao I-cheng pushed them back". Meanwhile, the siege of Kucha by the allied (Tibetan and Turgish) forces lasted until the beginning of the winter season. With the arrival of winter, the army had to retreat when conditions got tough. Military operations and siege lasted as long as eighty days. However, this siege was not a complete disaster for China. The main disaster in the Central Asian battlefields was the consolidation of the Tibet-Turgish alliance (Beckwith, 1993, pp. 102-103; Taşağıl, 2017, pp. 147-148).

The Tibetan army was in the western Central Asia, Turkestan, in 729, not in the Tarim or Dzungaria Basins, where the Chinese did not notice them. They were apparently there at the request of the inhabitants. The oppressive policies of the Umayyad governor, Aśras al-Sulamî caused the revolt movement that was likely to occur between both Sogdians¹²³ and Arabs around Transoxiana. Aśras al-Sulamî caused the revolt of the local people because he received tax (Arabic: *cizye*) from Muslims in addition to non-Muslims. When the situation

¹²³ Between 706 and 715, Sogdiana was captured by the famous Umayyad Governor of Khurasan, Kuteybe b. Muslim and came under the Arabic rulership (Taşağıl, 2009, p. 349).

became serious, the Khurasanians called the Western Turks under the administration of Su-lu for help. It seems that the Khurasan and Turgish forces, with the help of their Tibetan allies, drove the Arab forces from Sogdiana almost completely. The Umayyad army, which was in a difficult situation, headed towards Bukhara, but was attacked by the Turgish on the way.

Upon this, Caliph Hishām sent reinforcements under the command of Junayd al-Murrî, so that the Umayyad forces were able to escape from the hands of the Turks (Özkuyumcu, 1998, p. 148). Only the city of Samarkand and the castles of al-Dabûsiyya and Kamarğa remained in the hands of the Arabs. Su-lu and his allies besieged the Samarkand as well. Thereupon, the governor of the city requested reinforcements from the central government. Su-lu lifted the siege upon the arrival of an army of twenty thousand people sent as reinforcements and the onset of severe winter condition (Beckwith, 1993, pp. 108-109; Comparetti, 2002, p. 165; Salman, 2002, p. 420).

The Turgish and their allies thought it was an easier target and attacked the Kamarğa fortress, which could not be captured before. However, the Arab garrison there unexpectedly proved to be a formidable opponent. Su-lu was disturbed by the prolongation of the siege. Assassins selected from among those who defended the Arab ranks during the long-lasting conflicts, repeatedly attempted to kill the Su-lu Khan. However, it could not achieve a result. The Arabs placed the sniper behind the moat wall. Fortunately, the shot of the sniper did not do him any serious damage, thanks to the *Tibetan armor* he was wearing. Later, another marksman shot him. The arrow fired by the marksman was stuck in Su-lu Kaghan's chest this time, but he was saved from death thanks to his armor (Beckwith, 1993, pp. 109-110). The famous Tibetan armor (armor made of chain braid) protecting Su-lu Kaghan was well known by T'ang historians, they describe this armor as follows: "The men and horses all dress Tibetan armor made of chains. The crafting of the armor is extremely good. It envelops them completely and leaves openings for only the two eyes of a person. So powerful bows and

sharp swords cannot injure those who dressed it” (Beckwith, 1993, pp. 109-110). See below an example of the Tibetan armor and helmet:



Figures 11-12. Tibetan armor and helmet, the centuries between 17th and 19th (Neratova, 2020, p. 154).

Arab sources do not mention much about the Tibetans in Su-lu’s army. But Tibetan forces seem to have participated in this operation, or at least some of it. Thus, it appears that the Tibetan army joined the Turgish forces at least second time in three years (Beckwith, 1993, p. 110).

It is clearly seen that Su-lu Kaghan is a statesman who believes in the importance of establishing diplomatic relations with foreign countries. During this period, Su-lu, who completely directed his political and military intensity towards the west, also developed successful diplomatic relations in the east with Tibet and the Gok-Turk States (Bielenstein, 2005, p. 409).

As it is known, Su-lu married the daughter of A-shih-na Huai-Tao, the nominal head of Western Turks under China's rule, in 723. In addition, Su-lu has another diplomatic dynastic marriage with a Tibetan princess. Turgish ruler married with the Tibetan Princess namely *Dron-ma-lod* in 734¹²⁴. It can be easily said that with this marriage, the Turgish-Tibet alliance has become stronger. Su-lu Kaghan married the daughter of the King of Tibet and established a sincere friendship and alliance with Tibet. Su-lu, known to have also so-called Chinese origin and Eastern Turkish origin wives, in conclusion he had three wives. Since Su-lu felt safe thanks to the alliances he established, he focused on the problems he had with China in the following period (Beckwith, 1993, p. 111; Bielenstein, 2005, p. 409; Hoffmann, 2008, p. 382).

Meanwhile, suspicions arose in the Chinese court that the Tibetan Empire and Turgish Qaghanate had formed a secret alliance against China. China's growing suspicion on this issue is evident from several official imperial writings with an uncertain date, thought to date from the mid-730s. The Chinese confirmed their suspicion when they caught a Turgish delegation of envoy apparently going to the Tibetan Court. At that time, the Turgish delegation led by the "Kul Inancu" was passing the Pamirs with the gifts (for the King of Tibet) and letters they carried with them. It is stated in the sources that Kul Inancu who has been captured in 735 was executed (Beckwith, 1993, p. 111; The Cambridge History Of China Volume 3, 2008, p. 432). The Turgish, in retaliation for the sentencing of the captured delegation to execution by Liu Huan who is the Military Governor of Pei-t'ing, raided the Pacified West (734-735). In the face of the Turgish raid, the Chinese forces resisted under the command of Wang Hu-ssu, the T'ang Military Governor of the West. It is known that Kashgar, Qocho (modern Kara-khoja) and possibly Aksu regions were besieged by the

¹²⁴ According to some sources, the dynastic marriage took place in 732 (Hoffmann, 2008, p. 382).

Turgish forces for a long time during the events (Beckwith, 1993, pp. 111-112; The Cambridge History Of China Volume 3, 2008, p. 432).

Meanwhile, around the year 736, the Tibetan army was in motion under the command of General Cog-ro Manporje. In the autumn or winter of 736, they were walking to Turkestan via Little Balûr. Thereupon, the king of Little Balûr immediately sent an envoy to T'ang Court to complain about the situation. Apparently, Tibet's Little Balûr expedition is frequently mentioned in the imperial communiqués of the Chinese statesman Ch'ang Chiu-ling. In his letter to the King of Tibet, Emperor Hsüan-tsung of China stated that he heard that General Manporje was seen moving westward. In his letter the Emperor Hsüan-tsung, "What is the reason your army is marching west? If you are participating in the Turgish forces to overthrow our Military Governorship, you will certainly not succeed," said. Therefore, it is quite clear that around the end of 736, a large Tibetan power from somewhere west of the Pamirs entered Central Asia (possibly in response to an envoy sent by Su-lu)¹²⁵. Meanwhile, the Chinese who reacted to the Tibetan movement in Balûr invaded North East Tibet in early 737 and suddenly broke the seven-year peace agreement (Beckwith, 1993, pp. 114-115).

It is seen that after 734 Arabs were dealing with their own internal problems. A power struggle started between the Umayyads and the Abbasids. Meanwhile, the city-states in Transoxiana, as well as Tukhâristân and Sogdian Peoples were on the side of Su-lu Kaghan, who was respected in the region. Su-lu, who was against the Umayyads, went on an expedition in 737 to provoke the local people against the Umayyads. However, he was not very successful due to the betrayal of the malik of Gūzgānān. Su-lu Kaghan was killed by one of his commanders named Bagha Tarkan Kul Cur, in 738, when he was about to start a campaign again (Salman, 2002, pp. 420-421). Coming from the "Yellow Bone" branch of the Turgish, Bagha Tarkan ruled his country for a few years after killing Su-lu Kaghan. However,

¹²⁵ In his letter to Turgish Kaghan, Hsüan-tsung stated that he had sent everything captured from the envoy named Kul Inancu to the king of Tibet, Mes-Agtshom (Beckwith, 1993, p. 114).

it had difficulty in fusing the “Yellow Bone” branch of the Turgish tribes with the “Black Bone” ones. As a matter of fact, when it comes to the year 742, it is seen that the people of the “Black Bone” Turgish chose El Etmis Kutlug Bilgä as their leader. After the murder of Bagha Tarkan in 744, it is seen that he ruled both branches of the Turgish for four more years. The T’ang dynasty appointed him as the new On Oq kaghan with an official certificate granted to El Etmis Kutlug Bilgä on July 26, 744 (Chavannes, 2007, p. 393). El Etmis Kaghan was an ally of China, but he also had good relations with Tibet. In late 744, the Turgish envoy that came to the Tibetan court paid homage to the emperor, perhaps in an effort to revive the Turgish-Tibet alliance. However, this was a belated move for the Turgish people. The visit of the Turgish envoy in 744 is the last information given in the sources regarding the “Turgish-Tibet” relations (Beckwith, 1993, pp. 125-126; Salman, 2002, pp. 412-420; Taşağıl, 2017, p. 150).

It is known that Tibet cooperates with the Turgish and the Arabs (Caliphate) to prevent the progress of China. The presence of the emissaries of these two states at the Tibetan court in 732 and 744 confirms this (Hoffmann, 2008, p. 382). The second arrival date (744) of the Turgish and Arab emissaries to the Tibetan court is quite significant. As a matter of fact, the history of the turmoil that broke out in the Second Gok-Turk State was the same year. The fact that the Turgish Qaghanate had diplomatic relations with the Altai-Sayan peoples during the Bagha Tarkan period suggests that they may have been involved in the plans for the elimination of the Gok-Turk State. As it is known, the Second Gok-Turk State was destroyed by the alliance of the Basmil, Qarluq and Uighurs. It is not known whether the Turgish Qaghanate and/(or) Tibetan States had a political influence on the collapse of the Gok-Turk State. From the “black-bone” branch of Turgish, a kaghan named A-to Pei-lo sent an envoy to the Chinese court in 759. After this date, the names of the Turgish are not found in the sources (Salman, 2002, p. 420; Taşağıl, 2017, p. 150).

4.5. Relations with the Qarluq Kaghanate

One of the important Turkish communities in Turkish history is the Qarluqs. When they were first seen in history, they are thought to have lived on the banks of the Pu-ku-chen River located in the west of the Altai Mountains. It is seen that the Qarluqs are not counted among the Toles tribes in Chinese sources, instead they are shown from the Gok-Turk dynasty like the Turgish. Therefore, the Qarluqs are considered as a branch of the Gok-Turks. Qarluqs, which are kinfolk of the Gok-Turks, are essentially a community of tribes consisting of three tribes. These three tribes are Mou-ts'e (Mou-luo), Ch'ih-ssu (P'o-fu) and T'a-shih-li. Since they consist of three tribes, it is seen in various sources that they are referred to as "yabghu of three tribes", "Uc Qarluqs" or shortly "three-surnamed Qarluqs" (Dobrovits, 2004, p. 258). The Qarluqs, which are also mentioned in the Orkhon Inscriptions, are defined by Németh as "a strong Turkish community living in the east of the Western Turks, between the Altai Mountains and the upper parts of the Irtysh River" (Németh, 1969, p. 14).

Studies by linguists show that the name "Gar-log" is used specifically for the Qarluq in some Tibetan texts (Hoffmann, 1950, p. 191; Taşağıl, 2017, p. 80; Venturi, 2008, p. 30).

Qarluqs were attached to China around 657, together with the three tribes that formed them. China gave the title of military governor to the leaders of the three Qarluq tribes. In the following years, these three tribes moved south and reached the foothills of the Tien-shan Mountains. The Qarluqs, who have recovered its strength since 665, although were still subject to the Chinese Empire, they began to live independently from the Eastern and Western Gok-Turks. Its leaders, who used the title of "kul erkin" in the past, later started to use the title "yabghu" (Salman, 2001, pp. 509-510).

It is not known exactly when the Qarluqs came to the shores of the Lake Issyk-kul and Lake Syr Darya. After the collapse of the Western Gok-Turk Qaghanate in 657, a part of the Qarluqs was attached to China. It's strongly possible that the remaining ones to have migrated

to the west after this date and came the mentioned region. The Tibetan raids, especially towards the west of China since the 665s, have been good for the Turkish tribes that were vassal to China. Meanwhile, the Tibetan army combined with the Kashgar and Kung-yüeh¹²⁶ peoples in 665 and attacked the city of Khotan. While the Chinese were dealing with the Tibet threat coming from the west, the Qarluqs, who regained their old power, started to act independently from China. After this date, the leader of the Qarluq started to use the title of “yabghu”. It is stated that the Qarluqs were first seen in this region in 670, when they expelled the Chinese from Kashgar together with their ally, Tibetans. However, why and how they got here is unknown. In addition, it is stated in the sources that the Tibetan army, which entered the Tarim Basin in the 670s, demolished the walls of the city of Kucha with the help of the Turks and the Khotanese (Gumilev, 2019, p. 315; Salman, 1981, pp. 176, 189).

It is seen that the Qarluqs, who started to act independently from China, continued this situation until the reign of Kapgan Kaghan (692-716). It is known that the Qarluqs, in the same period, started to migrate into the Pei-t'ing region, which is one of the important centers on trade routes (Salman, 2002, pp. 421-424).

There is a record in Chinese sources that when Emperor Kao-tsung went to worship the sacred Mount T'ai (in 666), the Qarluq chief Ch'i-li Tudun and many other tribal chiefs also attended this ceremony. After this incident in 666, until the 700s, there was no mention of Qarluqs in Chinese sources. As a matter of fact, it is recorded in the Chinese chronicles that a Qarluq ambassador came to the Chinese Court in 711. In addition, in the Old Turkic Inscriptions, the events that took place between the Gok-Turks and the Qarluqs during the period of Kapgan Kaghan, the ruler of the Second Gok-Turk Empire, are mentioned. It is stated that the relations between the Qarluqs and Gok-Turks deteriorated after a Qarluq rebellion, which was stated to have taken place in 711 (Taşağıl, 2017, p. 83).

¹²⁶ In the sources, Kung-yüeh is mentioned as a branch of the Western Gok-Turks (The Cambridge History Of China Volume 3, 2008, p. 285).

The Qarluqs, who rebelled against the Gok-Turk rulership in 711, again declared their loyalty to China, together with some of the Turgish tribes in 714. It is seen that the Qarluqs, who are militarily talented, supported the Chinese army in wars after this date (Taşağıl, 2017, p. 83). As known, in 717, the army of triple (Tibet, Arab and Turgish) ally, led by the Turgish, surrounded and captured Aksu and Po-han (Yaka Arik), both north of the Tarim Basin. Thereupon, Assistant Grand Protector General of the Pacified West of T'ang namely Chia-huei, ordered A-shih-na Hsien to lead the troops of the "three-surnamed Qarluqs" to abolish the siege. The Chinese army led by A-shih-na Hsien forced the allied Tibet, Turgish and the Arab army to withdraw. The remarkable detail about this war is this, while the Turgish army was allied with the Tibetans, the Qarluqs fought against them in the Chinese army (Beckwith, 1993, p. 88; Huang Chi-Huei, 1970, pp. 75-76).

The Qarluqs acted together with the Uighurs and the Basmils during the riots that broke out after the death of Bilgä Kaghan, and was effective in the collapse of the Second Gok-Turk State (745) and the establishment of the Uighur State. At first, the Qarluqs, who got along well with the Uighurs, rebelled against the Uighur State many times from 746 to 759 (Salman, 2002, pp. 421-424).

The year 750 actually represents a period in which the Tibetan Empire was in military decline. In the north, the Qarluqs migrated to the lands of the Western Turks and they were struggling with the weak Turgish people to become the dominant power in the region. The Arabs were in a better condition off than the Tibetans. The Abbasid Dynasty, which put an end to the Umayyad Dynasty, had taken back some major cities such as Samarkand. And many important cities (including Bukhara and Kish) that rebelled during the collapse of the Umayyads were being recaptured. Other regions, such as Eastern Tukhâristân and Khuttal, apparently maintained their independence. Although Tashkent offered its allegiance to China, it remained independent. In short, the Chinese and Arabs were both the dominant powers and

also colonial power centers in Central Asia by the middle of the 8th century (Beckwith, 1993, p. 137).

Although information on this subject is limited, as far as we know, at the beginning of 750, the kings of Ferghana and Tashkent began to be hostile to each other. After a while, an event took place that changed the course of history. In 751, in the place called Atlakh where is on the banks of the Talas (Taraz) River, a battle lasting about five days took place between the Chinese and Arab armies. Towards the end of the war, the Qarluq unit in the Chinese Army changed sides. The Qarluqs, whom left the Chinese Army and joined the Arab ranks, was instrumental in the Arabs winning the battle of Talas. Thus, China, one of the superpowers of the period in Central Asia, has suffered a crushing defeat which would not be forgotten throughout centuries. By the way, Central Asia kept on again being under the Turkish rule. In addition, the country borders were drawn after the war. Accordingly, the Tarim River basin admitted as the border and the western part of it was given to the Qarluqs and the eastern part given to the Uighurs. Faced with the domestic disturbance and uprisings in its country, China could not busy itself with the Western regions for a long time after this date (Salman, 2015, pp. 69-77). Although it is stated in a few sources that the Tibetan army also participated in the battle of Talas (Vasary, 2016, p. 159), most of the historians say that the Tibetans were not among the parties of this battle (Dunlop, 2012, p. 307; Gibb, 1923, p. 96).

