

DYNASTIC RELATIONS IN EAST ASIA DURING THE 10TH-14TH
CENTURIES

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ABSTRACT

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This study analyzes the interdynastic relations in East Asia between the 10th and 14th centuries focusing on the relations between the sedentary and the nomadic dynasties that began to emerge on the northern borders of the sedentary societies of East Asia. After the collapse of the short-lived Türk and Uighur Qaghanates and the Tang Dynasty, beginning with the Khitans, the nomads began to unite around certain dynasties. Regardless of their ethnic background, these dynasties created dual administrative structures and yet acted like qaghans rather than Chinese Emperors despite assuming the title of Emperor. The focus of this study is to examine the nature of the relations between the nomadic and sedentary dynasties during a period in which the nomads had the military and political upper hand.

Keywords: Nomads, Khitans, Tanguts, Jürchens, Mongols

ÖZ

10-14. YÜZYILLAR ARASINDA DOĞU ASYA'DA HANEDANLAR ARASI İLİŞKİLER

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Bu çalışma 10-14. yüzyıllar arasında Doğu Asya'da yerleşik ve bu dönemde yerleşik toplumların kuzey sınırlarında ortaya çıkmaya başlayan göçebe hanedanlar arasındaki ilişkiler üzerine odaklanarak hanedanlar arası ilişkileri incelemektedir. Kısa süren Gök Türk ve Uygur Kağanlıkları ile Tang hanedanının yıkılmasından sonra Kitanlardan başlayarak göçebe topluluklar belirli hanedanlar etrafında birleşmeye başladılar. Bu hanedanlar etnik kökenlerine bakmaksızın çifte bir idari sistem getirmekle birlikte İmparator ünvanını almalarına rağmen bir Çin İmparatorundan daha çok bir kağan gibi hareket etmekteydiler. Siyasi ve askerî açıdan göçebelerin daha güçlü oldukları bir dönemde göçebe ve yerleşik hanedanların ilişkilerinin doğasını incelemek bu çalışmanın odak noktasını oluşturmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Göçebeler, Kitanlar, Tangutlar, Jürchenler, Moğollar

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This study examines the relations between the dynasties in the sedentary realm and the steppe in East Asia between the 10th and the 14th centuries. The reason for the selection of these dates is that the period between the 10th and 14th centuries are the apex of the nomadic power both in East Asia in particular and Eurasia in general, after the collapse of the two short-lived Türk¹ Qaghanates and the Uighur Qaghanate. Although these two Qaghanates have been studied widely², their successors, the lesser known Khitans and Jürchens and even the Mongols and the Yuan dynasty in East Asia have been studied comparatively less in Western and Turkish academic circles. Even the Yuan dynasty, which is the most studied of these dynasties in western historiography, is one of the least studied dynasties in China and it is widely studied mostly in Japan.³ The reason

¹ The Word “Türk” has been used as the name of the ruling dynasty and the ruling house of the Türk Qaghanate rather than an ethnonym. The Word Turk on the other hand has been used as an ethnonym to define the Turkic speaking peoples.

² Ahmet Taşağıl, *Gök Türkler*, vol. 1, 3 vols. (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2001).; Peter Golden, “Imperial Ideology and the Sources of Political Unity Amongst the Pre-Çinggisid Nomads of Western Eurasia,” *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi* 2 (1982): 37–76.; Osman Fikri Sertkaya, *Göktürk Tarihinin Meseleleri* (Ankara: Türk Kültürünü Araştırma Enstitüsü, 1995).

³ In Japan, especially the works concerning the Mongol invasions of Japan were for a long time the main focus of research related to the history of the Yuan dynasty. This event has been viewed as one of the important elements of Japanese history in shaping the Japanese national identity in modern times. In fact, the number of primary sources related to the Mongol invasions in Japan are very few compared to China and Korea. In modern historiography. For the primary Works on the Mongol Invasions of Japan in Japanese see: Aida Niro, *蒙古襲来の研究 [Môko Shûrai no Kenkyû: Research on the Mongol Invasions]* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kobunkan, 1982); Takashige Arai, *蒙古襲来 [Môko Shûrai: Mongol Invasions]* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kobunkan, 2007); Eiyu Hattori, *蒙古襲来 [Môko Shûrai: Mongol Invasions]* (Tokyo: Yamagawa Chubansha, 2014);

