

TURKISH - MONGOLIAN RELATIONS IN THE EARLY PERIOD

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Turks and Mongolians which placed together on the scene of Central Asian History lived for thousands of years side by side and sometimes together. This togetherness, with otherwords, brotherhood continued sometimes with friendship and sometimes with struggles. The linguistic proximity of this two community is already known. The togetherness in Central Asia that started from the very early stages of the history continued till the past centuries. In the analysis of this togetherness there are two dimensions; political relations and cultural relations. Political relations include relations of war and peace rather, a multidimensional struggle which is a result of sharing the same territory. The cultural relations includes the proximity of maintaining the similar life styles with minimal differences which is the result of living together. Although some differences occurred as a result of Turkish communities moved firstly to Western Central Asia and than to the front Asia in the second part of 10th century, relations with Turkish origin communities like “Kipchak”, Kirghiz and “Uyghur” continued for centuries.

In this paper we will make a general evaluation about the political and cultural relations between the Mongolian origin clans and Turkish origin clans in the early period which is the period before Genghis Khan (Jenghis Khan- Jinghis Khan).

The Political Dimension of the Relations

The difficulties of the life in steppes forced the tribes always to move to different locations where they could continue their lives. Therefore, this mobility and the dynamism lead to a very strong tribal structure. This situation, the strong tribal structure became the immutable reality of the Central Asian History. A system of big and little tribes from the Pacific Ocean to the Ural Mountains, even to the large plains of Blacksea Region is the point at issue¹. This situation is the same in the beginning of 20th century as it was in the early periods².

This large area of steppes was shared by Turkish, Mongolian and Manchurian originated tribes. The history of the Manchurian originated tribes which situated more eastern and majorly shared the same destiny of Northern China and Korea developed a bit differently³. However, the history of Turkish and Mongolian tribes developed on within the other.

This proximity is so clear that, sometimes it is difficult to understand which tribe is Turkish or which tribe is Mongolian⁴. Especially in the very early stages of history, which is periods B.C., there are some tribes that very little sources can be found about. Chinese sources tell about their Northern neighbours majorly by using mythological

¹ Ahmet Taşağıl, *Çin Kaynaklarına Göre Eski Türk Boyları*, Ankara 2004; Wolfram Eberhard, *Çin'in Şimal Komşuları*, Ankara 1942.

² Owen Lattimore, *Inner Asian Frontiers of China*, New York American Geographical Society, 1940.

³ Thomas J.Barfield, *The Perilous Frontier*, Blackwell, Massachusetts 1992, pp.85-124.

⁴ Eberhard, *Çin'in Şimal Komşuları*, s.35-40

terms instead of historical terms. For example, the term Ti (Di) used to point northern tribes includes the Turkish, Mongolian and Tungusian tribes. Sometimes the term "Jung" is used⁵. In the period of the Huns, to point the same Northerns, the term "Hu" is used and, the term "Jung" is used to point the tribes in the directions of West and Tibet. After a few centuries, the term "Hu" is used for the Sogds that lived in the Western regions. As a result, we can say that the Chinese have confused in geographical means in denominating the Northern and Western regions⁶.

On the other hand, about the ancestors of the Huns, again the mythological terms find place. Names which are not very clear are mentioned with very short informations. In 318 B.C., we see the name Hsiung-nu (Hun). However, after 225 B.C., there are names like Kuei-fang, Yen-yün, Hsien-yün to be told as the ancestors of the Huns⁷. Here Turkish and Mongolian originated tribes must be mentioned together. After 209 B.C., the Great Hun Empire that gained power with the leadership of Mo-tun is actually a confederation. The eastern flank of the confederation was established by Mongolian and Tungusian originated tribes⁸.

As any other political organisation, the Hun Empire first became weaker (Mid 1st century B.C.) and then came to an end in the 2nd century A.C. and was split to 2 or 3. The Mongolian and Manchurian originated tribes became stronger and established their own state by using the advantage of this situation. Here, maybe because of the close relations between Hsein-pi and Wu-huan tribes the relations and proximity between Mongolians and Tungus (Manchurians) may be discussed⁹. We see that many Hun tribes migrated firstly to Western Central Asia, and from there to Middle and Western Europe.