Qarluqs immigrated to the lands of Western Turks around 745. Later, with the weakening of the Turgish State, who was dealing with inter-tribal fights, they came to the region where the “black-bone” branch of the Turgish lived. And around the year 766 they established a state with Balasagun¹²⁷ as its capital. The Qarluqs, who captured Tokmak and Taraz, two important administrative centers of the Turgish, consolidated their sovereignty in

¹²⁷ Mahmud al-Kashgari, in his book *Dîvân-ü Lugâti't-Türk*, says that the Turkic word “ordu” means “the city where the kaghan lived”. In addition, he notes that the city of Balasagun is called as “Kuz-ordu” (Atalay, 1985, p. 124).

the region called Yedisu. The borders of the Qarluq State in the second half of the 8th century extended to *the shores of Syr Darya* in the west, *the shores of Chu and Ili* in the north, *Four Garrisons* in the east. In addition, it stretched south of the *Ferghana-Kashgar line* in the south. At that time, the neighbors of the Qarluq State were Oghuzs and Pechenegs in the north, Tibet in the south, the Uighurs and China in the east, and Abbasids in the west. However, the above-mentioned border with China disappeared in 791. Because those lands through which the border passed, were captured by Tibetans (Beckwith, 1993, p. 155; Karayev, 2008, pp. 122-123; Salman, 2001, pp. 509-510).

The events that removed the border of Qarluqs with China were the Pei-t'ing (Beshbaliq) events that started in 789. The Pei-t'ing events cover a period from 789 to 792. At the year-ends of 789, the Sha-t'o tribes, the Qarluq tribes and the other tribes living in and around the Pei-t'ing castle-city and its surroundings rebelled against the Uighurs. Shortly after this incident, the Tibetans, with the help of their allies, captured the city of Pei-t'ing in early 790 (Sultanov & Klyashtorny, 2019, p. 119). Failing to defend the city, Chinese Garrison Commander Yang Hsi-ku fled to Hsi-chou together with his two thousand soldiers. The Qarluqs occupied the Kagan Stupa¹²⁸ valley near Pei-t'ing, with the effect of their victory over the Uighurs the following year (791). Thus, the Qarluqs, with the support of the Tibetans, easily settled in the Uighur lands. Upon this, the Uighurs had to go south (Ecsedy, 1964, pp. 83-85).

In the autumn of 791, the Uighur army regained its strength. The Uighurs defeated them in the Ling-chou¹²⁹ attack carried out by the Tibetan army at the end of September. Then they defeated the ally Tibet-Qarluq army in Pei-t'ing. Shortly after this victory (in late September or October), the Uighur emissaries presented the prisoners captured in the battle to

¹²⁸ According to the sources, this place is in the north of Pei-t'ing (Beshbaliq), near today's city of Urumqi (Taşağıl, 2017, pp. 86, 88).

¹²⁹ Ling-chou today corresponds to Yin-ch'uan, the capital of Ning-hsia Hui Autonomous Region, located in the north-central China (The Cambridge History Of China Volume 3, 2008, p. 461).

the Chinese Court. In addition, there is information in the sources that a Tibetan prisoner was also taken to the T'ang capital at the beginning of 792 (Ecsedy, 1964, p. 85).

The Tibetan-Qarluq amity, which started during the reign of the Tibetan King Trisong Detsen (755-797), continued during the time of King Ral-pa-can. During his time, the Qarluqs sent an envoy to Tibet to reinforce their friendship. As far as we know, until the 943s, the Qarluq-Tibet neighborly relations continued in a friendly manner (Salman, 1981, pp. 200-201).

The Chinese part of the Karabalghasun Inscription, which is estimated to have been erected on behalf of the Uighur ruler named Ay Tengride Kut Bulmuş Alp Bilgä Kaghan (808-821), mentions the victories of the Uighurs against the attacks of Qarluq and Tibet forces between 791 and 812. The armies of the allied Qarluq and Tibet, which were defeated at that time, returned back to the center, leaving the borders to be protected by the people of the region. However, it is seen that they continue to harass the Uighur border from time to time in order to prevent a possible raid (Orkun, 1994, p. 235; Salman, 1981, pp. 196-197; Taşağıl, 2014, p. 84). In the Karabalghasun Inscription, the following are recorded regarding these events: The Uighur Kaghan has severely defeated the Qarluq-Tibet alliance. Kaghan followed those who escaped from the war to the west, to Ferghana lands¹³⁰. Moreover, those who escaped were even followed till to the Qarluq lands. The ruler ("yabghu") of Qarluq people also left the country for fear. The Uighur Kaghan captured the people living there, along with their animals.

Another event where the names Qarluq and Tibet were mentioned together took place in the 9th century. In the early ninth century (805-806), Râfi' b. Leys who is an Arab origin person, started a Samarkand-centered rebellion against the 'Abbāsīd rule. It is noteworthy that the rebellion movement started in Transoxiana and Khurasan regions and quickly grew and

¹³⁰ It is claimed that this event, which is described in the Karabalghasun Inscription, took place in 802. The reference to this view is an old Khotanese document (Yoshida, 2020, p. 10).

turned into a large-scale movement (Aydınlı, 2009, p. 483; Beckwith, 1993, pp. 158-160).

The revolt has become so dangerous that the ‘Abbāsīd caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd set out to Khurasan to deal with the rebellion, but before he could reach it, he died in the city of Tūs on March 24, 809. While giving information about the events, the Islamic historian Yaqubi states that many Central Asian peoples from many countries, including the Qarluqs and Tibetans, joined the ranks of the rebel Rāfi’. This large-scale rebellion movement lasted many years and it had ended at last, four years after it started (in the period of 810-811), with the surrender of the rebel Rāfi’ b. Leys to the Caliph Al-Ma’mūn (Beckwith, 1993, p. 160). After the death of Caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd, one of his sons, Al-Amīn, became the next caliph. Al-Ma’mūn settled in Khurāsān after the suppression of the rebellion. After a while, Al-Amīn decided his son Mūsā to be the number two crown prince. He asked his brother to give up his crown right in favor of his son Mūsā and to leave the east and return to Baghdad (Bozkurt, 2004, p. 101). His response to his brother is narrated by the historian Tabarī as follows: “I know the discontent in Khurāsān, the trouble in the cultivated or uncultivated areas. Jabghū (Yabghu) gave up his loyalty to me. The king of Tibet is turning away from me. The king of Kābul is preparing to raid the Khurāsān region to capture the adjacent parts. The king of Ushrūsunah no longer pays the tribute he normally sends every year. I just can’t do anything about these problems”. This is how Al-Ma’mūn stated in 810 that he was not happy with the environment in Khurāsān and was not willing to return. The word “yabghu” in the text is a title used by Turkish rulers. The word yabghu¹³¹, used here narrates the *Qarluq* rulers according to some historians and *Tukhāristān* rulers according to others (Beckwith, 1993, p. 158; Dunlop, 2012, pp. 310-311). After a while, the two brothers fought for the position of caliphate. Al-Ma’mūn, which surrounded Baghdad, destroyed the city. The war between brothers, as detailed in the History of al-Tabarī, ended with the murder of Muḥammad Al-Amīn in 813. Thereupon, Al-

¹³¹ While Barthold defines the word “jabghū or yabghu” as a Turkish title, he specifies that the ruler in question is the ruler (yabghu) of the Qarluq Turks. On the other hand, Dunlop states that this yabghu is the ruler (yabghu) of Tukhāristān (Dunlop, 2012, p. 310).

Ma'mūn became the caliph. After Ma'mūn became the caliph, he gave the duty of spreading Islam to "Al-Fadl b. Sahl" of Iranian origin, one of his viziers. For this, he called for jihad to Central Asia. The primary places where the vizier Al-Fadl b. Sahl would embark on the expedition were oriented to the four kingdoms that were enemies of or fought with Al-Ma'mūn before the period between 809 and 810. Among them were the Qarluq Qaghanate and the Tibetan Empire. As known, the Qarluq Turks and Tibetans, whose names mentioned here, have allied with the rebel Râfi' b. Leys before, during the uprisings, so they have fought against Al-Ma'mūn (Beckwith, 1993, p. 160; Bozkurt, 2004, p. 101; Özbayraktar, 2019, p. 180).

In the sources, there is no information about Qarluq and Tibet relations, except for two discrete events that took place in the 9th century, until the 11th century. First, there is information about the visit of the ambassadors in the sources. During the King Ral-pa-can period (817-836), the Qarluqs sent an ambassador to Tibet to reinforce their friendship. The other is an incident that took place on the Qarluq-Tibet border during the reign of Lang Darma (836-842). As known, Tibetan Buddhism subjected to great pressure and persecution under Lang Darma. The king's men sought three Buddhist monks who identified to spread the teachings of Buddhism. Therefore, in order not to be caught by the king's men, they fled the country, loading Vinaya¹³² texts on a mule. During their escape, the monks came to the Uighur land, passing through the land of the Qarluqs. We see that this incident at the border does not harm the friendship of the two countries (Hoffmann, 1950, pp. 192-193; Salman, 1981, pp. 200-201).

In addition, in Tibetan sources, there is an incident between the Qarluq and Tibetans that took place in the first half of the 11th century, but its reality disputed. As known, Ye-shes-'od (947-1024) is the first important lama king of Tibet. Ye-shes thought that Buddhism

¹³² Tripitaka, the oldest Buddhist scripture, divided into three parts. One of these sections is Vinaya-Pitaka, which means "basket of discipline" (Tümer, 1992, p. 355).

was corrupt in his country. During his reign, he wanted to innovate in religious education. For this, he wanted to bring Atisha, a famous Buddhist priest, to the capital. However, despite his invitation, he could not get any results. Thereupon, he thought of the idea of giving financial support to Atisha's monastery by gifting it "gold". The king went on a journey to find the gold. In one of his travels, he captured by the Qarluqs, who ruled in the eastern of the East Turkestan that time. The Qarluq offered two conditions to release the lama king. According to the first condition, Lama King Ye-shes would convert to Islam. According to the other condition, he required to pay gold as heavy as himself. The king's nephew, Byang-club-'od, found the gold requested and brought it to the Qarluqs. However, when the gold weighed, it has realized that the gold is missing as much as the weight of the king's head. When the requested amount did not meet, the Qarluqs do not release the priest king. Thereupon, his nephew tells the king that he will find the missing part of the gold and bring it back. However, Ye-shes told his nephew that he was an old king near death, so he should not come to his rescue. He asked him to use all the gold he found to bring Atiśa to Tibet. Compulsively obedient to the king's decision, his nephew returned to his country in sorrow. Later, the lama-king Ye-shes-'od¹³³ in exile became ill because of his long-term captivity. The historians assume this event to have occurred in 1036 (Vitali, 1996, pp. 282-284). At the end of this story, although it is stated that the Qarluq ruler executed the old and sick king, the phrase that the king of Tibet was executed, does not go beyond an assumption. According to the viewpoint based on the biography of Lotsawa Rin-chen bzang-po, this story seems unreal. Also, Lama King Ye-shes-'od died peacefully in the Guge, not in captivity (Hoffmann, 2008, pp. 394-395; Sørensen, 1994, pp. 457-458). In the story's continuation, Byan-chub-'od, upon the news of the death of Ye-shes-'od, stopped collecting gold and sent Lotsawa Nag-tsho

¹³³ This legendary story about the search for gold for ransom also included in the Tibetan Chronicle, "mNga.'ris rgyal.-rabs". However, this time the protagonist of the story is not Ye-shes-'od, but 'Od-lde (Vitali, 1996, p. 281).

together with the gathered gold to India, to invite Atiśa Dīpaṅkara to Western Tibet (Vitali, 1996, pp. 281-282).

In the sources, a Qarluq invasion reported having taken place in the first half of the 12th century. According to this, the Qarluqs (or the Qarakhanids) came from the north of the Guge Kingdom, i.e., from Turkestan and invaded the kingdom¹³⁴. It stated that three kingdoms¹³⁵ in Western Tibet joined their forces because of this occupation and fought together against the Qarluq army. The Qarluq invasion mentioned in all three Tibetan chronicles. However, there are some differences between the chronicles about the events that took place after the invasion. Tibetan chronicles *lDe'u Jo. Sras chos. 'byung* and *mkhas. Pa lDe'u chos-'byung-s*, two of the three sons of the Tibetan king (bKra-shis-rtse and mNga'-thang-skyong¹³⁶) killed in this war. The other son, 'Od 'bar-Ide, continued to live the rest of his life, as a prisoner in the Qarluq land. However, according to the narration of *mNga.'ris rgyal-rabs*, bKra-shis-rtse, the son of bSod-nams-rtse, was killed in a place called gNyi-gongphu during the Qarluq attacks. The other son, 'Od 'bar-rtse, was held in captivity in Sog-po-yul¹³⁷. The third son, Jo-bo rGyal-po, ensured the continuity of the lineage by temporarily sitting on the throne of Guge. The different fates of the three brotherly kings of these three Tibetan Kingdoms beautifully illustrate the territorial dimension of the Qarluq attack (Vitali, 1996, pp. 347-351). We see that the Qarluq State had diplomatic relations with the Tibetan Empire. And the two of them sometimes formed alliances in the battlefields (Abdurrahman, 2002, p. 239; Yasin, 2016, p. 86).

¹³⁴ Vitali identifies that, based on information in Tibetan chronicles, the Qarluq invasion occurred between 1110 and 1137. It is thought that the invasion recorded as the Qarluq invasion in Tibetan sources was mainly carried out by the Qarakhanids. As known, the Qarakhanids had considerable power at the beginning of the 12th century (Vitali, 1996, pp. 347-51).

¹³⁵ The Western Tibet then divided into three separate kingdoms ruled by the sons of bSod-nams-rtse (Vitali, 1996, p. 347).

¹³⁶ They recorded the name of him as *mNga'-thang-skyong* in some sources and as *Jo-bo rGyal-po* in others (Vitali, 1996, p. 348).

¹³⁷ As adduced in note 77 *supra*, there are sources that associate the name *Sog-po* with Turks, Mongols or even Tanguts. As mentioned before, "yul" means "place, province, land or country". Therefore, Sog-po-yul (or Sog-yul) means "land of the Sog-po people" (Beckwith, 1993, pp. 169-172; Jaschke, 2003, pp. 512, 579; Vitali, 1996, p. 415).

4.6. Relations with the Uighurs

The Chinese consider the Uighurs, which are named as Huei-ho and Wei-ho in Chinese sources, as descendants of the Huns. The Chinese record them as “Huei-ho”, which means “flying hawk”. They called the Uighurs as “Hor” in Tibetan sources. Later, around 605, the Yüan-ho tribe, whose name it recorded as Wei-ho in sources, is thought to be the ancestor of the Uighurs. In the sources, it is stated that they were a small community of ten thousand people, warriors formed half of the population in the early 7th century (Taşağıl, 2018, p. 203; Tezcan, 1975, p. 303).

When examining the subject of Uighur-Tibetan relations, it is necessary to mention a small Tibetan incomplete text included among an extensive manuscript collection kept in the Bibliothèque Nationale Library in Paris, known under the number “P.T.1283”, in the Pelliot Tibétain collection. The documents, including this text, found by Paul Pelliot (1878-1945) during his expedition to Central Asia in 1908, are in scroll form. The text is commonly known as “Rapport sur les rois demeurant dans le nord”, which means “Report on kings live in the north”. This ancient Tibetan text is an eighth century text. The text is brief and has suffered physical damage over the centuries that have passed until today. For this reason, it has missing parts. Although the language of the text is Tibetan, its subject is not about Tibetans. Instead, it concerns many Turks and other nomadic tribes living in Northern Central Asia and East Asia during the eighth century. The text reports important historical data and many important legends and stories, so it is a fascinating mix of fact and fiction. As with many other documents found in Dun-huang, in this document it is written on both sides of the page. There is a Chinese text on one side of the document and two Tibetan texts on the other side, both written in the same handwriting. In one of the Tibetan texts, they recorded that the Uighur Kaghan sent his five envoys to investigate the kingdoms in the North. According to the researchers who read and translated the text into Latin languages, the text comprises the

last report written by Uighur envoys on this journey. The question of *who might have written the text of the Tibetan manuscript* has studied and discussed by various scholars. Some scholars argue that the Tibetans, after listening to what a Uighur person talked about the report of the emissaries, they wrote what he told. Alternatively, Clauson hypothesizes that a Chinese translator translated the text into Tibetan, so there were erroneous spellings in Turkish tribe names. It is estimated the event subject to the manuscript took place in the second half of the eighth century. The date of writing of the text is predicted between 787 and 848, the period when Tibet occupied Dun-huang region. There are also various comments and opinions among the scholars who researched the manuscript on what the travel route of the envoys are. Clauson states the envoys set out from the country of the Eastern Turks. According to Ligeti, the route of the Uighur envoys starts from the city named *Ba ker Pa lig*¹³⁸ which is the name of a city (or region) of the Uighurs and has a meaning “the city of copper” (Sinor, 1981, p. 96; Venturi, 2008, pp. 10-12).