for the number of the extensive studies in Japanese concerning the Mongols was initially that the Mongol invasion attempts of Japan became an important symbol for the Japanese nationalists to take as a corner stone for the birth of Japanese consciousness and solidarity against a stronger and foreign enemy. Later on, the Japanese studies shifted towards the Yuan dynasty's other aspects, but for a long time, the focus of Japanese historiography on the Mongols remained to be the invasion attempts of Japan by the Mongols. Until recently, the approach to the nomads and their dynasties were mostly shaped by the prejudices of both eurocentric and sinocentric points of view that regarded the nomads as “the other” vis-à-vis their own cultural and political spheres. The majority of the works concerning the Khitans, Tanguts and the Jürchens studied here were done by Russian, Japanese and Chinese scholars, and despite the existence of precious works in German and French, works in English are quite rare.

The approach to the nomadic dynasties and their relations with the sedentary dynasties of East Asia have also been so far mostly observed through a Sino-centric glass, mostly due to taking the Chinese sources uncritically. As a result, the nomadic dynasties along with the nomadic peoples as well as semi-nomadic or even sedentary peoples such as the Tibetans or the Goguryeo been taken as uncivilized intruders who live in complete chaos in their own realms and randomly pillage China and the other “civilized” parts of the world at will. One of the reasons for such a perception was the nature of the sources at hand as will be discussed below in detail. Another reason was the political use of these

Shoji Kazazoe, *蒙古襲来研究史論*[*Mōkoshūrai kenkyū shiron: Historical Theory on Research on Mongol Invasions*] (Tokyo: Yuzankaku Shuppan, 1977); Tetsutaro Sato, *蒙古襲来絵詞と竹崎季長の研究* [*Mōkoshūrai ekotoba to Takezaki Suenaga no kenkyū: Mongol Invasions Scroll and Research on Takezaki Suenaga*] (Tokyo: Kinseisha, 2005); Yamaguchi Osamu, *蒙古襲来・元寇の史実の解明* [*Mōko Shūrai-Genkōno Shijitsu no Kamei: Mongol Invasions- Explanation about the Historical Facts on Mongol Invaders*] (Tokyo: Kofusha, 1988).

nomads as others and the lack of understanding of the nomads on the side of the sedentary world. The Song dynasty, as will be discussed in this study was one of the most introverted dynasties in Chinese history. While the previous Tang and the succeeding Yuan dynasties were shaped by cosmopolitan societies and political structures, the Song elite were more exclusive than both the preceding Tang and the succeeding Yuan dynasties in terms of their dealings with their nomadic neighbors. A great number of tribal and ethnic names as well as the linguistic, cultural and ethnic diversity of the region between Manchuria and Northern shores of the Black Sea also reinforced the image that one barbarian group followed another. But a careful examination of the legitimization patterns as well as the relations between these dynasties and China and Korea, their sedentary neighbors, demonstrate a continuum on the steppe, despite the change of the names and ethnicities of the dominant groups. In this respect, this study approaches the political changes on the steppe as dynastic changes rather than one ethnic group overthrowing another. We see the names of the tribes and ethnic groups which are recorded as having been “annihilated” by their overthrowers seem to reappear later in the records within the elite of the new dynasty. The Yelü ruling house and the members of the Khitan nobility as an example seem to be an important element both in the Jürchen and the Mongol administrations long after they lost power. The Khitans themselves in return had a significant number of Uighurs and other Turkic groups among themselves from whom they inherited the steppe legitimization traditions. The difference of these dynasties from the previous Huns, Xianbei, Rouran and the Türks who stayed on the steppe and had exclusively steppe style administrative structures or the Tabgach Wei dynasty who stayed on the sedentary Chinese areas and had Chinese style administration to the extent that they forced the Tabgach to assimilate into Chinese culture was that these dynasties were established on the peripheries of both the steppe and the sedentary areas and had a dual administrative system which made their system more flexible. The fact that these dynasties adopted