On the other hand, after the dissolution of the Hun empire, many Hun and Mongolian tribes moved to Northern China and established new states¹⁰. While these states were able to protect their steppe culture characteristics in the beginning, later on they Chinesized and gained different cultural characteristics. Also, in such situation, the Turkish and Mongolian originated tribes shared the same destiny¹¹.

Following the Huns, in the East of Central Asia, the Juan-juan state took place on the history stage. Currently it is discussed whether the origin of this state is Mongolian or Tungus. Actually, this state became dominant in this part of Central Asia for approximately 250 years. Tungus, Turkish and Mongolian originated tribes joined the Juan-juan state, which was organized as a confederation like the Hun empire. In other words, this time Turkish tribes were attached to a Mongolian originated state.

In 552, Juan-juan state was destroyed by the "Gök-Türk"s under the leadership of Bumin. Bumin, who earned the title İl (İllic) Khan, established the Gök-Türk state the same year¹². The following years the Gök-Türk state took over the control of Central Asia and became a confederation spread from Black Sea to Korea. Later Mongolian and

⁵ *Shih Chi* 110(*Hsiung-nu chapter*).

⁶ E.G.Pulleyblank, "A Sogdian Colony in Inner Mongolia", *T'oung-pao*, 1951, XLI, p.323 so end.

⁷ *Shih Chi* 110; *Han Shu* 94,A,B(*Hsiung-nu chapter*).

⁸ W.Macgovern, *Early Empires of Central Asia*, Chapel Hill-North Carolina 1939, pp.35-150; B. Ögel, *Büyük Hun İmparatorluğu*, Ankara 1982, I, pp. 15 so end.

⁹ *Hou Han Shu* 90; Barfield, pp.85-124.

¹⁰ *Wei Shu* 30; *Chin Shu* 113

¹¹ *Wei Shu* 100; P.A. Boodberg, The Language of the T'o-ba Wei, *HJAS*, I,1936, p.179; Eberhard, *Çin Tarihi*, Ankara 1987, p.166; Otto Franke, *Geschichte de Chinesischen Reiches*, II, pp.182-205. Eberhard, *Conquerors and Rulers, Social Forces in Medieval China*, Leiden, 1952, p.68 so end.

¹² Ahmet Taşağıl, *Gök-Türkler I*, Ankara 2002, pp.16-18.

Tungus tribes joined this political organisation¹³. Most important tribes were Ch'i-tan, Shih-wei, Hsi and K'u-mo-hsi's. By the way, we have to add that, Chinese sources between 6-8'th centuries provide more detailed informations. That makes our knowledge of history and culture about the Turkish and Mongolian originated tribes clearer. These Mongolian tribes were placed in the Gök-Türk federation. We see that when Gök-Türk state became weaker after 582, the Mongolian tribes began to act individually or sometimes they were attached to China. This situation continued until the Gök-Türk state collapsed in 744. In the following Uyghur state the situation is the same. There were Mongolian tribes in the Uyghur confederation¹⁴.

After the Great State of Uyghurs (established 745) collapsed by Kyrgizs, the sovereignty in the Orhun area passed to the Kyrgizs¹⁵. However, they couldn't establish an absolute sovereignty over the area. Rather, this couldn't be for long-term. After the Mongolian originated Kytans which came from the East in 920's occupied the area completely, in Mongolia, Turks never have been able to win the sovereignty over this area. As it is known, the Kytans moved to West and established a country called Kitay (known as Karahitay by Islamic sources) on Eastern Kazakhstan vicinity. Turkish tribes like "Kipchak", "Uyghur" and "Karluk" were attached to this state¹⁶. Actually, the Karahitay country replaced "Karahanlı" state. Eastern Turkestan gained control over southern and eastern Kazakhstan lands.