In the relevant text, the incident in which the Qarluq, Basmil and Uighurs united and defeated the Eastern Turk ruler and destroyed the Second Gok-Turk State (745) is mentioned as follows: “In the north there are five *Basmel* tribes united in a triple confederation with the *Hor* and the *Gar-log*. They overthrew the rule of the ‘Bug chor king, who had the title of kaghan.”

As seen above, the Uighur people are called “Hor” by Tibetans in the text. The word “Hor” is used more than once in the Tibetan text. In the word group “Ho yo hor” mentioned elsewhere in the text, according to one opinion, the word “Ho-yo” as an adjective is brought before the word Hor, with a meaning “great, sublime”. And it is probably meant to describe the Uighur Empire. The Japanese historian Moriyasu, who has researched the Tibetan text, states that it is wrong to identify the word “Hor” with the Uighurs as suggested by Bacot.

¹³⁸ Pelliot reconstructed *Ba-ker Pa-lig*, as “Baḡir Baliq” (Venturi, 2008, p. 12).

According to Moriyasu, the word Hor cannot be considered an abbreviation of long words such as “Ho yo hor / Ho yo ‘or / U yi kur”. In addition, according to him, the word Hor in the text sometimes refers to the Uighurs of the Mongolian region and sometimes to the Uighurs of the Ho-si region in the east of the Tien Shan (Venturi, 2008, pp. 4-6, 30).

According to the Tibetan text, there are nine tribes that are called “Turks of the nine-bones” in Tibetan language when moving from the ‘Bug chor to the west. The great chief of these, the Uighur commander (Turkic: *tutuk*), received the title of “kaghan” inherited from his ancestors and given by China. The word (in Tibetan) “drugu-rus-dgu” in the original text has been transcribed like “the nine bones (clans) of the Turks¹³⁹.” The linguists have interpreted this expression as the Tibetan equivalent of the Turkic confederation of the nine tribes, namely Toquz Oghuz. As known, after the Uighurs joined the Toquz Oghuz tribal union, they became known as “On Uighur”. While the Uighur State was established, the Toquz Oghuz Turks formed the basis of the state. Therefore, the Uighur Turks are occasionally recorded as “Toquz Oghuzs” in Islamic sources. The “Yag le ker” clan mentioned in the above text has been matched with the royal clan of the Uighurs, named “Yaglakar (Yaghlaqar)”, by Clauson and Ligeti (Venturi, 2008, p. 24).

4.6.1. Relations with the Orkhon Uighur State

The Uighur Turks was a tribe that lived under the Gok-Turks for a long time. After a while, the tribes affiliated with the state revolted one by one against the weakening authority. The Uighurs also rebelled together with the Qarluq and the Basmil forces. This triple ally, which also got the support of China, destroyed the Second Gok-Turk State in 745. Later, the Uighurs established a new state in the Eastern Gok-Turk homeland, centered on Ötükän. The borders of the Uighur country extended from Manchuria to the Qarluqs of Tien Shan Mountains (Vasary, 2016, pp. 132-133).

¹³⁹ Venturi states that the expression “drugu rus dgu” in Tibetan definitely refers to the Toquz (means: nine) Oghuz Turks (Venturi, 2008, p. 24).

After the Uighur State was established, Uighur-Chinese relations were apparently friendly. It was established kinship between two dynasties through marriages in the following years. It is aimed to establish a political environment of peace by establishing kinship between the two countries. As known, the T'ang Dynasty was shaken by the revolt of the Chinese General An-Lu-shan and his followers at the end of 755. An-Lu-shan, the general governor of the North China Province, advanced in a short time with the army under his command and captured both capitals of the T'ang Dynasty. The rebellion movement is a long-running uprising that will last until 763. The Uighur and Tibetan ambassadors, who attended the enthronement ceremony of the Chinese Emperor Su-tsung, who became the ruler in 756, realized the chaotic situation in China, and they offered to help the T'ang Dynasty. It is certain that both countries offering aid have an interest in it. The "An Lu-shan" Rebellion was completely eliminated in the period of Bögü Kaghan, thanks to the alliance of China and Uighur (in 763). Chinese General of Turkish origin, Pu-ku Huai-en, has commanded the Uighur troops, which had a substantial contribution in suppressing the rebellion (Baykuzu, 2014, p. 378; Gumilev, 2019, pp. 472-473; Kamalov, 2001, p. 243).

China was shaken by another rebellion movement in 765. The events have developed as follows. General Pu-ku Huai-en was tasked with accompanying the Uighur troops backed home after "An-Lu shan" rebellion was suppressed. The General wanted to accommodate in the Chinese Province T'ai-Yuan on their way. However, the province's governor, Hsin Yun-ching, did not open the city gates to him and his guests. Angry at maltreatment, Pu-ku Huai-en reported the impropriety to the Chinese Court. But their enemies, including Governor Hsin Yun-ching, conspire against Pu-ku Huai-en. They accused him of high treason to China. Angry at the emperor's belief in these slanders, Pu-ku Huai-en also wrote a letter telling the T'ang Emperor that he unfairly accused of. After a while, Pu-ku Huai-en has attacked and defeated the T'ai-Yuan Governor who disrespected him. Pu-ku Huai-en's attack on a Chinese

governor meant a revolt against China. As a matter of fact, this event was the beginning of the events that will develop in the continuation. Pu-ku Huai-en first advanced to south by gathering several divisions from the Tibetan, Uighur and Tang-Hsiang tribes, and then attacked Ping-chou in late 764. The Chinese side did not respond to this attack, seeing that the enemy army coming towards its borders was powerful. Therefore, the troops of P'u-ku Huai-en waited for a while and then came back. It is seen that, in 765, General P'u-ku Huai-en formed an army of approximately 300 thousand people, with those joining from Tibet, Uighur, Nu-la, Tang-hsiang¹⁴⁰, Ch'iang and T'u-yü-hun tribes. The General moved south to attack the Chinese cities with his army. According to P'u-Ku Huai-en's plan, the Tibetan forces would move from the north, the Tanguts from the east, and the T'u-yü-hun and Nu-la tribes from the west against the Chinese. The Uighur contingent would first follow the Tibetan division and then join them at a predetermined point. P'u-ku Huai-en proceeds in line with his plan. The rebel forces, which plundered the Chinese cities of Ching, Ping, Feng-hsiang, reached and plundered even the cities near the capital-city of China, such as *Feng-t'ien* and *Feng-shui* (Baykuzu, 2014, pp. 394-395). Therefore, P'u-ku Huai-en's army came close till to the Chinese capital, Chang-an. Meanwhile, the Chinese army had recently emerged from the An Lu-shan rebellion, having lost many soldiers in the wars. It was also very weak economically. For these reasons, the uprising launched by P'u-ku Huai-en intimidated the Chinese. It was very unfortunate that General P'u-ku Huai-en had died unexpectedly (the year 765, ninth month) as they approached the Chinese capital (Baykuzu, 2014, p. 396; Gumilev, 2019, pp. 481-482). News of the general's death reached his Uighur and Tibetan followers as they were about to attack the city of Jing yang¹⁴¹. After the death of Pu-Ku Huai-en, two of the top commanders wanted to take over the army, but they failed. In addition, the Tibetans and the Uighurs competed for leadership of the army. Meanwhile, the

¹⁴⁰ Tang-hsiang is one of the Chiang tribes, also known as the Tanguts (Baykuzu, 2014, p. 394).

¹⁴¹ Today, Jingyang is a district of the prefecture-level city of Deyang.

Chinese Emperor assigned General Kuo Tzu-i to respond to the attacks. The commander, Kuo Tzu-i, divided the Chinese Army into several branches. Kuo Tzu-i, who set out with his own military union, went to the place named Ho-chung after a while. Here the General has been surrounded by a large Uighur military unit. The surrounding people asked him who he was. Then, one of his men said the name of the commander, as: “Kuo Ling-kung¹⁴².” However, the Uighur soldier asked that “Is Kuo Tzu-i alive?” They said that the General was alive. Afterwards, the Uighur soldier said that, “If General Kuo Tzu-i is alive, let him stand out and show himself.” Upon this, Kuo Tzu-i came close to the Uighurs with the few soldiers he took with him. At that time, the brother of Bögü Kaghan named Yaglakar Hu-lu Tu-hu (Tutuk Alp), and those with him were waiting in an attack position by stretching their bows. When General Kuo Tzu-i saw the Uighur commander Hu-lu Tu-hu, he recognized him and took off his helmet. Then, “Did you see I was alive? What dangers, wars we have survived together, have you forgotten them?” he said (Baykuzu, 2014, pp. 395-396). Upon this, the Uighur commander and chieftains, who knew him, lay down their weapons and greet him. The Uighur commander said that General P’u-Ku Huai-en told them that the Chinese Emperor had fled south and that the General Kuo Tzu-i was also dead, so they came to join the military expedition with him (Baykuzu, 2014, pp. 397-398; Gumilev, 2019, p. 482).

General Kuo Tzu-i and his entourage chatted and drank with the Uighurs. They gave them gifts and tried to attract them to Chinese ranks by promising them some privileges. The Uighur Turks tell the Chinese General that they made a mistake in pursuing P’u-Ku Huai-en. Thereupon, the parties made a peace agreement by mutual oath. According to Chinese sources, Uighur Commander-in-Chief Tutuk Alp Yaglakar told his army that they had withdrawn from the rebellion movement.

¹⁴² It is the actual name of the General Kuo Tzu-i (Baykuzu, 2014, p. 395).

Meanwhile, the countless animals brought with them by the Tibetan tribes in P'u-ku Huai-en's army attracted the attention of the Uighurs. Thinking that they would have a great wealth if they captured these animals, the Uighurs decided to join the Chinese who were about to attack the Tibetans. Meanwhile, the Tibetan side has also doubted the weird behavior of the Uighurs. Thereupon, they left their encampments in the middle of the night. When the Uighurs saw the Tibetans had left the camp, they began to follow the escaped Tibetan unit. General Kuo Tzu-i sent one of his commanders as reinforcements to the Uighurs who set out to follow the fleeing Tibetans. The Uighur military unit, which followed the Tibetans, caught up with them about five days later.

When they got there, they found that there were over 100,000 people from Tibetans and other tribes who took part in the rebellion at that location. According to the legend, the moon was dazzling that night and it lit up like daytime. Thereupon, the Uighurs called the shaman of the tribe, made him pray for wind and snow. A short time later, there was a sudden change in the weather, a freezing cold weather came, and then it started to snow. As that snowy night was ending, Uighur forces attacked early in the morning. When the weather got brighter, the Uighurs saw the Tibetans were about to freeze from the cold. They were trying to keep warm by wrapping blankets and carpets, and they could not hold their arrows and bows. The Uighur Turks have attacked the enemy, who seemed to be in a weak situation. In the following hours, a terrible sight emerged on the battlefield. At the end of the war that took place in and around Ling-Tai¹⁴³ the enemy defeated, and the corpses of around 100 thousand Tibetans covered the area. At the end of the war, approximately 10 thousand people (various information is available in various sources on this number) were taken prisoner and thousands of live animals (such as horses, oxen, sheep, camels) were captured. In addition, it was

¹⁴³ Ling-t'ai: It is the name of a county of Gansu province. The authorities changed the name of the Ling-t'ai to Ling-chou, in 742 (Huang Chi-Huei, 1970, p. 122).

rescued about 5 thousand Chinese prisoners in captivity. All Ch'iang and T'u-yü-hun tribes within the rebel group surrendered (Baykuzu, 2014, p. 398).

The Chinese Emperor Tai-tsung was satisfied with this victory. The victors of the war, the Uighurs, sent a delegation of two hundred people to the Chinese palace. Tai-tsung gave a hundred thousand pieces of fabric as a reward to the delegation. While the defeated Tibetans retreated with great losses, the Uighurs who made a proper political move received plenty of rewards from the Chinese government. At that time, the treasure of the T'ang Dynasty has been run out because of the successive rebellions. China, on the other hand, did not want to come up against the Uighurs, which it sometimes has military support, because of the Tibetan danger on its borders. Therefore, he had to give prizes and gifts to the Uighurs in exchange for this victory (Huang Chi-Huei, 1970, pp. 122-123).

Meanwhile, the political environment in China has also changed. After two consecutive rebellions, the T'ang Dynasty lost its reputation. Besides, its economy has weakened and its treasury has been depleted. This was a great opportunity for the Uighurs. After a while, the Uighurs and Tibetans would start to cause trouble on the Chinese borders, which were weakened both economically and militarily. As a matter of fact, the west of the Yellow River was completely captured by Tibetans after a while (Baykuzu, 2014, p. 399).

However, the Uighurs made a peace treaty with China in 783. Together with this agreement and the wedding promise made by China, the alliance against Tibet was strengthened and thus the tension between the two parties was removed (Gumilev, 2019, p. 490). After this date, Uighur Khan, Tun Baga Tarkan (Ho ku-tu-lu P'i-chia Kaghan) reminded several times the promise given to establish kinship. This request was always denied by the emperor. It was finally adopted in 788 (ninth month). Thus, the marriage of Princess Hsien-an Kung-chu to the Uighur Kaghan was approved by the Emperor Te-tsung (779-805). The news

reported to the kaghan with the Uighur envoy Ho-chüeh Chin-chün (Huang Chi-Huei, 1970, p. 153).

The Chinese have established a powerful alliance with the Uighurs against the Tibetan danger on their borders, thanks to the marriage to be realized. Alp Kutlug Bilgä Kaghan (Tun Baga Tarkan), who will marry the sister of the Chinese Emperor, sent a large delegation of one thousand people to the capital of China to welcome the Princess. The Uighur Kaghan told the emperor through his ambassador to China, *“We used to be like brothers. Now I will be your groom. If so, I’ll be such as your son. If Tibet (Tu-fan) gives you trouble, let us know. Because a son should take care of his father’s troubles”*. The Uighur Turks, who seem to have acted consistently with this message, cut off their ties with Tibet after the marriage took place (Çandarlıoğlu, 2011, p. 67; Mackerras, 2008, p. 325).

The Uighurs remained allies with China for a long time after peace was established through marriage with China. In the events indeed that took place between 789 and 792 and around Pei-t’ing, the T’ang Dynasty and the Uighurs were allies, however the Qarluqs and other Turkish tribes acted together with the Tibetans. Pei-t’ing Events cover the period from 789 to 792. As known, Pei-t’ing was a garrison affiliated to China. Over 6,000 tents of the Sha-t’o tribes lived in peace together with the Qarluq tribes, the Turks of white dress¹⁴⁴ and other Western Turkic tribes, and they were dependents of the Uighurs. The city of Pei-t’ing was located close to the Uighur country. Since it was on the route to China, Pei-t’ing was providing communication and trade with China through the Uighurs. The indigenous people of Pei-t’ing had to get on well with the Uighurs. It seems that the Uighurs have turned the advantage of their position into an opportunity. Because they were constantly collecting tribute from the Pei-t’ing people. The unending demands of the Uighurs caused complaints among the townspeople in the following days. It is understood that the atmosphere of peace

¹⁴⁴ In the sources, there is an expression such as “the Turks of white dress”. The historian Klyashtorny states that those recorded as the “the Turks of white dress” in Chinese sources are the Turks belonged to the Manichaean faith (Ecsedy, 1964, p. 97; Sultanov & Klyashtorny, 2019, p. 119).

and tranquility has deteriorated starting from the 780's. At that time, it is stated that the activities of robbery and banditry increased near Pei-t'ing. The Uighurs harassed the people of Pei-t'ing with heavy taxes and fees. In addition, it is noted that the people condone being the target of the robbers and their goods being plundered. For these reasons, it is stated that the people of the region complain about what happened. Realizing the unrest in Pei-t'ing and its surroundings, Tibetans began to bribe them in large quantities in order to attract the tribes and communities living in the region. As a matter of fact, the Tibetans, who finally achieved their goal, managed to attract the Qarluqs and some other Turkish tribes to their ranks against the Uighurs. While these were happening in Pei-t'ing, the Uighur ruler Tun Baga Tarkan died in 789. When the kaghan died, his son To-lo-ssu ascended the throne and became kaghan with the title "Ay Tengride Kut Bulmus Külüg Bilgä Kagan". Meanwhile, at the end of 789, the Sha-t'o, the Qarluq and the other Turkish tribes living around Pei-t'ing rose up against the Uighurs. The Tibetans attacked the city of Pei-t'ing with the help of the rebels and captured the city in January 790. Upon this, Uighur forces under the command of the Prime Minister Il Ügäsi (Hsieh-kan-chia-ssu) went on the offensive. And then they retook the city back from the enemies after a while. Meanwhile, the Uighur ruler To-lo-ssu, who had recently ascended the throne, was probably poisoned to death in the third month of 790 by his younger brother. When To-lo-ssu Kagan died, his younger brother ascended the throne instead. The people who found the previous ruler's brother's ascension to the throne wrong, and the state leaders who took the people behind, dethroned the new kaghan. Then they kill him and those around him. After these events, A-ch'o (Feng-ch'eng K'o-han), the son of the former ruler who was just 16-17 years old, was brought to the head of the country. Meanwhile (in the fifth month of 790) the Uighur Turks were at war with Tibet, under the command of Il Ügäsi. The Uighurs were defeated in this war. Also in the same year, Tibet and its Turkic allies (the Qarluq, the Sha-t'o and other tribes) attacked the defenseless city of Pei-t'ing again. The people of Pei-

t'ing, who were already overwhelmed by the oppression of the Uighurs, surrendered to the Tibetans when they could not resist the siege, so the city of Pei-t'ing was captured by Tibet again.