Chinese style administration systems and bureaucracy on the outset is deceptive since they also continued to administer the steppe areas in accordance with the traditional nomadic administrative structures. This study on the other hand is concerned with such administrative structures only as far as the legitimacy of the dynasties are concerned. The ethnic origins of the tribes, peoples and individuals are also out of the scope of this study and are only mentioned to give background information concerning the events or the arguments regarding these tribes, peoples or individuals. On the contrary, the main argument of this study is that, regardless of ethnicity, the tribes and political entities established in Manchuria and Mongolia did adopt or continue certain ideas of legitimacy, concepts about the sovereignty of their state vis-à-vis their sedentary neighbors and hierarchy within the political system in East Asia. An examination of the diplomatic patterns of these dynasties demonstrate that they have adopted the nomadic traditions and concepts into the Chinese centered East Asian political order beginning from the Khitans and the Shatuo Turks of the Five Dynasties era. Despite using a Chinese style nomenclature, these dynasties seem to act on the nomadic traditions of the steppe in their understanding and notions of sovereignty. In this respect, this study approaches the nomads by taking the dynasties into consideration. Just as the Seljukid Sultans in Anatolia were claiming descent from Oghuz Qaghan, a steppe figure while at the same time assuming the title of Sultan-ı Rum (The Sultan of Rome), or later the Ottomans were claiming to be Caesars of Rome, Sultans and Khans all at the same time⁴, the Khitan, Tangut, Jürchen and the Mongols claimed to be both Qaghans and Chinese huangdi at the same time. Even the Shatuo Turks, who claimed descent from the Türk Qaghanate, assumed the title of huangdi instead of qaghan and yet

⁴ Mustafa Soykut, *Italian Perceptions of the Ottomans: Conflict and Politics Through Pontifical and Venetian Sources*, *Italien in Geschichte Und Gegenwart* 33 (Zürich: Peter Lang, 2011).

did not become complete Chinese emperors. In modern historiography, the assumption that the Mongols adopted the Turkic concepts of legitimacy and sovereignty nearly more than three centuries after the collapse of the Türk Qaghanate and two centuries after the collapse of the Uighur qaghanate based on their linguistic, cultural and ethnic kinship to the Turkic peoples whereas the Khitans and the Jürchens as well as the Tanguts were complete strangers to these ideas and concepts despite being Türk, or Uighur subjects at a recent period based solely on their ethnic and linguistic differences becomes doubtful as will be discussed on each chapter concerning these groups. This study tries to prove that while these nomadic dynasties of East Asia adopted dual systems including Chinese concepts and administrative and bureaucratic structures, they also brought nomadic concepts and ideas along with them to the sedentary areas that they took under control. Having been established on the peripheries of both China and the steppe, it was natural for these dynasties to adopt dual systems since they needed to embrace both sides to maintain control of these areas. Thus, as it will be discussed in the following chapters in detail, there was a continuous process until the end of the Yuan era, in which the dynasties of nomadic origin consciously adopted not only Chinese concepts of sovereignty and legitimacy, but also continued the steppe tradition, and as a result the “innovations” of Chinggis and Qubilai Qaghan were actually reforms and further adaptations to the new environment rather than inventions by these two prominent Mongol rulers. Ideas such as fictive family structures among the political entities and their rulers, political marriages entered the Chinese and East Asian political scene after the hegemony of these dynasties began to emerge in East Asia as shall be discussed and changed the political structure.

It is also important to limit this study not only in terms of the time period and the concepts and topics that are being discussed in this study but also the geography with which this study deals. Otherwise, since this study is not limited

to ethnicity of the groups or dynasties discussed but to their being from pastoral nomadic tradition, the geographic dimensions of this study would be extremely wide. Therefore, it is important to give certain descriptions of the general geographic terms and limitations of this study. Since this study deals mainly with the nomads of the steppe and the seminomads of the forest areas, the term steppe is used to define the area which approximately falls to the east of the Altai mountains all the way to the Pacific Ocean on the east-west axis. On the north, it is limited by the Siberian Tundra whereas the southern border is harder to demarcate since this border had always been blurry and remained so until modern times. But it is safe to assume this border as the Hebei, Shanxi, Shaanxi, Ningxia and Gansu provinces of Modern China as a rough divider between the nomadic lifestyle and the sedentary lifestyle. Therefore, whenever the terms the steppe, northern steppe or “the north” has been used to define the geographic areas where the nomads dwell, the limitations of their geographic areas are such.