The real change occurred during the reign of Genghis Khan. Many Turkish originated tribes were attached to Genghis who developed his country in a very short period time from a state to an empire. Here the important point is that until the period of Genghis Khan, Turkish and Mongolian originated tribes lived together¹⁷. Turkish tribes like "Kipchak"s and Kyrgizs became a part of the Mongolian empire and formed an important component of the state. The contributions in the cultural area of the Uyghurs who live majorly in the center and eastern regions of the Mongolian empire is very significant. This togetherness is very clear especially during the reign of Kubilay Khan in China.

Approach To Cultural Relations:

There are many Mongolian tribes which walk away in the historical stage during the early periods. Their number is at least 118¹⁸. The history of these tribes is important for both Mongolian and Turkish history. Lets have a look at the most important ones:

Hsi's: Hsi's living on the Wu-huan mountains have been called K'u-mo-hsi during Wei's (385-549) reign and Hsi during the reign of T'ang. It's mentioned that this tribe was a part of the Tung-hu's and their life style and customs's were the same of Gök-Turks. On the other hand it is interesting that they were migrating, living in the fell tents. Also their hunting skills, cultivation of a kind of millet , the presence of wooden

¹³ Taşağıl, ibid.,pp.19-59.

¹⁴ Colin Mackerras, *The Uighur Empire According to T'ang Dynastic Histories*, Canberra 1968; J.R.Hamilton, *Les Ouighours à L' époque des Cinq Dynasties D'apres les Documents Chinois*, Paris 1955, p.27.

¹⁵ Taşağıl, *Çin Kaynaklarına Göre Eski Türk Boyları*, pp.78-81.

¹⁶ Ahmet Taşağıl, *Karahitay, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, 24, pp.415-416.

¹⁷ *Moğolların Gizli Tarihi*(terc. Ahmet Temir), Ankara 1986; Erdoğan Merçil, *İlk Müslüman Türk Devletleri*, Ankara 2000, p.29.

¹⁸ Eberhard, *Çinin Şimal Komşuları*, pp.181-186.

mortars, tripod pots of clay, their good race horses and black sheeps are interesting. They're seen as a tribe of the Kitans when they were powerfull¹⁹.

Kitan's: We see them for the first time in the second half of the 4th century A.C, in East Mongolia and South-west Manchuria. They separated from the K'u-mo-shi's during the reign of Wei (385-549). Later a part of them went to Korea. Their graves are on trees. After the dead is kept here for three years, it is scorched. They look like the Shih-wei's. They consist of 72 tribes. They belong to Tung-hus. They have horse cart wagons. Their customs are similar to the ones of the Gök-Türks. In spring and autumn, before wars, they sacrifice a white horse and a black ox's. Some researchers say that this tribe is a mixture of Mongolian- Tunguz²⁰.

K'u-mo-hsi's: Normally they take place on the history scene as a mountain tribe which is situated on the North. In the second half of the 4th century they are seen in Western Manchuria and Eastern Mongolia. Tung-pu, are another clan of the Yü-wens. They live by hunting and looting. Later they are separated to five different groups; the Ju-ho-chu, Mo-ho-fu, Ch'i-ku, Mu-kun, Shih-te.

They migrate like the Gök-Türks. Their clerical titles are the same of the Gök-Türks. They are experienced hunters. They cook pap with millet. They made assaults on Wei's (Tabgaç) after 480²¹.

Meng-wu: They're seen as a branch of Shih-wei's during the reign of T'ang dynasty (618-905). It's clearly known that the name "Mongolian" is originated from this tribe. Later on their name is Meng-ku in many sources.

Shih-wei's: The Shih-wei's took place on the scene of history as a continuation of the Hsien-pi's. They majorly cultivated millet, wheat and wild cereals on their lands. They have many Sable fur sources. Summers they reside in the villages, and winter they migrate. The men have bun hairs. They use bows and arrows made of horns. Hair of women is tied. They always wear jacket and trousers made of white deer feather. They produce wine. They make necklace of red fig and wear them. This is the indicator of richness.