Later, Che-hsieh Chin-chung, chief of the Sha-t'o tribe, and other Turkic tribes altogether became subordinate to Tibetans. Upon this development, Yang Hsi-ku, the Chinese Garrison Commander of the city of Pei-t'ing, fled to Hsi-chou (Kara-khoja) with his two thousand soldiers (Ecsedy, 1964, p. 85; Huang Chi-Huei, 1970, p. 154; Sultanov & Klyashtorny, 2019, p. 119).

Il Ügäsi returned to his country from the Tibet expedition in the sixth month of 790. Over the next two months, he gathered an army of several thousand men. Then he took action again, allying with the fleeing Chinese Commander Yang Hsi-ku. Il Ügäsi, together with his ally, charged again to conquer the city of Pei-ting. However, he was unsuccessful in this attempt. The defeated Uighur troops withdrew from Pei-t'ing in early November. When Il Ügäsi returned to his country, he expressed his support for the new kaghan A-ch'o, who ascended the throne while Ügäsi was on a military expedition. The new kaghan was also happy with this situation. Meanwhile, the Qarluqs occupied Kagan Stupa near Pei-t'ing the next year (791). It is seen that the Qarluqs, who captured the region, easily settled in the Uighur lands with the support of the Tibetans. Faced with this situation, the Uighurs had to move to the south (Ecsedy, 1964, pp. 83-85; Huang Chi-Huei, 1970, p. 155).

The Uighurs regained their power in the autumn of 791. They defeated the Tibetans in the Ling-chou offensive at the end of September and then defeated the allied Tibetan-Qarluq forces in Pei-t'ing. On this date, it is seen that the Uighurs regained its power to prevent the Tibetan attacks. Indeed, they defeated the Tibetans and the Qarluqs just after the new kaghan ascended to the throne. Shortly after this victory, the Uighur ruler presented the prisoners he had captured during the war to the Emperor Te-tsung, together with the delegation he sent.

The Uighurs also sent Shang Chieh-hsin¹⁴⁵, a high-ranking Tibetan prisoner they held, to the Chinese Palace in early 792 (Ecsedy, 1964, p. 85; Huang Chi-Huei, 1970, p. 155; Mackerras, 1969, p. 232).

It is seen that the Uighurs have taken a firm stance in the northwestern borders, in the Pei-t'ing region since the mid-8th century. The Chinese were also defending their last military emplacement in the same region and at the end of the 8. century, which could resist on to the threat of Tibet. By the way, the Uighurs were a natural alliance for the Chinese under the threat of Tibet (Ecsedy, 1964, p. 86).

We can say that the progress of the Chinese in East Turkestan has been halted with the Battle of Pei-t'ing (791). Because of this, East Turkestan fell into the hands of Tibet until the middle of the 9th century. Tibet attacked Pei-t'ing and Turfan Region whenever it had the opportunity until the 840s, when the Uighur State collapsed. Pao-i K'o-han¹⁴⁶, who became the crown prince of the Uighurs in 792, led a recent attack. It is known that many Tibetans and many of their allies (such as the Qarluq and other tribes) were killed in the attack.

After this incident, they continued to Hsi-chou (Qocho), which they had captured from Tibet. Shortly after, the Uighurs, apparently reaching Kucha, attacked the Tibetan army that had laid siege to Kucha, China's only remaining military outpost in the west. With a compulsory pullback, the Tibetans came to Yü-shu, a fortified town about 280 km (560 li) east of Kucha and about 35 km (70 li) west of Agni. Meanwhile, the Uighurs who followed them surrounded the Tibetan army from behind and eventually destroyed them. Thus, the Tibetans had to withdraw south of the oases on the Northern Silk Road (Beckwith, 1993, p. 156).

¹⁴⁵ The Tibetan prisoner, whose name is pronounced as Shang Chieh-hsin in some sources, was probably the same person with the Marshal Zhang Khri-sum-rje (i.e. Shang Ch'i Hsin Erh), who was the commander-in-chief of the Tibetan army.

¹⁴⁶ Pao-i K'o-han (r. 808-821) is the ruler of Uighur who ascended the throne by taking the title of *Ay Tengride Kut Bulmuş Alp Bilge* Kaghan in 808.

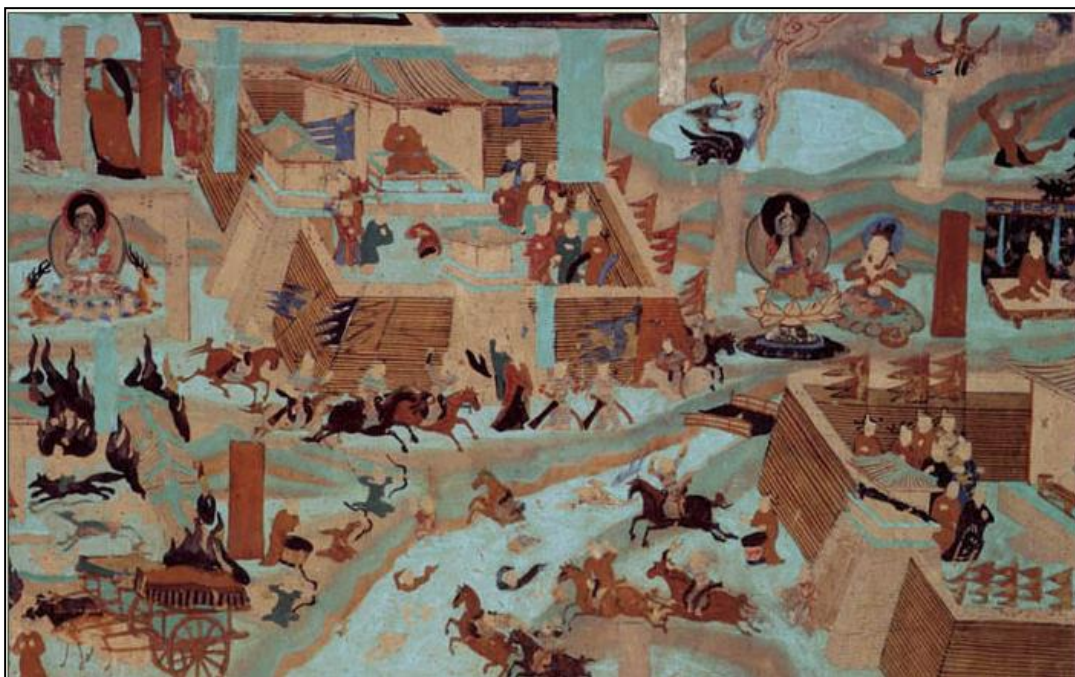


Figure 13. Dun-huang, Cave 12, Depiction of a War¹⁴⁷ (Whitfield & Sims-Williams, 2004, p. 197)

The Nan-chao Kingdom, which has been a long-time vassal of Tibet, took refuge in the T'ang Dynasty in 794 because of the successive defeats of Tibet and became subordinate to China. It is seen that Tibetans, who lost their power when they were about to control the Tarim Basin, were fighting the Uighurs around Qocho. Unfortunately, it is doubtful when exactly the Uighurs established tight control over the Qocho. In addition, we know little about the fate of the city at these times. However, it appears that the Tibetan-Uighur border in the east of the Tien Shan territory is remained around Qocho. Meanwhile, Qocho may have changed hands several times (Beckwith, 1993, pp. 156-157).

Gumilëv states that in 795, the Uighur army defeated the Tibetan army around Pei-t'ing and after that date, the influence of Tibet in the region weakened (Gumilev, 2019, p. 496).

¹⁴⁷ China entered into conflict with rival empires such as the Arabs, Uighurs, and Tibetans during the T'ang Dynasty (618-907).

In 795, the Uighur ruler passed away. A-ch'o who passed away had no son. For this reason, the people enthroned Kutlug Bilgä with the title of "Ay Tengride Ülüg Bulmış Alp Ulug Bilgä". The new kaghan eliminated the gangs that Tibet and Qarluq formed against the Uighurs. After connecting the Qarluqs to the Uighurs, he went down to Turfan and eliminated the gang activity here. He rewarded the local people who lived in their own way and punished those who engaged in gang work (Taşağıl, 2018, p. 215).

It is estimated that the Karabalghasun Inscription was erected in the name of the Uighur ruler named Ay Tengride Kut Bulmış Alp Bilgä Kaghan (r. 808-821). The Chinese part of the inscription mentions the victories of the Uighurs against the attacks of the allied Qarluq and Tibet forces between 791 and 812. According to Gustav Schlegel's report, in the first of the events in the inscription, the Uighur ruler eliminated the attack of allied Qarluq-Tibet forces by applying a clever plan. After the defeat, the Qarluqs and Tibetans retreated to the center, leaving the border protection for the people living in the region. However, they continued to harass the Uighur border from time to time in order to prevent a potential raid (Salman, 1981, pp. 196-197; Taşağıl, 2014, p. 84). In the other incident mentioned in the inscription, the Tibetans attacked Kucha¹⁴⁸. Upon this, the Uighur ruler, who came to save the city, besieged the Tibetan military unit from all sides and defeated (Orkun, 1994, p. 235).

In the third incident described in the First Karabalghasun Inscription, the Uighur ruler defeated the allied Qarluq and Tibet army. Then he followed those who escaped from the war, westward to the lands of Ferghana. Even those who escaped were traced to the land of the Qarluq. The ruler (yabghu) of the Qarluqs, who saw the Uighurs approaching the Qarluq land, left his country in fear. Thus, the Uighur Kaghan captured the local people and their animals. The inscription describes this event as follows:

¹⁴⁸ The city mentioned in the First Karabalghasun Inscription and translated as Kuli-Ze (Kui-tzû) from the Chinese original is the current city of Kucha (Orkun, 1994, p. 744).

... He attacked the Qarluq and Tibetans. He tore their flag, cut off their heads. He followed the runaways and dragged them westward to the land of Pa-ha-na¹⁴⁹. He captured the people with their animals. Thereupon, the Qarluq Yabghu ignored his orders and left his lands by fear, (Orkun, 1994, p. 235).

The Uighurs continued to put pressure on Tibetan lands from the northeastern border. For example, in 808 they attacked and captured the strategic city of Liang-chou. The Tibetans suspected that their ally, the Sha-t'o Turks, had changed sides, thinking that they had contacted the Uighurs. Therefore, they planned to settle the Sha-t'o Turks beyond the Yellow River (Beckwith, 1993, pp. 163-164).

We see that the Uighurs started to have problems with the Kyrgyz at the beginning of the 9th century. Over the following ten years, the Kyrgyz became their archenemy (Sultanov & Klyashtorny, 2019, p. 120).

In 809, the Northern *tao*¹⁵⁰ Military Governor of Tibet organized a punitive expedition against the Uighurs. Also, in the autumn of the same year, a Tibetan cavalry unit of 50 thousand people rode to Great Stone Valley (*Chinese: Ta-shih Ku*), via P'i-t'i Springs¹⁵¹ route. In Ta-shih Ku, a group of 10 thousand men from the Tibetan cavalry unit attacked and robbed the Uighur embassy delegation, who were returning to their country after a diplomatic visit to the Chinese capital (Huang Chi-Huei, 1970, p. 169). It took a long time, like four years, to respond to this cheeky Tibetan move that entered the interior of the Uighur country. The Tibetans built a bridge at a place called "Wu-lan Ch'iao"¹⁵² over the Yellow River, in the autumn of 813. The historian Ssu-ma Chien commented on this issue: "After that, Shuo-fang, who was constantly under attack, was in a difficult situation." Indeed, with the completion of

¹⁴⁹ According to linguists, the word Pa-ha-na (or Po-han-na) in the Turkic Inscription is probably the Chinese transcription of Ferghana (Orkun, 1994, p. 744; Pritsak, 1951, pp. 276-277).

¹⁵⁰ Tao is a Tibetan word whose meaning is unknown. Here, tao word describes an administrative center that located west of the Yellow River (Beckwith, 1993, p. 164).

¹⁵¹ "P'i-t'i Springs" is the name of a place located approximately 150 kilometers (300 li) north of the city of Hsi Shou-hsiang in Inner Mongolia (Beckwith, 1993, p. 164).

¹⁵² It means Wu-lan Bridge. The bridge is known to be close to the Shuo-fang Garrison (Huang Chi-Huei, 1970, p. 172).

the bridge, Tibetan forces frequently attacked Shuo-fang area (Beckwith, 1993, p. 164; Huang Chi-Huei, 1970, p. 172).

In the beginning of that year (year 813), the Uighur military unit crossed through the south of the Gobi Desert and then attacked the Tibetans somewhere in west of the Liu-Ku (means: *Willow Valley*) Valley near Hsi Shou-hsiang City (Huang Chi-Huei, 1970, p. 172). Sometime after this incident, several thousand powerful men gathered from the Uighur cavalry force came to the area called P'i-t'i Springs. Then they showed strength against his enemies here. This demonstration worried somewhat, the T'ang Generals in the region. However, this demonstration has been probably aimed at Tibetans more than Chinese. Despite all these efforts, the Tibetan raids continued northeast of Lan-chou, even to the region as far as Gobi. Hence, we see that the Tibetans re-attacked the Uighurs in 816. The Tibetan military force, which crossed the Gobi Desert from the beginning to the end in 816, had the dare to come till Ordu Baliq, which is thought to be the capital-city of the Uighurs, after two or three days of march. However, the Tibetan force that received the news of the death of the King of Tibet, was forced to withdraw¹⁵³ (Beckwith, 1993, pp. 164-165).

By the 820s, the Uighur Empire had reached the largest area it had ever seen, from east to west. Apparently, in the early summer of 821, the Uighur military unit attacked an army of allied forces in the west, comprising the Tibetans and the Qarluqs. The Uighurs chased them over the Syr Darya River to Ferghana. Then, where they reached, they collected a great amount of booty from the people of the region. After that, it was seen that they were in the Ustrûsana region (Beckwith, 1993, p. 165; Sümer, 2002, pp. 289-315).

It is highly probable that this event was the event mentioned above (and described in the Karabalghasun Inscription). Probably the same year (821) Arab envoy Tamim b. Bahr

¹⁵³ Moriyasu describes this event as a raid that took place in the desert between Lop nor and Agni. But the Chinese, who apparently believe that the Tibetans are the most powerful one in Central Asia, must have understood that the Tibetan influx was organized through the Gobi Desert to the Uighur capital. Beckwith supports the Gobi Desert theory by looking at the historical context of events (Beckwith, 1993, p. 165).

traveled to the Uighur Capital City (Ordu Baliq) with the route starting from the region around Talas, which is under Uighur control, and continuing through Issyk-Kul Lake and Dzungaria. At the time, things were not going very well for the Uighurs. On the one hand, their old enemies, the Kyrgyz, were constantly causing problems. On the other hand, the Tibetans in Hami and Lop Nor kept them outside of Gansu and the southern Tarim (Basin), while Tibetans in Ho-hsi posed a threat on the route that passed through the P'i-t'i Springs¹⁵⁴ territory (Beckwith, 1993, pp. 165-166).

By 820, the Uighur and the Chinese State decided to re-ally against this powerful enemy. This alliance was to be strengthened by a wedding between the two countries. Emperor Hsien-tsung, who will give his daughter, Princess T'ai-ho, in marriage with the Uighur ruler, died in 820. Thereupon, Mu-tsung (r. 820-824), the son of the former emperor, became the new T'ang Emperor. In 821, the Uighur ruler, known as Pao-i K'o-han, died, and *Kün Tengride Ülüg Bulmuş Alp Küçlüg Bilgä* Kaghan ascended the throne. In the early 821, Tibet and China almost agreed on the terms of a new peace agreement. On the other hand, the Uighur ruler was about to marry a T'ang princess. The Chinese Court announced on July 1 that the Uighur kaghan would marry the Chinese Princess T'ai-ho, the sister of Emperor Mu-tsung. The peace treaty made between the Chinese and the Uighurs through marriage was perceived as a provocation for the Tibetans. Believing that the alliance established between the Uighur and Chinese states was strengthened through marriage, the Emperor of Tibet followed a more aggressive policy after the news of the marriage was heard. Tibet reacted with military raids against both states. By the way, China still had not signed the peace treaty with Tibet. Eight days after the marriage was declared, the Tibetan army raided the fortress of Ch'ing-tsai, a Chinese fortress (Çandarlıoğlu, 2011, p. 69; Huang Chi-Huei, 1970, p. 175). However, Yen-chou governor Li-Wen-Yüeh attacked the Tibetans, and the Tibetans retreated.

¹⁵⁴ The only direct route to China for the Uighurs was through a place called P'i-t'i Springs (Beckwith, 1993, pp. 165-166).

The Uighur State has quickly exploited the China-Tibet conflict for its own benefit. On July 16, the Uighur ruler told the Chinese Emperor Mu-tsung: “We will bring the Princess T’ai-ho to our country safely, with a warm welcome. For this, we will send cavalries of ten-thousand-seater to Pei-t’ing and An-hsi (Kucha), and we will fend off the Tibetans planning to raid.” With this statement, it seems that the Uighurs intend to attack the Tibetans in the west again. However, their sole purpose was to reassure the Chinese that they could defend the Princess and her entourage from Tibetan raiders in the Ordos area (Beckwith, 1993, pp. 166-167).