This study takes a variety of sources in different languages into consideration under a more critical light to have a better view of what has been discussed above. While the majority of the sources are in Chinese and the majority of these sources in Chinese are written by the Confucian elites of the time who had a biased view of the nomads, there were luckily sources in other languages as well as in Chinese written by people belonging to non-Confucian circles. Even better, there are also few sources written by the nomadic dynasties themselves giving a better self-image of these groups. The number of sources that has been extant from the nomads themselves are very few in number. The Türks of the Türk Qaghanate had their own script and left behind some inscriptions, the most notable of which is the Orkhon inscriptions in the Gobi Desert. These steles provide us with very important data and a unique point of view concerning the nomads from their mouth. Therefore, these steles have been studied widely both by linguists and

historians. Some Japanese⁵ scholars did research on these steles with a unique view taking their linguistic side into account. The Russian scholars⁶ have also

⁵ Hidemi Onokawa, “鐵勒の一考察 [Tetsurei no ichikôsetsu: A Study on the Tiele],” *東洋史研究* [*Tôyôshi Kenkyû: Research on Oriental History*] 5, no. 2 (1940): 89–127; Hisanosuke Izui, “突厥語における數詞の組織について [Tokketsugo ni okeru Sûshi no Soshiki ni tsuite: About the Turkic Noun Organization Related to Countables],” *言語研究* [*Gengo Kenkyû: Language Research*] 1939, no. 1 (1939): 54–59; Hiroshibushi Suzuki, “突厥トニユクク碑文箭記-斥候か逃亡者か [Tokketsu tonyukuku hibun sakki – Sekkô ka tōbō-sha ka: Türk Tonyukuk Inscription- A Spy or a Fugitive?],” *待兼山論叢* [*Machikaneyama ronsō: Machikaneyama Journal*], no. 42 (2008): 55–80; Takeshi Shibata, “古代チュルク字における二三の文字の音價について [Kodai churuku ji ni okeru ni san no moji no oto onai Ni tsuite: On the sound values of a few letters in Ancient Türks Scripture],” *言語研究* [*Gengo Kenkyû: Language Research*] 1950, no. 16 (1950): 54–58; Takao Moriyasu, “モンゴル国現存遺蹟・碑文調査研究報告 [Mongoru Kuni Genson Iseki Hibun Chōsa Kenkyū Hōkoku: Provisional Report of Researches on Historical Sites and Inscriptions in Mongolia],” *内陸アジア言語の研究* [*Nairiku Ajia Gengo No Kenkyū: Inner Asian Language Research*] 3 (1993); Shichiro Murayama, “ソ連トルコ学研究管見 [Soren Toruko-Gaku Kenkyū Kanken: Soviet Turcology Studies Review],” *スラヴ研究* [*Surau Kenkyū: Slavic Research*] 4 (1960): 105–11; Takeshi Shibata, “オルホン碑文の発見と研究 [Oruhonhibun no hakken to kenkyū: Discovery and Deciphering of the Orkhon Inscriptions],” *東洋学報* [*Tōyō Gakuhō: The Toyo Scholarly Journal*] 31, no. 3 (1947): 367–91; Kazuo Takeuchi, “Turk語の長母音について [Turk-go no nagaboin ni tsuite: On Long Vowels of Turk Language],” *言語研究* [*Gengo Kenkyū: Language Research*] 1957, no. 32 (1957): 43–59.

⁶ Gubaidulla Aidarov, *Язык орхонского памятника Бильге-кагана* [*Yazyk Orkhonskogo Pamyatnika Bilge-Kagana: The Language of the Bilge Qaghan Steele*] (Moscow: Nauka, 1966); I.L. Kizlasov, “Посвятительная Орхонская Надпись Из Окрестностей Д. Купчегень,” *Известия лаборатории археологии ГАГУ-Горно-Алтайск* [*Izvestiya Laboratorii Arkheologii GAGU-Gorno-Altaysk*], no. 1 (1995); Gubaidulla Aidarov, *Язык орхонских памятников древнетюрской письменности VIII века* [*Yazyk orkhonskikh pamyatnikov drevnetyurskoy pis'mennosti VIII veka*] (Moscow: Nauka, 1971); Vladimir Mikhailovich Nasilov, *Язык орхоно-енисейских памятников* [*Yazyk Orkhono-Yeniseyskikh Pamyatnikov*] (Moscow: Изд-во восточной лит-ры [Izd-vo vostochnoy lit-ry], 1960); Igor Valentinovich Kormushin, *Тюркские енисейские эпитафии: грамматика, текстология* [*Tyurkskiye Yeniseyskiye Epitafii: Grammatika, Tekstologiya*] (Moscow: Nauka, 2008); Platon Mihailovich Melioranskiy, “Памятник в честь Кюль-Тегина. С двумя таблицами надписей [Pamyatnik v chest' Kyul'-Tegina. S dvumya tablitsami nadpisey],” *Записки Восточного отделения Русского археологического общества* [*Zapiski Vostochnogo*