They use ox-carts. Their residences look like Gök-Türk's felt tented wagons, however theirs are of cane. The Shih-wei's of the north cover their houses with the shell of beech tree. In the winters they live in caves. Their language is similar to the language of Ch'i-tans. Their graves are the trees. They marry by abduction. They labour with hunting and fishery.

They're also called Hei-ch'e-tze Shih-wei's (Black wagon Shih-wei's). During the Uyghur reign they have floats and caiques made of pelt²².

Chu: Chu's live at the north east of the Bayirku's. They only cultivated deers and hitch up them to their wagons. Their houses is made of tree pelts.

Wa-chie-tse: They live to the north east of Ch'i-tan's and are known as wild horsemen. They ride horses without saddle. They have long bows and arrows.

Wu-liang-hsia: They live to the north of Yü-yang and to the south of the river Amur. They're presumed to be the ancestors of the Urenhay's of present day²³.

¹⁹ *Wei Shu* 113; *Hsin T'ang Shu* 219; *Wen-hsien T'ung-k'ao*, 2717c.

²⁰ *Pei Shih* 94; *Suei Shu* 83; *T'ung Chih* 200; *Chin Shu* 24

²¹ *Wei Shu* 2; *Wei Shu* 100; *Pei Shih* 94; *Hsin T'ang Shu* 217B.

²² *Pei Shih* 94; *T'ung Chih* 200; *Suei Shu* 84; *Hsin T'ang Shu* 219B.

²³ *T'ai-p'ing Yü-lan* 1000; *Hsin T'ang Shu* 219B.

As a result, we can say that, the tribes we described above are mainly the ancestors of who live now in Mongolia. Although they're mentioned by different names, Chinese sources wrote them by putting them together. This writing process began with the "Han" dynasty and came to an end with the T'ang dynasty. Most of the clans are nomads, however undoubtedly some of them were busy with agriculture. As to stockbreeding, sheep feeding is the most common and beef and horse feeding is also widespread²⁴.

As a point of view, the Shih-wei culture could be seen as the base of the Mongolian culture developed since the 10th century. There is culturally a solid development relation between the Turkish and Mongolian tribes. Therefore, by the sources it is oftenly said that the culture of the pro-Mongolian tribes resemble to Hun and Gök-Türk culture. As in the Huns, we see that they use wagon houses, bows made of horns, and flat ski's. From many points, the similarity of titles shows the closeness of Turks- Mongolians, and sometimes the identity. However it is not the same situation for the small Tunghus (Manchurian) groups.

The cultural registers about the Shih-wei's is various in means of content. There are many tribes gathered under the same name who live seperated from each other in seperated geographic regions. The one's who live to the north are hunters related to the Siberian culture. The southerners were majorly herdsmen. The ones to north had tents covered with beech trees, wagon houses, clothes made of leather, clothes made of fish skin, flat ski's, caiques made of pelt and houses put on poles named nest houses to be used as summer residences. They were occupied with stockfarming. The main difference from the Turkish tribes was that they were feeding pigs and they had graves on trees.

As mentioned above, Turks and Mongolian originated societies who appeared together on the scene of history on the steppes of Center Asia, lived together until the 10th century. They developed all kind of cultural and political relations. This relation was so close that sometimes Turkish tribes Mongolianised, and sometimes Mongolian tribes Turkisized. As a result of this situation, many times the sources couldn't decide which tribe is Turkish or Mongolian, they accepted them both Turkish and Mongolian. As a result, it became difficult to put a tick and certain line between the Turks and the Mongolians. Whenever on of the Turkish tribes established a great state, the Mongolians tribes were attached to them. Whenever on of the Mongolian tribes established a great state, this time the Turkish tribes were attached to them. Originated Turkish or Mongolian, when these great states were dissolved, all the tribes moved independently on the east and west. And the one's that went to China shared the same destiny and Chinesesized.

²⁴ Eberhard, *Çinin Şimal Komşuları*, pp.55-61.