Famous Arab traveler Tamim Ibn Bahr paid a visit to the Uighur capital shortly after the Chinese Princess married the Uighur ruler. He mentions the golden tent he saw in the capital during his visit. It was likely that the Chinese Princess brought the tent with her as she was coming from her country. Tamim Ibn Bahr reported that the tent was covered in gold and, although far away, they could see it even from outside the city. However, the Uighurs were not alone in owning a golden tent. According to the sources, also the Tibetan ruler had a golden tent at the same period (Mackerras, 1972, p. 182). The Tibetans, who could not succeed in the war with China and saw that the goings on were not very good, sent an envoy to Ch’ang-an in the ninth month of 821 and made a peace offer to China. China, which did not have a cavalry unit and therefore could not make a counterattack, accepted this offer happily. Thus, the Sino-Tibet war ended in 821. Emperor Mu-tsung bid farewell to his sister, who married the Uighur ruler, and watched the princess’s departure from the gate of T’ung-hua. The Uighurs promised the Emperor that they would take the Chinese Princess to their country safely against the threat of Tibet. Thereupon, Princess T’ai-ho set out from the capital Ch’ang-an in July. In order for the princess to arrive safely in the Uighur country, the Uighur kaghan was forced to fight the Tibetans again. The prefect of Feng-chou, Li Yu, sent an information note to the Chinese court to inform that he greeted Princess T’ai-ho and the

3,000-strong Uighur delegation at the Liu Springs, in the eleventh month of 821. In addition, he informed that he was making plans to get rid of the Tibetans (Mackerras, 1972, p. 179).

After the end of the war between China and Tibet, a treaty known as the 821–822 Treaty was signed between the two countries. The treaty was signed by the Emperor of China in Ch'ang-an in 821, and by the Emperor of Tibet with a ceremony in Lhasa in 822. The Tibetan State attached great importance to this treaty signed with China. The stone monument on which the inscription of the treaty was written stands in front of the Ta Chao Ssu Temple in Lhasa (Li, 1956, p. 3). After the signing of the treaty, Tibetan Marshal Zhang Lha bzang¹⁵⁵, discussed with the Chinese ambassador Liu-Yüan-Ting on China's Uighur policy. During the meeting, the commander of Tibet said: The Uighurs are a small kingdom. The Tibetan army has come very close to their capital in the past (in 816). It was three days away. However, when we received the news that our king had died, we retreated. If we had attacked their city, the Uighurs could not resist us. Why is the T'ang Dynasty afraid of the Uighurs and giving them gifts? (Mackerras, 1972, p. 172). In response, the Chinese envoy said that the Uighurs had helped China many times, and that they did not invade China by adhering to the agreements made (Huang Chi-Huei, 1970, pp. 176-178).

Tibetan Marshal Zhang Khri sum rje (i.e., Shang Ch'i Hsin Erh), probably in 823 (may also be 822), carried out an attack on the Orkhon Valley. At that time, the Qarluqs, an ally of Tibet, were at war with the Arabs in Ferghana. For this reason, the Tibetan army could not achieve success. As a result, the Uighurs repelled the Tibetan attack (Gumilev, 2019, p. 503; Huang Chi-Huei, 1970, p. 179; Li, 1956, p. 73).

With the death of Ay Tengride Kut Bulmış Alp Bilgä (Pao-i K'o-han) Kaghan in 821, the Uighur State has entered a period of decline. A war broke out between the Kyrgyz and the

¹⁵⁵ According to sources, Marshal Zhang Lha bzang was an important military figure in the early 9th century. He was both the minister of interior (Tibetan: *nang blon*) and the general during the reign of the Tibetan King Tridé Songtsen (i.e. *Sadnalegs*). His full name appears to be “Zhang Tshe spong Lha bzang klu-dpal”. According to the sources, he also served during the King Tritsug Detsen (i.e. *Ralpachen*) period (Li, 1956, pp. 20-22, 73, 98).

Uighurs, who were their strong neighbors in the north. The struggle for power and power in the country has worn the state, the rebellion has become a serious problem. Besides all this, it happened a very severe winter in 839. The herds of animal, which were the basis of the economy, suffered disaster, and most of the animals died of epidemic and starvation. The Kyrgyz, who attacked the capital “Ordu Baliq” in 840, eliminated the Uighur State, which was struggling with internal rebellions and natural disasters (Mackerras, 1972, p. 12; Taşağıl, 2018, p. 217).

As known, after 842, the Tibetan Empire also went towards collapse. In the second half of the 9th century, a general named K’ung-Jê (i.e., Khrom-bžer, Blon Gun bžer or Shang K’ung-Jê), a member of the Dba clan, who served as the provisional governor around the Gansu province, is frequently mentioned. This governor, who rebelled by not recognizing the last Tibetan King who was enthroned, took the title of “blon” (in Tibetan) and declared himself as “minister”. Blon K’ung-Jê captured the Ho-hsi region of China with the Uighurs and Tanguts in 847. The Chinese commander Wang-Tsai commanded the northern troops on the orders of Emperor Hsüan-tsung and attacked Blon K’ung-Jê and his army. Meanwhile, the Sha-t’o Turks took part in the Chinese commander’s army as a vanguard. The Chinese army, which came to Yen-chou by crossing the Yellow River, fought with the military unit of K’ung-Jê and defeated them (Huang Chi-Huei, 1970, p. 188). Blon K’ung-Jê, whose name was involved in various incidents, was captured in 866 by Shan-chou District administrator T’o-pa Huai-Kuang. Chinese historian Ssü-ma Kuang (i.e., Sima Guang) says that after the murder of Blon K’ung-Jê (in 866), Tibetan power was over. According to the sources, T’o-pa Huai-Kuang killed Blon K’ung-Jê and sent his head to Ch’ang-an. Beckwith says that the word “T’o-pa” at the beginning of the name of the person named in this incident was a common clan name among the Tanguts. For this reason, he states that we can assume that

T'o-pa Huai-kuang, who killed Blon K'ung-Jê, was a Tibetan of Tangut origin¹⁵⁶ (Beckwith, 1993, p. 170). The issue of the nationality of the person who killed the Blon K'ung-Jê seems to be a controversial issue. Sorensen, based on a source named YLJBCHBY, one of the old Tibetan Annals, states that it was not T'o-pa Huai-kuang who killed Blon K'ung-Jê. His interpretation is that Blon K'ung-Jê was killed by a *Sog-po* general named Pho-ku bTsun. Transcribed as Sog-po from Tibetan to Latin languages, we see that the word is used in sources, sometimes to refer to the word *Uighur*, sometimes the *Mongol* and sometimes the *Tangut* (Sørensen, 1994, pp. 422-423; Vitali, 1996, p. 415).

4.6.2. Relations with the Gansu (Kan-chou) Uighurs

It is known that some Uighurs scattered around after the collapse of the Orkhon Uighur State came to An-hsi and the region where the Tibetans lived. The Uighurs came to Ho-hsi¹⁵⁷ region in two parts in 840 and 842. It is stated in the sources that a large Uighur population settled in the eastern parts of Ho-hsi region and formed a large Turkic population there. The center of the region was the city of Kan-chou (Gansu)¹⁵⁸ located on the trade routes. According to Chinese sources, control of the Ho-hsi region within the borders of Gansu province was in the hands of the Tibetans. Therefore, when the Uighurs came to the region, they came under the rulership of the Tibetans. The Tibetans also placed them where they saw fit. By the year 847, Tibetan minister Blon K'ung-Jê invaded the Ho-hsi region of China together with the Uighurs and Tanguts. Thereupon, the military unit of the Chinese commander Wang-Tsai, fought the invaders in Yen-chou and defeated them. P'u-ku (Bu-gu) Chün, the leader of the Pei-t'ing Uighurs, ended the dominance of Tibet's Pei-t'ing and Hsi-

¹⁵⁶ Beckwith, referring to Moriyasu, states that the story of the Uighur Chief P'u-ku Chün (or Pho-ku bTsun) killing Blon K'ung-Jê cannot be true. For a cross reference on the subject, you can refer to the following resources: (Beckwith, 1993, pp. 169-172; Huang Chi-Huei, 1970, pp. 191-193; Richardson, 1957, pp. 76-77).

¹⁵⁷ Ho-hsi means western regions of the Yellow River. It is also the place defined as the Gansu corridor today. There were military commanderies of Ho-hsi region in Liang-chou, Kan-chou (Gansu), Su-chou, and Dun-huang (Ekrem, 2007, p. 158; Yıldırım, 2012, pp. 139-140).

¹⁵⁸ The city of Gansu was a very important center located on the trade route between today's Eastern Turkestan and China. During the 840-842 period, when the Uighurs came to the region, the trade route was in domination of the Tibetans (Emet, 2002, pp. 233-237).

chou (Turfan) regions in early 866. Thus, Tibet, which has already been weakened because of the chaotic environment and war of thrones in its country, has no longer any effectivity in East Turkestan and Ho-hsi regions (Ekrem, 2007, pp. 158-159; Huang Chi-Huei, 1970, pp. 188, 192).

At the beginning of the tenth century, in the area called Dun-huang, there was a small Chinese State that was founded mainly in the middle of the Yellow Uighurs and the Pei-t'ing Uighurs. The Yellow Uighurs began military activity after a long time and as a result, in 911 captured the city of Dun-huang¹⁵⁹. It is thought that the Dun-huang caves, which are the places where Buddhism spread, are close to the region and that the Uighurs who migrated around here probably turned to Buddhism in the following years (Emet, 2002, pp. 233-237; İzgi, 2000, pp. 27-28).

In early 912, during the Liang Dynasty, the Tibetan and the Uighur representatives were admitted to the Chinese court. Each of the them gave a letter to the Emperor and presented local gifts. They took gold and silk with them on their way back to their countries. Also, again in 928, a joint Tibet-Uighur delegation visited the Chinese court (Bielenstein, 2005, pp. 247, 443). The Tibetans who expelled from East Turkestan by the Chinese and Pei-t'ing Uighurs came to the Gansu region and created trouble for the Yellow Uighurs here. Thereupon, the Yellow Uighurs decided to ally with China, a powerful state, against the Tibetan threat. As a result, the Uighur chief, Jen-mei Kaghan, made an alliance with China in 923 (Emet, 2002, pp. 233-237).

Information on Uighur-Tibetan relations after this date belongs to the years after 933. According to sources, Tibetan gangs started robbing by attacking Uighur caravans since 933. Thereupon, the Yellow Uighur-Tibet wars are seen. In these wars, the Chinese sided with the

¹⁵⁹ It is a settlement of the Gansu province. It was established during the reign of the Emperor Wu-ti (r. 141-87 B.C.) of Han Dynasty (Yıldırım, 2015, p. 53). At the beginning of the tenth century, in the area called Dun-huang, there was a small Chinese State that was founded mainly in the middle of the Yellow Uighurs and the Beshbaliq Uighurs (Çandarlıoğlu, 2002, pp. 193-214).

Uighurs because of their interests (Emet, 2002, pp. 233-237). Yellow Uighurs have fallen under the rule of Mongols after 1226 and have lost their independence. Yellow Uighurs still live in the northwest China today (Çandarlıoğlu, 2019, p. 37).

4.6.3. Relations with the Turfan Uighurs

After the collapse of the Orkhon Uighur State, a large Uighur mass came around Pei-t'ing and Kao-Ch'ang (Turfan) regions. At that time, 13 Uighur tribes living in the frontiers of China fled also the disasters they suffered there and joined the Turfan Uighurs. The Uighurs gathered in this region were referred to as Hsi-chou Uighurs in Chinese sources. The Uighurs, who formed a large group here, established the Turfan Uighur State in 856 by electing Mengli Tegin, the nephew of the last kaghan of the Orkhon Uighur State, as the ruler. We learn from an inscription found in that region that their capital city was Qocho and that their rulers were called "Idi-kut" after 948 (Emet, 2002, pp. 233-237).

At the end of 851, Chinese commander Chang I-ch'ao captured all ten provinces dominated by Tibet. Thus, the southeastern part of Koko-Nor was again under Chinese rule. As known, the Kao-Ch'ang (Qocho) region is also one of the places that was taken back from the Tibetans by the commander Chang I-ch'ao in 851. The same Chinese commander took back Liang-chou from the Tibetans in 861 (Huang Chi-Huei, 1970, pp. 191-192). According to the sources, in 866, the kaghan of the Turfan (Pei-t'ing) Uighurs was P'u-ku Chün¹⁶⁰. In addition, it is clearly stated in Chinese sources that the Qocho region was captured by the Uighur chief P'u-ku Chün during the 865-866 period (Emet, 2002, pp. 235-237; Ögel, 1984, pp. 361-362). It is seen that the region of Qocho and Pei-t'ing was subjected to raids by Tibetans from time to time. We understand that the Uighur chief went on an expedition

¹⁶⁰ In the sources that give information about the year 866, he is mentioned as the ruler of the Beshbaliq Uighurs at that time. They sometimes transcribe his name in various forms, such as Bögü Tegin, Bugu Chün or P'u-ku Chün, in various written sources. Some scholars argue that the person responsible for the murder of the Tibetan General Blon K'ung-je was the Uighur chief P'u-ku Chün. Those who claim this say that in the Tibetan Chronicles name of the person who killed the general is written as Pho-ku bTsun. And they suggest this name matches with the Uighur chief P'u-ku Chün. On the other hand, many scholars argue that the story that P'u-ku Chün executed the Tibetan General is not acceptable (Beckwith, 1993, p. 172; Sørensen, 1994, pp. 422-423).

because of the Tibetan raids. As a matter of fact, the victory of P'u-ku Chün against the Tibetans in Chinese sources is mentioned: "During the reign of Emperor I-tsung (859-973), the Uighur Commander-in-Chief P'u-ku Chün attacked the Tibetans by setting out from Pei-t'ing. He killed the Tibetan Commander-in-Chief and captured the cities such as Hsi-chou, Lun-t'ai (today's Urumqi District)." According to another source, the Chinese commander Chang I-ch'ao states in his letter to the Emperor of China that P'u-ku Chün, chief of the Pei-t'ing Uighurs, captured the cities of Hsi-chou, Lun-t'ai and Ch'ing-Cheng (Abdurrahman, 2002, pp. 238-248; Huang Chi-Huei, 1970, pp. 191-192). Consequently, P'u-ku Chün captured the Turfan (Hsi-chou) region in early 866 and dominated the tribes living in the vicinity (Beckwith, 1993, pp. 171-172; Huang Chi-Huei, 1970, p. 192).

Turfan Uighur State maintained its independence until it was annexed to the Mongol Empire in 1209. Today, Turfan Uighurs continue their lives under the region called Eastern Turkestan Uighur Autonomous Region (Abdurrahman, 2002, pp. 238-248; Çandarlıoğlu, 2019, p. 40).

4.7. Relations with the Sha-t'o Turks

According to Chinese Sources, the Sha-t'o tribe is Turkish (Eberhard, 1947, p. 15). According to Barthold also, they are Turkic-origin. According to the sources, it is a clan originating from the Western Gok-Turk country (Taşağıl, 2017, p. 120). As known, there is information about them in a Chinese Chronicle named *Wu-Tai-shih* ("Historical Records of the Five Dynasties").

The Ch'u-yüeh tribe is considered being the ancestors of the Sha-t'o Turks. When the Gok-Turks dispersed, the Western Gok-Turks went to the Issyk-Kul Lake and Ili basin, the former country of the Wu-suns, and joined the Ch'u-yüeh and Ch'u-mi tribes and settled there. It is known that the Sha-t'o Turks were subordinate to the Western Turks and helped them in military expeditions (Howorth, 1885, p. 293; Taşağıl, 2017, p. 120). During the reign

of Sha-t'o chief Fu-kuo, towards 712 years, the Tibet danger appeared. Thereupon, Fu-kuo transferred all of his people to Pei-t'ing (Eberhard, 1947, p. 16; Taşağıl, 2002, pp. 323-367).

Sha-t'o Turks were the biggest auxiliary force and ally of the Uighurs. However, they were disturbed by the high taxes the Uighur State took from them after a while, in the term starting from about 785. So, the relationship between them deteriorated. That Uighurs came to Sha-t'o settlements and plundered caused the Sha-t'o tribes to become poor. Meanwhile, it is striking that Tibetans in the south are getting stronger day by day. Sha-t'o Turks, who started to feel uncomfortable with the Uighurs, found it more appropriate to their interests to approach Tibetans who seem strong. In 786, the Sha-t'o people, which comprised over 6 thousand tents, could not withstand heavy pressure, separated from the Uighur ranks and took refuge in Tibetans. It is known that the Sha-t'o tribes were the vassals of the Tibetans in the period between 785 and 805, and they served as a vanguard in wars. Thus, the Sha-t'o Turks, who were allied with the Tibetans during the invasion of Pei-t'ing, fought with them against the Uighurs. At the end of the war, the city of Pei-t'ing passed into the hands of Tibet. Upon this, the first attempt of the Uighurs who attacked the city to take back the city did not yield any results. But in 788, the Uighur prime minister, Il Ügäsi (Hsieh-kan-chia-ssu) took back the city of Pei-t'ing (Gökalp, 1973, pp. 44-46).