taken the literary, linguistic and social as well as political implications of these steles, but the majority of the works were done by the Soviet academics and recent post-soviet works are few in number. western scholars⁷ have done research on these steles extensively. There is also a magic and fortune telling book titled *Irq Bitig*⁸ written in the Orkhon Turkic scripture, the only surviving example of

otdeleniya Russkogo arkeologicheskogo obshchestva: Notes of the Eastern Branch of the Russian Archaeological Society] 12 (1899): 1–144; Vladimir Mikhailovich Zhirmunskiy, “Орхонские надписи–стихи или проза? [Orkhonskiye Nadpisi–stikhi Ili Proza?: Orkhon Inscriptions, Poems or Prose?],” *Народы Азии и Африки [Narody Azii I Afriki]*, no. 2 (1968): 74–82; Vasilii Pavlovich Vasilev, “Китайские надписи на орхонских памятниках в Кошо-Цайдаме и Кара-Балгасуне [Kitayskiye Nadpisi Na Orkhonskikh Pamyatnikakh v Kosho-Tsaidame I Kara-Balgasune: Chinese Inscriptions in the Orkhon Monuments in Kosho-Tsaidam and Kara Balgasun],” *Sbornik Trudov Orkhonskoy Ekspeditsii*, no. 3 (1897): 19–20; Boris Yakovlevich Vladimirtsov, “Географические имена орхонских надписей, сохранившиеся в монгольском [Geograficheskiye Imena Orkhonskikh Nadpisey, Sokhranivshiyesya v Mongol’skom: Geographical Names in Orkhon Inscriptions Preserved in Mongolian],” in *Доклады Академии Наук СССР. Серия В [Doklady Akademii Nauk SSSR Seria V: Reports of the USSR Academy of Sciences. Series B]* (Moscow, 1929).

⁷ For translations of and the studies on the Orkhon Inscriptions and other old Turkic inscriptions see: E. Denison Ross and Vilhelm Thomsen, “The Orkhon Inscriptions: Being a Translation of Professor Vilhelm Thomsen’s Final Danish Rendering,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies, University of London* 5, no. 4 (1930): 861–76; Talat Tekin, *Orhon Yazıtları: Orkhon Inscriptions*, 5th ed. (Ankara: Türk Dil Kurumu Yayınları, 2014); Talat Tekin, *Orhon yazıtları: Kül Tigin, Bilge Kağan, Tunyukuk* (Istanbul: Simurg, 1995); Vilhelm Thomsen, *Orhon ve Yenisey Yazıtlarının Çözümü: İlk Bildiri; Çözülmüş Orhon Yazıtları* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1993).

⁸ For a translation of *Irq Bitig* into modern Turkish and articles related to it see: Talat Tekin, *Irq Bitig: Eski Uygurca Fal Kitabı* (Türk Dil Kurumu yayınları, 2013); Marcel Erdal, “Further Notes on the Irk Bitig,” *Turkic Languages* 1 (1997): 63–100; Marcel Erdal, *Irq Bitig Uzerine Yeni Notlar* (Ankara Universitesi, 1978); Gerard Clauson, “Notes on the ‘Irk Bitig,’” *Ural-Altaysche Jahrbücher* 33 (1961): 218–25.; EVEN Hovdhaugen, “The Relationship between the Two Orkhon Inscriptions,” *Acta Orientalia* 36 (1974): 55–82; Ross and Thomsen, “The Orkhon Inscriptions: Being a Translation of Professor Vilhelm Thomsen’s Final Danish Rendering”; E. Denison Ross, “The Orkhon Inscriptions,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 5, no. 04 (1930): 861–76.

its kind.⁹ Other steles have also been discovered and continue to be discovered on the steppe area as well as other parts of China and Russia and will probably shed more light on the nomads' point of view in the future. The Uighurs, following the Türks also had their own script derived from the Sogdian script and left behind many inscriptions as well as paper documents. But in the case of the Khitans¹⁰ who followed them on the Eastern steppe and the Jürchens¹¹ replacing the Khitans, even if there were scripts derived from Chinese and Uighur scripts, documents and inscriptions that survived are very few in number and are not so important in terms of their content. Most of the survived documents are either the translations of the Chinese texts, especially the classics, or the personal objects and diaries of the Khitan elite. There are quiet many studies in Chinese¹²

⁹ Irq Bitig was discovered in the Dunhuang caves of Gansu in the famous Dunhuang library which was discovered by Wang Yuanlu (王圓籙), a Daoist monk in 1900. He sold some of the pieces to the western, Russian and Japanese scholars including the famous French sinologist Paul Pelliot.