Although the Uighurs took back the city of Pei-t'ing, they did not change their domestic policy. Because of this attitude of the Uighurs, who continued to demand high taxes from the people, the local people of the city came under the yoke of Tibet in 789 by uniting with the Sha-t'o people. Later, the Tibetan army defeated the Uighur and Chinese army in Pei-t'ing, with the help of the forces of Qarluq and Sha-t'o (790). It is understood that after a while; the Uighurs regained their old power. First, at the end of September 791, they defeated the Tibetans in an attack on Ling-chou. After that, they defeated the allied army of Tibet-Qarluq in Pei-t'ing (Ecsedy, 1964, p. 85).

In 795, the Tibetans transferred the Sha-t'o people living in Pei-t'ing city to Kan-chou. That place was closer to them. Undoubtedly, they did this to control them strictly. The Tibetans then used the Sha-t'o troops as vanguard in wars. Until 808, Sha-t'o-Tibet relations continued firmly. For a long time, Sha-t'o people acted as their vanguard in Tibet's military raids to the Uighurs and the Chinese, and sometimes in raids for plunder. According to sources, this cooperation broke down in 808. The Uighurs occupied Liang-chou, which was under the rule of Tibet (in 808). In the Uighur-Tibet war here, the Tibetans defeated. According to the Chinese Annals named *T'ang-shu* ("History of the T'ang Dynasty"), Tibet billed the bill for its defeat to the people of Sha-t'o. They thought that the Sha-t'o people have made a cooperation with the Uighurs without being noticed to anyone, so the Uighurs won the war. Because of this incident, the Tibetans proposed to transport the Sha-t'o people outside of the Yellow River. Bothered by this offer, Sha-t'o chief Ch'u-yüeh Chin-chung found it appropriate to attach to the Chinese as a remedy. Before the Tibetans took a decision about them, the Sha-t'o chief, who decided to flee, took his people of 30 thousand with him and first fled to the east of the Ötükän Mountains. Thereupon, the Tibetans started following the fleeing Sha-t'o tribes (Gökalp, 1973, pp. 37-38; Gumilev, 2019, p. 501). After chasing for a while, the Tibetan army which caught up with the Sha-t'o army, started to war with them. While some people were fighting, those who could not fight started to flee. Under the leadership of the Sha-t'o chief Ch'u-yüeh Chin-chung, the Sha-t'o people fought valiantly with the Tibetan army many times from the T'ao-Shui¹⁶¹ River to the Shih-men¹⁶² Hill. Many Sha-t'o soldiers died in these battles. While the Tibetans were chasing the Sha-t'o people, they were able to go into the Ötükän. This situation is a sign that the power of the Uighurs was weakening at that time. The Sha-t'o convoy could not stay here any longer because of the Uighurs lacking the power to support them. Besides, the Tibetans were following them. They

¹⁶¹ T'ao-Shui River is located in Gansu province (Huang Chi-Huei, 1970, p. 171).

¹⁶² Shih-men is the name given to a hill in southwest of Tao-Ho district of Gansu state (Huang Chi-Huei, 1970, p. 171).

had to fight in countless times until they arrived to Shih-men. Sha-t'o chief Chin-chung¹⁶³, was pressed and defeated by Tibetan forces while crossing the Yao River¹⁶⁴. He even lost his life in this battle. His son, Ch'u-yüeh Chih-i, who replaced him, was thinking of moving eastward by crossing the I-pu-la Mountains with his people, whose number decreased from 30 thousand to 10 thousand. He then planned to reach Ling-chou through the Ala-shan Mountains. The Tibetans who caught up with them while on the escape route defeated the Sha-t'o army once again. Here, too, they lost many soldiers (Gökalp, 1973, pp. 37-38; Huang Chi-Huei, 1970, p. 171; Taşağıl, 2002, pp. 323-367; Wu Hsing-tung, 1970, p. 5).

As a result, nearly 10 thousand people who remained alive from the wars reached Ling-chou. The Sha-t'o people took refuge in the Chinese town (Beckwith, 1993, pp. 163-164). While they waiting here, the Chinese Governor Fan-Hsi-Ch'ao came out with his soldiers to make them welcome. Then he placed them in the city of Yen-chou¹⁶⁵, on the order of the Emperor. Although the Chinese seem quite benevolent in this incident, their purpose was to employ the Sha-t'o Turks, a warrior tribe, against the Tibetans. Fan-Hsi-Ch'ao bought and gave sheep and oxen to the people of Sha-t'o, who known to be engaged in animal husbandry, to feed and raise. The emperor wanted a Chinese Governorate to be established in Yin-shan and the Sha-t'o people to be resettled there. In the summer of the following year, the Chinese moved the Sha-t'o tribes to the east of the Yellow River, to set them a distance from the Tibetans (Beckwith, 1993, p. 164).

The Sha-t'o people, who were placed in the Yin-shan Governorate in Ordos Region of Inner Mongolia, will be the founders of three dynasties of Turkish origin in China years later. Sha-t'o chief Chih-i was appointed as the army commander of the Yin-shan Governorate (or

¹⁶³ In some sources, it is stated that the Sha-t'o chief did not die in the war, and that his people committed suicide, unable to endure the defeats and disasters they suffered (Gökalp, 1973, p. 38).

¹⁶⁴ It is one branch of the Yellow River. Yao River coming out of Gansu reaches the Yellow River by passing through Ala-shan steppes (Gökalp, 1973, p. 57).

¹⁶⁵ Yen-chou is an old city. It is located in the east of Ala-shan Mountains, within the borders of today's Gansu state (Gökalp, 1973, p. 57; Wu Hsing-tung, 1970, p. 16).

“the head of the region”). The Sha-t’o group of 700 people under the direction of Ko-Lê-A-Po, the younger brother of Sha-t’o chief Chin-chung, who died in wars with the Tibetans, came right after and they also took refuge in Fan-Hsi-Chao. The emperor ordered him to be given the title of military governor (*tu-tu*) of the Yin-shan region. The Sha-t’o tribes who lived under control of China gave strength to the Ling-yen garrison of China. In the years that followed, the Ling-yen military forces, which went on a campaign, successfully returned from many battles thanks to the support of the Sha-t’o Turks (Gökalp, 1973, pp. 38-39, 51; Huang Chi-Huei, 1970, p. 171).

Ch’u-yüeh Chih-i visited the Chinese Emperor in the capital-city Ch’ang-an to strengthen the relations of the Sha-t’o Turks with China. Received a warm welcome here, the chief of the Sha-t’o Turks was gifted with gold, silken fabric and around ten thousand horses. And the Emperor gave him the title of “T’e-chin Chin-wu-wei” General. After a while, in the raid against the Tibetans, the Sha-t’o army supported the Chinese army and joined the war with them. During the expedition of Chinese army to Chen-chou region, the Sha-t’o chief Ch’u-yüeh Chih-i joined the battle as a vanguard with his 700-man army (Gökalp, 1973, p. 39). After Sha-t’o chief Ch’u-yüeh Chih-i dies (830), his son Ch’u-yüeh Ch’ih-Hsin replaces him. Ch’ih-Hsin, together with the Chinese army, allied to the raids organized to suppress the revolting Uighurs; and showed great usefulness in war. In the following years, he supported the Chinese forces fighting to suppress the P’an-hsü rebellion and contributed to suppressing the rebellion. For this reason, he was presented with the various titles and the surname “Li”, which is the surname of the T’ang Emperor (Taşağıl, 2002, pp. 323-367). The rule of the T’ang Dynasty ended in 907. After that, a seventy-two-year period in which there was no political stability started. Thus, many short-lived dynasties emerged in the traditional center of the Chinese Empire in the Yellow River Valley (The Cambridge History Of China Volume 5, 2009, p. 206). The Five Dynasties, which gave their name to this period, established the

Liang, T'ang, Jin, Han, Zhou Empires, with the "later" in front of their names. The Sha-t'o Turks established three of the five dynasties, these were: The Later T'ang (923-936), the Later Jin (936-947) and the Later Han (947-951) dynasties. None of the five dynasties established could dominate all of China. We know little about Sha-t'o-Tibet relations during the Five Dynasties period. Information in the sources regarding this period is insufficient. However, there is a brief information. According to this, the incident occurred in the first years of the enthronement of the Later Jin Empire's Ruler, Shih Ch'ung-kuei (r. 942-946). The emperor sent his envoy named Chang-Ch'ien to the Tibetan tribes in the west to buy some horses. However, when the apostle returned to his country, the horses he received from the Tibetans did not satisfy the ruler. For this reason, he received a warning from the authorities for his error in trade (Wu Hsing-tung, 1970, pp. 52, 80).

As seen, information about the relations between the Sha-t'o Turks and the Tibetans is for the period after the 780s. We see that the Sha-t'o people, who were subordinate to the Tibetans in the period between 785 and 805, served as a pioneer force in battles and performed successfully. It is understood that at the beginning of the 9th century, the peoples of Sha-t'o and Tibet were at odds. As a matter of fact, the Sha-t'o people, worrying that the Tibetans would force them to migrate, fled their place in 808. During this escape, many clashes took place with the Tibetans who were chasing the fleeing Sha-t'o Turks. In the process, the Sha-t'o Turks lost almost two-thirds of their total population. Of these, a community of about ten thousand people who could reach the Chinese border took refuge in China. Here, the Sha-t'o tribes, which recovered and got stronger in a few years, have been the leading force of China in wars from now on. Sometimes they took part in the Chinese army and fought against the Tibetans in the Tibetan-Chinese wars. As known, the unity of Tibet broke down at the end of the 9th century. Therefore, there is little information about Sha-t'o-Tibet relations in the sources after this period.

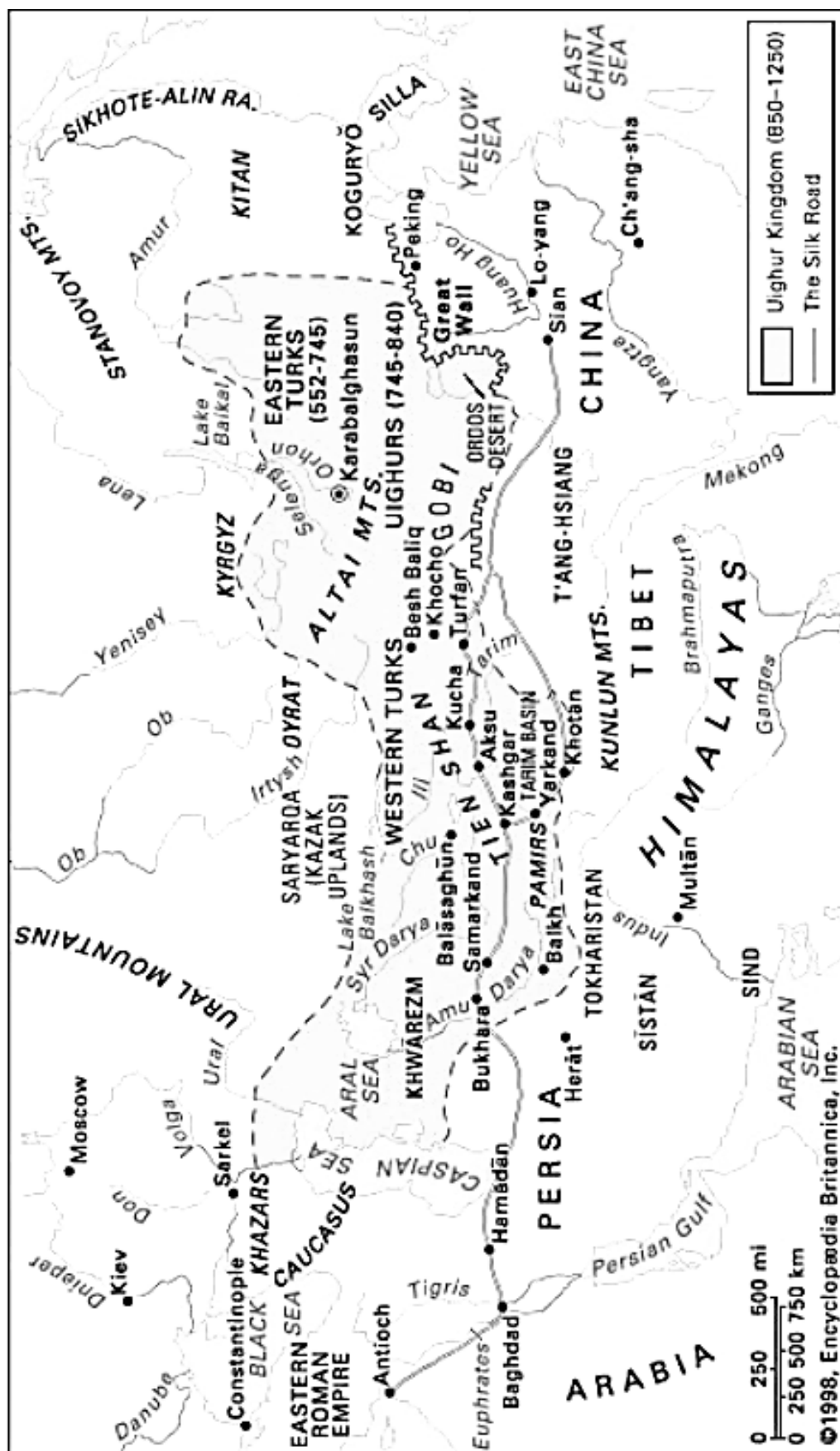


Figure 14. Central Asia between the 9th and 13th Centuries (Encyclopædia Britannica, 2017)

4.8. Relations with the Other Turkish Communities

4.8.1. Relations with the Kyrgyz Turks

It is stated in the sources that the Kyrgyz country is neighbors with the Kurikans in the east, the Qarluqs in the southwest, and the Tibetans in the south. It is known that the Kyrgyz established political relations with Tibet for their own interests. They attached (in 758) to the Uighur State during the reign of Mo-yen-ch'o. Starting from 788, unrest against the Uighur State started in the Pei-t'ing region. During this period, the Tibetans, who were seeking alliance to attack the Uighurs, attracted the Sha-t'o Turks, Qarluqs and other small Turkish tribes. Later, they finally managed to attract the Kyrgyz, who could not forget the blow they received from the Uighurs in 758. Gumilëv says that Tibetans in search of alliance came to Yenisei via Qarluq country and carried out espionage activities (Gumilev, 2019, pp. 493-494).

Therefore, it is seen that Tibetans at that time formed alliances with Turkish tribes such as the Sha-t'o, the Qarluq and the Kyrgyz, who shared their political and commercial interests, and sometimes acted jointly with them against the Uighur State. According to Yoska, Bičurin gives the following information about the Kyrgyz, *"In 759, the Uighurs, under the rulership of Bögü Kaghan, defeated the Yenisei Kyrgyz. Hence, after 759, the Uighurs entered between the Yenisei Kyrgyz people and the Chinese Empire. The Yenisei Kyrgyz had good relations with Tajiks, Tibetans and Qarluqs in political and commercial terms. However, the Uighurs played a major role in shaping these relations. The Tibetans were afraid of the Uighurs in their relations with the Yenisei Kyrgyz and therefore demanded military protection from the Qarluqs..."* (Yoska, 2017, pp. 9-10).

It is known that Kyrgyzs, who have rich iron deposits in their places of residence, were in advance level in mining according to the archaeological findings. The Kyrgyzs, who knew how to process the raw iron they extracted from the mine, used gold, iron and tin in making tools and equipment. We know that they produce arrow heads, helmets, knives,

swords and similar tools from the iron they produce (Butanayev, 2002, pp. 405-411). The Kyrgyz, who took advantage of the iron deposits in the north, were sending the iron they produced to Tibet, Iran and Arab countries via Qarluq country. In return, they bought the required goods for them. When the Uighur ruler Kutlug Bilgä Kaghan defeated the Qarluq, Tibet and the Kyrgyz, valuable trade routes came under the control of the Uighurs (Çandarlıoğlu, 2003, p. 63).

In the 8th and 9th centuries, hunting and fishing were also important to the Kyrgyz economy. Southern Siberia's forests and rivers were rich in fur animals and fish. Fur, woolen and other fabrics played an important role in the Kyrgyz's trade with Eastern Turkestan, Arabs and possibly Tibetans. Chinese sources also report that the Kyrgyz people trade with other peoples, including An-hsi, Pei-t'ing and the Arab Abbasid country. There is not much information in Chinese Sources until 840s about the Kyrgyz, who were defeated by the Uighurs in the 758s and cut off from China. However, although the Kyrgyz tribes could not continue to trade with China, the Abbasid Caliphate managed to keep its trade relations alive with the Qarluq and Tibet countries. According to the sources, the roads incoming or outgoing Tibet pass through the Qarluq region. In addition, at some stages of the trade route, the Kyrgyzs provided "*security service*" to prevent the Uighurs from robbing their trade convoys (Drompp, 1999, p. 402). As it is known, one of the most important activities of the Uighur ruler Kutlug Bilgä is the successful campaign against the Kyrgyz. In the Karabalghasun Inscription, it is stated that the Qarluq tribes and the Tibetans formed gangs and did not leave peace in the region. Therefore, the reason for Kutlug Bilgä's expeditions to the Qarluq and Tibet countries must be these events. The Yenisei Kyrgyz revolted in the days when the new Uighur ruler came to power. Thereupon, Kutlug Bilgä went on an expedition against them. The Karabalghasun Inscription provides information on these issues. In the Kyrgyz expedition, it is described in the inscription that the Uighurs killed the Kyrgyz chief,

destroyed his country, massacred all his warriors and captured the herds of animals. These are stated in the relevant section of the inscription, “The Kyrgyz chief fell down dead as soon as the Uighur Kaghan’s bow buzzed... The Kyrgyz state had been shattered and destroyed, and no living creature remained in his homeland. Owls were singing in the ruins of the dormitory. Later, the Qarluq and Tibetans formed gangs against the government, one after the other” (Orkun, 1994, p. 234).