¹⁰ The ethnonym for his people has been used as Khitan in accordance with the modern historiography in English language in order to avoid the Turkic versio Kitai which is today used for defining China in Turkic and Slavic languages.

¹¹ The name Jürchen has been used to correctly render the pronunciation of the name instead of Jurchen. While Jurchen, the Mongolian plural of the name is also used by some scholars to name this group, the original pronunciation of the name has been selected for this study as in the cases of Khitan, and Türk.

¹² For studies on documents in Khitan script in Chinese see: Wanzhang Yan, “锦西西孤山出土契丹文墓志研究 [Jīn xī xī gū shān chūtǔ qīdān wén mùzhì yánjiū: A Study on the Epitaphs in Khitan Script Unearthed in Jinshi West Gushan],” *考古学报 [Kǎogǔ xuébào: Journal of Geological Sciences]*, no. 2 (1957): 69–84; Zhiyong Gai, “近年庆陵出土辽代墓志补证 [Jīnnián Qīng Líng Chūtǔ Liáo Dài Mùzhì Bǔ Zhèng: The Tomb Inscriptions of Liao Dynasty Unearthed in Qingling in Recent Years],” *内蒙古文物考古 [Nèiménggǔ Wénwù Kǎogǔ: Inner Mongolia Cultural Relic and Archeology]*, no. 1 (2002): 97–106; Pujiang Liu, “辽朝国号考释 [Liáo Cháo Guó Hào Kǎoshì: Textual Research on the Liao Dynasty],” *历史研究 [Lìshǐ Yanjiū: Historical Research]*, no. 6 (2001): 30–44; Shu Chen, “跋吉林大安出土契丹文铜镜 [Bá Jílín Dà'ān Chūtǔ Qīdān Wén Tóng Jìng: Postscript of Khitan Bronze Mirror Unearthed in Jilin Daan],” *文物*

concerning the Khitan script in recent years. These studies mostly concentrate on the translation of the Khitan language texts into Chinese and the social analysis of the Khitan society as can be derived from the texts and the material culture of the Khitan and post-Khitan era remnants in the Khitan script. But these still concentrate mostly on the elite culture of the Khitans and need to be complemented with archeological evidence as well as sources in other languages. However, it was the Russians¹³ who approached to the Khitan script in a more

[*Wenwu: Cultural Relics*], no. 8 (1973): 36–40; Huiquan Zhou, “论辽代的契丹文文学 [Lùn Liáo Dài de Qidān Wén Wénxué: On Khitan Literature in Liao Dynasty],” *江苏大学学报-社会科学版 [Jiāngsū Dàxué Xuébào-Shèhuì Kēxué Bǎn: Social Science Edition]* 8, no. 2 (2006): 1–9; Fengzhu Liu and Baolin Yu, “《耶律延宁墓志》的契丹大字释读举例 [‘Yēlǜ Yán Níng Mùzhì’ de Qidān Dàzì Shìdú Jǔlì: An Illustration of the Khitan Characters in the Epitaph of Yelü Yanning],” *文物 [Wenwu: Cultural Relics]*, no. 5 (1984): 80–81; Shi Ji, “清宫玉卮契丹文铭补释 [Qīnggōng yù zhī qidān wén míng bǔ shì: Supplementary Explanation of the Khitan Script in the Qinggong Jade],” *社会科学辑刊 [Shèhuì kēxué jí kān: Social Sciences Journal]*, no. 2 (1988): 72–76; Wanzhang Yan, “河北兴隆金墓出土契丹文墓志铭考释 [Héběi xīnglóng jīn mù chūtǔ qidān wén mùzhì míng kǎoshì: A Textual Research on the Khitan Script Epitaph Unearthed from the Xinglong Golden Tomb],” in *阎万章文集 [Yánwànzhāng wénjí: Collected Works of Yan Wanzhang]* (Liaoning: Liaohai Chubanshe, 1982).;