It is known that the Yenisei Kyrgyz Turks recovered shortly after this war and started the struggle for life again (Karayev, 2008, p. 89). The Kyrgyz expedition has an important place in the history of Central Asia. After this victory, the Uighurs dominated the lands up to today’s Turfan region. Therefore, the Kyrgyz, whose connection with the south of Sayan Mountains was disrupted, had to retreat to the north from where they were (Yoska, 2017, p. 13). According to sources, the wife of the Kyrgyz leader called A-je¹⁶⁶ who became the ruler over the Kyrgyz people in 818, was the sister of the Tibetan Commander-in-Chief. Therefore, it is seen that the Kyrgyz have a kinship relationship with the Tibetans (Gumilev, 2019, p. 510).

The struggles between the Uighurs and the Yenisei Kyrgyz resumed in the 820s and continued for twenty years. As a result, the Kyrgyzs overthrew the Orkhon Uighur State in 840. Classified under the Yenisei Inscriptions group, the Altın-Köl II Inscription was found by a peasant in 1878 in the territory of today’s Kyrgyz State. The Altın-Köl II Inscription, written in the old Turkic runic letters, thought to have been erected by the Kyrgyz, is thought to be a concrete proof of Kyrgyz-Tibetan relations (Scharlipp, 1995, p. 46). Bazin estimates that the inscription belongs to the period between 840 and 848. The sentence in which the word Tibet is mentioned in the inscription is as follows: “er erdem üçün töpöt kanka yalawaç bardım, kelmedim”. The word “töpöt” used here is also mentioned in the Karabalghasun-I

¹⁶⁶ The title of the Kyrgyz rulers is known as “A-je” (Taşağıl, 2017, p. 104).

Inscription and means “Tibet”. According to linguists, the inscription tells that a Kyrgyz envoy went to visit the Tibetan Emperor because of the assignment, but did not return to his country from there (Aydın, 2019, pp. 109-110; Kormuşin, Mozioglu, Alimov, & Yıldırım, 2016, pp. 110-111; Orkun, 1994, p. 515).

Although there is rather scant information on Tibetan-Kyrgyz relations, Chinese sources provide strange information. According to one of them, it is stated that both Kyrgyz and Tibetan troops formed an alliance with Lu-lung governor Li K’uang-wei and T’u-yü-hun leader Ho-lien-T’o in 890. This alliance took place in the battle against Li K’o-yung, the leader of Sha-t’o Turks, in the northwestern Ho-tung. Li K’o-yung defeated his rivals Li K’uang-wei and Ho-lien-T’o in a short time. The sources do not give exact information about whether Kyrgyz and/or Tibetan soldiers took part in this war. Moreover, the sources do not allow us to know whether the Kyrgyz and/or Tibetan troops involved acted on behalf of any ruler (Drompp, 1999, p. 396).

There are some opinions in the scientific community that among Kyrgyz there are those who know Tibetan language and writing. They found a Tibetan text written on a tree bark in one of the burial sites during the excavations carried out by the archaeologist, namely A. D. Grach in Tuva. Based on the remains of the dead found in kurgans, Grach determined the kurgans belong to the Kyrgyz. Therefore, perhaps with the new findings to emerge in the following years, it will be possible to conclude that among the old Kyrgyz there are people who can read the Tibetan script (İsakov, 2014, p. 53).

They gave some information about the Kyrgyz, in the old Tibetan text numbered “P.T. 1283”. The following section in the Tibetan text is particularly noteworthy: *“Behind them are two small Hir-tis tribes; these sometimes fight the Uighurs. Sometimes they are friendly. Going north from there, there is a Gir-tis tribe. They have crystal-like eyes, red hair, and there are a variety of pets in their country. In their country, horses are naturally large.”*

Most of the scholars studying the Tibetan text think that the words “Hir-tis” and “Gir-tis” both represent the Kyrgyz nation. The information given in the text that they occasionally fight the Uighurs is consistent with historical facts. In addition, the descriptions of the physical characteristics of the Kyrgyz people in the text are not different from the information found in both Chinese and Islamic sources (Venturi, 2008, p. 26).

Looking at the Kyrgyz-Tibet relations, it is seen that more political and economic relations have been established. With detailed research and studies on this subject, additional information is likely to emerge.

4.8.2. Relations with the Yabghu State of Tukhâristân

In the sources, it is mentioned that the Western Turks allied themselves with the Tibetans in a war that took place in the Tukhâristân region at the beginning of the 8th century. Tibetan and Western Turk cooperation¹⁶⁷ was witnessed in Tirmidh¹⁶⁸, a strategic city of Tukhâristân on the Amu-Darya River, which controls the roads to Sogdiana.

Tabarî, an important historian of Islam of the 9th century, mentions the attack of the alliance forces composed of the Hephthalites, Tibetans and Turks against Tirmidh, which was an important crossing point on Amu-Darya, in 704. According to the sources, Tirmidh, under the rule of the Umayyad, was captured by Mûsâ (“Mûsâ b. Abdullah b. Hâzim es-Sülemî”), the son of the former governor of Khorasan, in 689-690. In 704, when the city was attacked, Mûsâ was the ruler of the city. As a result, allied Tibetan and Turkish army failed to seize the city. According to Islamic sources, many soldiers died in the war (Beckwith, 1993, pp. 66-69; Dunlop, 2012, p. 304).

After Kutlug Toen Tardu, Che-li Mang-kia-lo became the ruler (yabghu) of the country. There was an incident with Tibet during his time. The Yabghus of Tukhâristân was a

¹⁶⁷ In some sources, it is stated that the opinion on Tibetan-Western Turk cooperation, which is claimed to have taken place in Tirmidh, in 704, is doubtful (Frye, 1990, p. 490).

¹⁶⁸ For the city of Tirmidh (or *Tirmiz*), see also above in Figure 9.

border neighbor with the Chieh-shih Kingdom¹⁶⁹. At the year-ends 749, the Tukhâristân envoy, who came to the Chinese court, reported that the king of Chieh-shih established an alliance with Tibet and that the two countries planned to attack Tukhâristân together. Indeed, really, after a while, the allied army of Tibet and Chieh-shih took action to attack Tukhâristân. Tukhâristân yabghu, who was in a difficult situation, asked China to send its military unit in An-hsi Garrison as his support. The Chinese Emperor accepted the request for help. The Chinese military forces under the command of Kao Hsien-chih, combined with the army of Tukhâristân and in the battle that took place there, ally Tibet and the army of Chieh-shih were defeated (Beckwith, 1993, pp. 135-136; Bielenstein, 2005, pp. 326, 337-338; Salman, 2012, p. 215).

4.8.3. Relations with the Qarakhanids

There is an event related to Turkish history mentioned in Tibetan chronicles. It is estimated that the event took place in the first half of the 11th century. Essentially, the essence of the event is the same in both sources, there are some differences in the details. According to what is explained in *mNga' ris rgyal-rabs*, that is one of the Old Tibetan Chronicle, King 'Od-lde organized an expedition to Bru-zha¹⁷⁰. However, he failed in the war and was captured by the ruler of the enemy side (yab-sgod-ba)¹⁷¹. The captive king escaped after a while. However, some time after escaping from captivity, he died of iron poisoning in bShul-dkar (Shi-gar¹⁷²). King 'Od-lde's military expedition against Bru-zha was not because of his eagerness for this war. The reason for this expedition is that the king had to protect the north-west border of his country from its aggressive Muslim neighbors. According to Ladakh Annals

¹⁶⁹ Chieh-shih Country was located in the north of Gilgit province and on the trade route from Kashgar to India. As known, the country of Chieh-shih was located on a strategic trade route. Therefore, sometimes it could block trade passing through its country, because of its own interests (Bielenstein, 2005, p. 338).

¹⁷⁰ Bru-zha (*i.e.*, *Bru sha*), in ancient times, is the name of a country located in the west of Tibet and on the Persian border (Jaschke, 2003, p. 381).

¹⁷¹ The word "yab-sgod-ba" used here is the Tibetanized spelling of the word "yabgu", which means "tribal leader" and is an official Turkish title (Vitali, 1996, p. 286).

¹⁷² Shi-gar, the old capital of the Ancient Baltistan, is on the road from Bru-zha to Ladakh (Vitali, 1996, p. 281).

(“La-dwags rGyal-rabs”) from Tibetan Chronicles, King dPal gyi-mgon¹⁷³, has a domain that includes the region west of Mar-yul and Rut-hogs¹⁷⁴. However, in another Tibetan chronicle, there is an expression that “*he ruled all Mar-yul region until Bru-zha*”. With this discourse, it is stated that the region dominated by King dPal gyi-mgon, forms a border with the country of Bru-zha (Powers & Templeman, 2012, p. 217). If ’Od-lde, a descendant of the King dPal gyi-mgon, is the king of the entire Mar-yul region, the operation Bru-zha mentioned in the chronicles is logically justified (Vitali, 1996, pp. 284-286). In the chronicle named Zangs-dkar chags-tshul lo-rgyus (“*A record of the settlement of Zangs-dkar*”) from Tibetan sources, the event is described a little differently. While the king of Tibet was taking his Bru-zha origin wife¹⁷⁵ to his hometown, he was attacked by the yabghu’s (yab-sgod-ba) men. While the queen was abducted by them, the King ’Od-lde was captured and killed. The date of death of the king is predicted to be 1037. Probably, while ’Od-lde was planning this trip, he did not expect any danger on his route. However, it appears that shortly before they got there; the area was occupied by the hostile ruler’s (i.e., yabghu’s) army (Vitali, 1996, pp. 282-284).

It is historically significant that the King ’Od-lde’ was captured by the tribal leader (“yab-sgod-ba”) in Bru-zha. The word *Yab-sgod-ba* used here is the Tibetanized spelling of the Turkic word *Yabgu*, which means “leader of the tribal” and is a Turkish title. The fact that the sources stated that the King of Tibet was a prisoner of Yab-sgod-ba suggests that, he was a prisoner in the hands of a Turkish state or tribe. At that time, it probably seems that the Turkic Qarakhanids had control over Bru-zha¹⁷⁶. In this situation, some historians suggest that the Qarakhanids State, which controls neighboring South Turkestan, reached Bru-zha a while before 1037. Vitali identifies the word “Hor-nag-mo” found in Tibetan texts with the

¹⁷³ It is thought that the King dPal gyi-mgon ruled the Ladakh region in 931 (Vitali, 1996, p. 246).

¹⁷⁴ Rut-hogs (i.e., *Ru-thog*, *Ruthok*, *Rodakh*), is a region in Tibet next to Ladakh, it is also the name of a wide plain east of Lake Pan-kon. Rut-hogs, is a place famous for its salt and wool (Francke, 1926, p. 95; Jaschke, 2003, p. 531).

¹⁷⁵ According to the records, King ’Od-lde married a Bru-zha princess. When the Turkish Yabghu attacked the Bru-zha region, it is very likely that the King ’Od-lde took part in the operation to support the allied country, because of the responsibility imposed by the marriage alliance (Vitali, 1996, p. 286).

¹⁷⁶ For Bru-zha (i.e., Hunza) please see the *Figure 6*.

Qarakhanids. He states that the word in the text is the Tibetan equivalent of the Qarakhanids, a Turkish tribe that ruled Southern Turkestan since the middle of the 10th century. In addition, in the Tibetan text, it is stated that the person called “A.lan” is at the head of the Turkish army. The word written as “A.lan” is seemed to be the Tibetan phonetic spelling of the name Arslan¹⁷⁷. The person likely to have taken the Bru-zha country under his sovereignty at the time of the event is the ruler of the Qarakhanids State. The ruler of Qarakhanids in the stated period was namely Ebu Şucâ Süleyman Arslan Han b. Yusuf (r. 1032-1056) (Peteich, 1997, p. 109; Vitali, 1996, pp. 286-287).

Turks and Tibetans, who lived in the same geography for thousands of years in neighboring lands and breathe the same air, undoubtedly have common memories. The limited sources of ancient history have not left regular and detailed records of the past of Turks and Tibetans. For these and similar reasons, it is possible that there are many events about Turkish-Tibetan relations that could not be brought to light.

4.9. Cultural Relations Between the Tibetans and the Turks

4.9.1. Language and literature

As known, language is one of the most important elements of a culture. The most important factor regarding the cultural dimension of Tibetan-Turk relations is the interaction in terms of language. We know that there are many Chinese-origin words in Tibetan. However, there are also Turkish loan-words in Tibetan. The path followed by languages in Central Asia is so complex that the words borrowed by Tibetans from Chinese or Mongolian most of the time reached to Tibet via Turkestan by the way of Turkish idioms. For example, “*pag-si*”¹⁷⁸ word, whose origin is Chinese, has passed to Tibetan through the Uighur Turks. Sometimes it is even seen that a Turkish-origin Mongolian word was borrowed from the

¹⁷⁷ It is a title referring to the highest rank among the Qarakhanids (Vitali, 1996, p. 287).

¹⁷⁸ The word “*pag-si*” means “teacher, sage and scholar”. Also, according to Das’s Tibetan-English dictionary, the second president of the Karma-pa sect, which is a sect of Tibetan Buddhism, is called as *paksi* or *bakši* (Das, 1902, pp. 13-14; Laufer, 1916, pp. 485-486).

Mongols and passed to Tibetan (Laufer, 1916, p. 404). Linguists determined some of the Turkish loan-words in Tibetan with their analysis and studies. Below are some examples of loan-words identified by linguists:

- *ču-ba, ču-pa, čo-pa*, a long loose gown. We can also compare with the word “*ju ba*” in Turkish. Or compare with the word *čapan*, in the Eastern dialect of Turkish, meaning “wadded coat with long sleeves”. According to Jäschke’s Tibetan-English dictionary, the word *ču-pa* means “a man’s dress, coat” in Central Tibet language (Jäschke, 2003, p. 159; Laufer, 1916, p. 490).

- *em-či, em-chi äm-či*, physician. According to Jäschke, the word is of Turkish origin. Called as *ämči* in Uighur dialect and in Mongolian. According to Das, it is a Mongolian-origin word (Das, 1902, p. 1352; Laufer, 1916, p. 489).

- *l-čags-mag, b-ča-mag*, steel used to light a fire. In Turkish, it derives from the word (“*čakmak*”), which is still used in today’s language. In Jäschke’s Tibetan-English dictionary, *l-čags-mag* is stated as “flint-stone, tinder-box” (Das, 1902, p. 398; Jäschke, 2003, p. 148; Laufer, 1916, p. 491).

- *dam-ga, dam-k’a, t’am-ga, t’am-ka*, a seal, sign. Seen as *tamka* in the Orkhon Inscriptions, as *tamyâ* in the Uighurs, and as *tamaga* in the Mongol language. Stigmatization was common among the nomadic tribes. Nomadic tribes would brand a mark on the skin of the animals they feed, showing that they belonged to their own tribe. It is understood that Tibetans have adopted the word *tam-ka* from the fact that they have made the last syllable of the word an abbreviation by omitting it from the correct place in terms of grammar. For example, in a Tibetan text, we see that the word *rgyal-t’am* which means “royal seal” is derived by taking the *tam* part of the word *tam-ga* (Jäschke, 2003, p. 229; Laufer, 1916, p. 488).

- *dar-ka-če, dar-rgan*, tarkan in present-day Turkish. A term that shows a title of the officials. The word appears in two official Tibetan documents, dated 1724 and 1729, and transcribed as *ta-ro-kha* and *da-ro-ga* by linguists. The word “tarkan” has been used as a title in various Turkish tribes and states. Some scholars state that, in Turfan region, the word *doroyā* or *daroyā* is used to mean the “mayor”, but in the western part of Turkestan (from Kucha to Kashgar), used as a title of the officials. Besides, in the Orkhon Inscriptions, “tarkan” is listed among the titles of Bilgä Tonyukuk (Laufer, 1916, pp. 487-488).

- *hor-du*, is defined in Tibetan-English dictionaries as “Mongolian camp or headquarters”, has passed from the Uighur word *ordu* (English: army) to Mongolian. And it is clearly seen that it derived from the Mongolian to Tibetan as *hor-du* (Laufer, 1916, pp. 499-500; Tezcan, 1975, p. 301).

- *pi-čag, pī-čak*, knife, big butcher’s knife. Jäschke states in the Tibetan-English dictionary that the word *pi-čak* is a word of Turkish origin. In present-day Turkey Turkish, we use “bıçak” word that is derived from the old *pi-čag* word (Jaschke, 2003, p. 323; Laufer, 1916, p. 492).

- *top, tōb*, cannon. It is used as *tōp* in old Turkish dialects, “top” in Ottoman Turkish, and *tōb* in Persian (Das, 1902, p. 330; Laufer, 1916, p. 492).