¹³ Alexander Lvovich Ivliev, “Соотношение культур империи Ляо и киданей [Sootnosheniye Kul’tur Imperii Lyao i Kidaney],” *Археология и этнография народов Дальнего Востока. Сборник научных трудов. Владивосток [Arkheologiya i Etnografiya Narodov Dal’nego Vostoka. Sbornik Nauchnykh Trudov. Vladivostok]*, 1984; Vasilii Petrovich Zaitsev, “Рукописная книга большого киданьского письма из коллекции Института восточных рукописей РАН [Rukopisnaya Kniga Bol’shogo Kidan’skogo Pis’mā Iz Kollektzii Instituta Vostochnykh Rukopisey RAN: Handwritten Book Khitan Large Collection of Letters from the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts],” *Письменные памятники Востока [Pis’mennyye Pamyatniki Vostoka: Written Monuments of the Orient]*, no. 2 (2011): 15; Vsevolod Sergeevich Taskin, “Опыт дешифровки киданьской письменности [Opyt Deshifrovki Kidan’skoy Pis’mennosti: Experience Deciphering Khitan Script],” *Narody Azii i Afriki*, no. 1 (1963); Vladimir Ernstovich Shavkunov, “К вопросу о расшифровке малой кидань-чжурчженьском письменности [K Voprosu O Rasshifrovke Maloy Kidan’-Chzhurchzhen’skom Pis’mennosti: On the Issue of Deciphering Khitan Small-Jurchen Writing],” *Eppgrafika Vostoka* 15 (1963); Vyacheslav Petrovich Zaitsev, “Идентификация Киданьского Исторического Сочинения В Составе Рукописной Книги-Кодекса Nova H 176 Из Коллекции Ивр Ран И Сопутствующие Проблемы [Identifikatsiya Kidan’skogo

methodical manner and paved the way for these studies just as in the case of Tangutology. There are also a few works in English¹⁴ concerning the Khitan script. The third indigenous group to establish a Chinese style state on the Northern margins of China was the Tanguts. While the Khitans and the Jurchens on the North East were based in Manchuria and are assumed to have spoken a Tungusic language¹⁵, the Tanguts spoke a Tibeto-Burman language and were linguistically related to the Tibetans. The Tanguts were a group of tribes speaking the Tangut branch of the Tibetan languages. But they claimed descent from the Tabgach of the Wei dynasty. They broke up from the Tibetan Empire during the Tang dynasty and settled to the Ordos region in the North-west. Despite the fact that the Tibetans had their own script that suited the Tibetan languages better, the Tanguts also invented a script based on the Chinese script rather than the Tibetan script. Like the Khitan case, the Tangut script has also been widely studied by

Istoricheskogo Sochineniya V Sostave Rukopisnoy Knigi-Kodeksa Nova N 176 Iz Kollektzii Ivra Ran I Sopotstvuyushchiye Problemy: Identification of Khitan Historical Works in the Composition of the Handwritten Nova N-Code 176 Books from the Collection of the IOM and Problems Related to Them],” *Acta Linguistica Petropolitana-Trudy Instituta Lingvisticheskikh Issledovaniy* 11, no. 3 (2015): 167–208; Vasilij Vaslevich Ushnitskiy, “Дауры: новые этнографические материалы [Daur- Novyye Etnograficheskiye Materialy: Daur- New Ethnographic Materials],” *Severo-Vostochnyy Gumanitarnyy Vestnik*, 2014, 30.

¹⁴ Daniel Kane, *The Kitan Language and Script*, vol. 166 (Brill, 2009); Andrew E. Shimunek, *Towards a Reconstruction of the Kitan Language, with Notes on Northern Late Middle Chinese Phonology* (Indiana University, Department of Linguistics and the Department of Central Eurasian Studies, 2007).

¹⁵ The Khitan case is still contested by scholars. Since both the Tungusic languages and the Mongolic languages belonged to the Altai group alongside the Turkic and Korean languages and according to some scholars including the Japanese languages. Herbert Franke and Karl H. Menges, *Tungusen Und Ljao. Abhandlungen Für Die Kunde Des Morgenlandes, Band XXXVIII, 1* (JSTOR, 1970).