- *tu-pag (tu-bak)*, rifle, gun. In present-day Turkey Turkish, it is “*tüfek*”. It is stated in the dictionary of the Türk Dil Kurumu (“Turkish Language Association”) that the word *tüfek* is a loan word coming from the Persian *tufeng* to Turkish (Laufer, 1916, p. 492).

- *u-lag, (“ula” in Eastern Tibet)*. Its Turkish equivalent today is “*ulak*”. It has meaning such as courier, person providing official communication services, animal liable to carry goods for official messenger carrying diplomatic mail. The word *ulak* meaning “messenger” is included in the Tibetan-English dictionary of Das, as *hu-lag* in the same sense (Das, 1902, p. 1115; Laufer, 1916, p. 492).

As stated in the previous chapters, Tibetan chronicles contain a Turkish word, “yabgu” (Tibetan: “yab-sgod-ba”). Besides, it is quite meaningful that a Tibetan word (“blon”) is used in the Orkhon Inscriptions. The presence of loan words between the languages of the two peoples is important to show the cultural relationship between the Tibetan and Turkish peoples. Besides those mentioned above, many words from other Turkish dialects are thought to have been borrowed by Tibetan (Laufer, 1916, pp. 485-493).

Another factor that shows the cultural relationship between the two societies is the literary works they have left today. The mention of the name “Tibet” in Old Turkic Inscriptions and the information recorded about Turks in old Tibetan manuscripts that have survived are a good example of this subject. It can be seen that there is information about Tibetan-Turkish relations in the Old Turkic Inscriptions, which are very important written sources for Turkish History. The presence of the word *Tibet* in the Orkhon Inscriptions was mentioned in previous chapters. The word *Tibet* witnessed in two of the inscriptions found in the Yenisei Region. This is a clear sign that Turkish tribes living in Southern Siberia have a political relationship with Tibet. As known, the inscription named Altın-Köl II (E 29) from the Yenisei Inscriptions contains statements regarding the visit of a Turkish ambassador to Tibet. Again, from the Yenisei Inscriptions, it is seen that the inscription named Eerbek II (E149) contains the word “Tibet”. Linguists read the sentence in the sixth line of the inscription as “*töpöt üpädä? birkä tükändim ä*” and they translate as, “*I died in Tibet. Country?*” (Aydın, 2019, p. 233).

It is important to find the myths belonging to Turks in texts written in Tibetan to show the cultural shares of the two communities. There are three stories (or myths) belonging to Turks in the Tibetan text with the number “P.T. 1283” found in the manuscripts in the Pelliot Collection. Because of the erosion in manuscripts over the years, only two of these myths have survived and can be read. According to the first of the myths, the Eastern Turkish ruler

(kaghan) went on an expedition. Two of his men have disappeared from his army, and they come across a female camel on the way. Then they follow the camel and reach the water source. There, they meet a Turkish-speaking woman wandering around with a herd of camels. Some time after resting at the water source, they encounter a pack of dogs. This pack of dogs helps them, together they load the camels with the water they need to cross the desert. Then they set out and return to the Turkish country. The second myth resembles the myth of the Turks' descent from the wolf, but differs greatly from the descent myth. In the story here, there is a dog figure instead of a wolf as the major character. According to the story, a dog descended from the sky. The first dog emanated into two dogs, one black and the other red. Afterwards, they abducted a maiden from a Turkish household. The dogs united with the girl and then have puppies. While the daughters of the puppies born from this union were human, the male ones were the dog. Thus, their number increases, they become crowded. A Turkish tribe called *Qizil (red) Küşü*, has emerged from the family of the red dog. And another Turkish tribe called *Qara (black) Küşü* has emerged from the family of the black dog¹⁷⁹ (Erkoç, 2018, pp. 72-73; Venturi, 2008, pp. 29-30).

In addition, as stated in the previous sections, in Tibetan text number P.T. 1283, Qarluq, Kyrgyz, Turgish, Uighur and many other Turkish-origin communities are mentioned. Therefore, while listing the peoples that the ambassadors met along the route they followed during their travels, the names of many Turkish tribes are included in the text. Among them, *A-sha-sde (A-shih-te)*, *Ba-smel (Basmil)*, *Ba-yar-bgo (Bayirqu)*, *Be-ca-nag (Pečeneg)*, *Ha-la-yun-log (Alayundluq)*, *Hir-tis (Kyrgyz)*, *Lo-lad (Nu-la)*, *So-ni (Su-ni)*, *Yag-le-ker (Yaghlaqar)* and such Turkish tribes can be counted. While listing the names of the peoples on the route, some brief information was given about them. The present-day equivalents of place names

¹⁷⁹ Ligeti, as a result of his studies on the Tibetan text, read the tribal names in the text as “Ge-zir gu-shu” and “Ga-ra gu-shu”. These tribal names mean Red Snouts (old Turkic: *Qizil Küşü*) and Black Snouts (old Turkic: *Qara Küşü*) (Erkoç, 2018, p. 73; Venturi, 2008, p. 30).

and tribal names in the text have been found as a result of long years of examination and analysis by various academicians (Tezcan, 1975, pp. 301-303; Venturi, 2008, pp. 19-32).

4.9.2. Religion

Another cultural interaction has been in the field of religion. It is understood that, on the beliefs of Central Asian Turkish communities, the Iran, Mesopotamia, Arab, Chinese and Indian influences as well as the Tibetan influence. It is thought that Buddhism first spread between the Uighurs and Kyrgyz between the 7th and 11th centuries. Among the Turk communities, Buddhist sects called *Mahayana* and *Lamaism*¹⁸⁰ spread (Günay & Güngör, 2003, pp. 141, 160).

We see that Lamaism spread among the Uighurs, especially in the thirteenth century¹⁸¹. Tibetan Lamaism has spread among Tuva Turks since the second half of the seventeenth century. This religion continues to be effective today among Tuva Turks. The existence of manuscripts on Buddhist Uighur literature coming from the past to the present shows us that Lamaism has spread among the Turks. Among these are Buddhist texts translated from Tibetan into the Uighur language, dating from the 13th and 14th centuries (Günay & Güngör, 2003, pp. 180-181, 489).

¹⁸⁰ Tibetan Buddhism is called as Lamaism.

¹⁸¹ Especially after the Tibet expedition, Tibetan Lamaism affected the Mongolian Ruler, Kublai Khan. Hence, Lamaism spread among the Uighurs living under the rulership of the Mongols. We understand this from the manuscript texts and pictures that have survived from those times (Günay & Güngör, 2003, pp. 179-180).

5. CONCLUSION

In order to determine when the Turkish-Tibetan relations started, it is first necessary to look at when the history of these nations began. The history of the Turks goes back to 2700s Before Common Era. The history of the Ch'iang, the ancestors of the Tibetans, goes back to the 2000s B.C. when they raided China. The contacts of the ancestors of the Turks and Tibetans may go back to earlier times thanks to archaeological findings that will emerge in the following years. However, according to today's information, it is known that Turks had contact with Tibetan Ch'iang tribes living in the neighboring geography since the time of the Huns. The Ch'iang tribes established an alliance with a feudal lord named Shen in 771 B.C., and later the Huns joined this alliance. The Allied states combined their military forces and attacked the Zhou Dynasty of China. It is likely that this was the first Tibetan-Turkish alliance in history. The Ch'iang people of Tibetan were an important ally of the Huns at the beginning of the Han Period in China (206 B.C. - A.D. 220). It is understood from the practices of the Chinese administration that this is so. As a matter of fact, after the Chinese conquered the Gansu region west of the Huns, they wanted to create a buffer zone between the Tibetans and the Huns. And for this they set up the Chiu-ch'üan (Su-chou) Garrison here. By doing so, China wanted to cut off communication between the two communities. It is known that some Ch'iang tribes lived under Hun rule before the division of the Huns, and they were allied with the Huns in wars with China. The Hun State was divided into two as Northern and Southern Huns in 48. After this division, the Ch'iang tribes, which seemed to behave comfortably, were sometimes in alliance with the Huns and sometimes against them. We see that in 122, 138 and 140, Hun forces in ally with the Ch'iang tribes in wars with the Han Dynasty. The Yellow Turbans rebellion, which started in China in 184 and lasted for about twenty years, prepared the end of the Han period. This was actually a joint rebellion movement of the Chinese, as well as the Yüeh-Chih, Ch'iang, and Hun peoples against the Han Empire. With the collapse

of the Han Dynasty, the political unity in China disappeared. Later, many administrations emerged in the north of China. This period is called the Sixteen Kingdoms period by historians. During this period, when the Chinese political unity could not be established for a long time, the founders of four of the states that emerged were Huns and three were Tibetans. During the Sixteen Kingdoms, the Huns were in contact with the Tibetan Di (or Ti) and Ch'iang tribes.

During the Former Zhao State (304-329), which was founded by the Huns during the Sixteen Kingdoms, it is seen that the Tibetan tribes under the rule of the Huns revolted and the army struggled to suppress the rebellions for a long time. The Tai Kingdom was established by Tabgatch people in 315. We know that the dominant element of the Tai Tabgatch Kingdom, which was a federation of tribes, was the Turks. The Tai Kingdom has been in a power struggle with the Former Qin State, whose founders were Tibetan people. However, at the end of the struggle, the State of the Former Qin Dynasty was destroyed. The first information about Tibetan-Turkish relations during the Gok-Turks period is the information that a government official representing the Tibetans attended the funeral of the Gok-Turk Ruler, Bumin Kaghan. The sending of the representative to the funeral of the Gok-Turk Emperor shows that there are bilateral relations between the two communities. During the Gok-Turk Empire, bilateral relations were established with Tibet, but we rarely saw bilateral alliances. As known, after the collapse of the First Gok-Turk Empire, the Gok-Turks were divided into two as Western and Eastern Gok-Turks. The Western Gok-Turks have often allied with the Tibetans and sided with them against China. However, the Eastern Gok-Turks followed a different policy.

Especially since the beginning of the eighth century, Arabs, Chinese, Eastern Turks and Tibetans have started a fierce struggle for the domination of East and West Turkestan. It is striking that the Western Turks sometimes established relations with the Tibetans. For

example, in Chinese sources, it was recorded that the On Oq chiefs allied with the Tibetans in 677 and rebelled against China. The Turgish tribe is one of the five Tu-lu tribes that form the Western Gok-Turks. With the decrease in the effectiveness of the Western Gok-Turks, we start to see the Turgish influence in the region. Meanwhile, we see that the Tibetans have grown stronger since the 670s, sometimes cooperating with the Turkish tribal chiefs against China. With the disappearance of the Western Gok-Turk power around 657, the Qarluqs also started to gain strength. It is seen that the Qarluqs are in contact with the Tibetans, starting from the 670s. It is seen that the Qarluqs, who came and settled in the lands of the Western Turks around 745, established a state in this region around 766. The Qarluqs, who were seen to fight against the Uighurs together with the Tibetans and some other Turkish tribes in the battles of Pei-t'ing that took place during the 789-791 period, eventually became the winner in this struggle. The Qarluqs, who were on the side that fought against the Uighurs, captured the Kagan Stupa, north of Pei-t'ing after the Pei-t'ing Victory in 791. Therefore, they benefited from being allies in Tibet. It is seen that the Qarluqs have good relations with the Tibetans; they send mutual envoys and are allies in wars. One of the Turkish tribes that seem in contact with the Tibetans is the Ch'u-yüeh tribe. These are the Turks who were known as Sha-t'o Turks in the following years. Sha-t'o Turks, descended from Western Gok-Turks, were under the rule of China, after the weakening of the Gok-Türk power (around 659). The Sha-t'o Turks, who got closer to the Uighurs during the internal turmoil in China, started to have difficulties under the heavy taxes imposed by the Uighurs since 785. Thereupon, they became allies with the Tibetans. Like the Qarluqs, they took the side of the Tibetans in the Tibetan-Uighur struggle that lasted between 789-791 in Pei-t'ing. The Sha-t'o Turks, who lived under the rule of Tibet in a period of about twenty years, moved away from them since the 805s. Worried that the Tibetans would expose them to forced migration, Sha-t'o Turks had to leave their homeland in 808. However, the Tibetans who followed them killed

thousands of Sha-t'o Turks until they reached Ling-chou on the Chinese border. When they arrived at the Chinese border, it was understood that approximately 3 thousand five hundred people survived from the Sha-t'o people, who were a group of 30 thousand people when they set out. After this incident, Sha-t'o Turks, who came under Chinese sovereignty, took part in the Chinese army after gathering their old forces. In the wars between China and Tibet, the Sha-t'o Turks fought with the Tibetans on behalf of China as the vanguard force. Therefore, Sha-t'o Turks have not been on the same side with Tibet after this happening, through the years.

According to the information and documents we have, perhaps the Turkish community with which Tibetans come into contact with the most is Turgish Kaghanate. While the Second Gok-Turk State was newly established, Wu-chih-le, one of the Western Gok-Turk chiefs, established the Turgish Kaghanate by uniting the Turkish tribes around 690. The 8th century is a period when Turgish people are fighting on one front and maintaining friendly relations on other fronts. Because the Turgish Kaghanate could not battle with all the States at the same time. In 717 we see Arab, Tibetan, and Turgish forces attacking Chinese cities. It is noteworthy that they are facing an army of Turks, most of whom have been linked to China before. Again, around 726-727, it is seen that the Turgish were allied with the Tibetans and attacked the Four Garrison by joining their forces. The Turgish people, who came to the aid of the king of Khorasan in 729, are also in the same ranks as the Tibetans. But the Arab Umayyad State was against this tripartite alliance. As seen that the Arabs, who were defeated in this war, had to drive from Sogdiana. Having good relations with Tibet, the Turgish Kaghan Su-lu married a Tibetan princess in order to pursue the political interests of his country. There is information that a Turgish ambassador visited the Tibetan palace in 744. We understand that this is the last piece of information on Tibet-Turgish relations. In the period of the Second Gok-Turk State, Tibet's request to establish an alliance against China was rejected

by Bilgä Kaghan. And Tibet's alliance proposal was reported to China by a letter (726). Bilgä Kaghan got various privileges for his people from the Chinese State in return for this notice he made to the Chinese Emperor.

In 745, the Second Gok-Turk State was destroyed by the triple allied army consisting of the Uighur, the Qarluq and the Basmil forces. It is seen that the Uighurs were mostly in competition with the Tibetan Empire in the period between 745 and 840. In times of weakness, China demanded military support from the Uighurs against the Tibet threat. The Uighurs accepted China's request for help in turn of gifts or various privileges, and they were often allied with China. The Uighurs militarily supported the Chinese army in Tibet's attacks on China. After the collapse of the Orkhon Uighur State, a group of the Uighurs migrated to the region west of the Yellow River, a place known today as the Gansu corridor. The Uighurs of the Gansu region, called the Yellow Uighurs, lived for a short time under the rule of the Tibetans, who were the rulers of the region at the time. During this period, a neighborhood relationship between the two communities brought about by living in the same region must have developed. Therefore, cultural interaction is likely to occur. It is thought that the Yellow Uighurs were affected by Tibetan Lamaism when they lived close to each other in the same region. Also, borrowings between the Uighur and Tibetan languages must have started around this time. However, the attack of Tibetan gangs on Uighur caravans starting from 933s caused the Yellow Uighur-Tibet wars. As known, after the collapse of the Orkhon Uighur State, another mass of Uighur people came to the vicinity of Pei-t'ing and Turfan. These got stronger over time and established the Turfan Uighur State. It is observed that Qocho and Pei-t'ing, where the Turfan Uighurs started to settle, was exposed to Tibetan raids from time to time. The ruler of the Pei-t'ing Uighurs went on an expedition against the Tibetans because of these raids. Having achieved outstanding success in the war between the Tibetans and the

Uighurs, the Uighur army captured cities such as Qocho (Hsi-Chou), Lun-t'ai and Ch'ing-cheng from the Tibetans.

Other Turkish groups that have relations with Tibetans, among those who we have less information about them, include the Kyrgyz, The Yabghu of Tukhâristân, and Qarakhanids. It is seen that the Kyrgyz people establish bilateral relations with the Tibetans, who are their southern neighbors, mostly in political and economic terms. Little is known about the relationship between the Yabghu of Tukhâristân and Tibet. It is known that in the early 700s, in the Tibetan attack on the Tirmidh, which was dominated by the Arabs, the yabghu was on the same side with them. According to another historical record, the Yabghu of Tukhâristân, who sent an envoy to the Chinese court in 718, reported that they neutralized the Arab and Tibetan bandits by fighting them, so the bandits did not trouble China. In another incident after this date, we saw that the yabghu of Tukhâristân provided military support from China against the Tibetan forces attacking his country.

We have some information about the relations between the Qarakhanids and the Tibet. There is an important event on this subject, which is described in the old Tibetan Annals. According to this, even though the incident is told differently in various sources, the theme that they all unite with is that the King of Tibet was captured by a Turkish ruler ("yabghu"), in the first half of the 11th century. Academicians who conducted research on this subject estimate that the ruler mentioned in Tibetan texts is Süleyman Arslan Khan, the yabghu of Qarakhanids.

Tibetans, who live in the same geography as the Turks and who are sometimes border neighbors, have had relations with many Turkish tribes and societies apart from what is probably known. However, most of them cannot go beyond guesswork because of the scarcity of scientific evidence from those times to the present day. Perhaps, with new findings that

will emerge after archaeological discoveries in the following years, or with new documents that will come to light, we will get more information on this subject.



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