Japanese scholars¹⁶ as well as Chinese¹⁷, western¹⁸ and Russian scholars.¹⁹ Although the Tangut language has been deciphered and there are many

¹⁶ For studies on the Tangut script and documents in Tangut script in Japanese see: Mantaro Hashimoto, “「文海」の‘韻’の音韻組織について—タングート語音韻論-1 [Bunkai’ No’ in’ No On’insoshiki Ni Tsuite – Tangūto-Go On’in-Ron - 1: Phonological Organization of ‘Rhyme’ of ‘Wenhai’ - Tangut Phonology Theory -1,]” 言語研究 [*Gengo Kenkyū: Language Research*], no. 41 (1962); Mantaro Hashimoto, “掌中珠のタングート・漢対音研究の方法 [Shōchū Tama No Tangūto Kan Tai-on Kenkyū No Hōhō: Comparative Tangut-Chinese Phonology Research Method of Zhangzhongzhu,]” 中国語学 [*Chugokugogaku: Sinology*] 1961, no. 109 (1961): 13–16; E. Grinstead and Mantarō Hashimoto, *Tangūto-go (Seikago) No «in» No Soshiki Ni Tsuite* タングート語 (西夏語) の韻の組織について. *Tōhōgaku* 25 (JSTOR, 1963).

¹⁷ Yinsheng Han, 党项与西夏资料汇编 [*Dǎngxiàng Yǔ Xīxià Zīliào Huìbiān: Compilation of Tangut Xi Xia Materials*], vol. 1 (Ningxia: Ningxia Renmin Chubanshe

¹⁸ Eric Grinstead, *Analysis of the Tangut Script* (Studentlitteratur Lund, 1972); R. E. Emmerick, “Anne-Marie Blondeau (ed. and Tr.): Matériaux Pour L’étude de L’hippologie et de L’hippiatrie Tibétaines (à Partir Des Manuscrits de Touenhouang).(Centre de Recherches d’Histoire et de Philologie de La Iv E Section de l’École Pratique Des Hautes Études.[Série] II. Hautes Études Orientales, 2.)[iv], 427 Pp., 42 Facsim. Genève: Librairie Droz, 1972.,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 36, no. 03 (1973): 698–700; James A. Matisoff, “Brightening” and the Place of Xixia (Tangut) in the Qiangic Branch of Tibeto-Burman,” *Studies on Sino-Tibetan Languages: Papers in Honor of Professor Hwang-Cherng Gong on His Seventieth Birthday*, 2004, 327–52; M. G. Morisse, *Contribution Préliminaire à L’étude de L’écriture et de La Langue Si-Hia* (JSTOR, 1904); Gerard Clauson, “Eric Grinstead: Analysis of the Tangut script.(Scandinavian Institute of Asian Studies Monograph Series, No. 10.) 376 Pp. Lund: Studentlitteratur, 1972. Sw. Kr. 65.,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 36, no. 03 (1973): 696–98; Marc Miyake, “Guillaume Jacques: Esquisse de Phonologie et de Morphologie Historique Du tangoute.(The Languages of Asia Series.) Xii, 373 Pp.€ 125. Leiden: Global Oriental, 2014. ISBN 978 90 04 26484 7.,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 78, no. 03 (2015): 644–46; R. E. Emmerick, “James Russell Hamilton (ed. and Tr.): Manuscrits Ouïgours de Touenhouang. Le Conte Bouddhique Du Bon et Du Mauvais Prince En Version ouïgoure.(Mission Paul Pelliot. Documents Conservés à La Bibliothèque Nationale, III.)[ix], 204 Pp. Paris: Klincksieck, 1971. Fr. 180.,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 36, no. 03 (1973): 693–96; Leonard WJ van der Kuijp, “Jayānanda. A Twelfth Century Guoshi from Kashmir among the Tangut,” *Central Asiatic Journal* 37, no. 3/4 (1993): 188–97; JOS L. VAN HECKEN, “Les Recherches Concernant L’écriture Et La Langue Si-Hia,” *Central Asiatic Journal* 15, no. 3 (1971): 202–10; Nicolas Tranter, “Script ‘borrowing’, Cultural Influence and the Development of the

documents left to us from the Tanguts, written both in their own language and in Chinese, today we mostly depend on the Chinese sources to write their history as well. In the case of the Mongols however, there are sources in numerous languages including Chinese, Arabic, Persian, Turkic languages, Japanese, Syriac, Hebrew, Armenian, Russian, Latin, Greek, medieval French. Although these are the most well-known, there are other sources in Indic languages and other languages as well. The imperial Mongol history is, in a way, world history and requires examination of documents and sources in a variety of languages. The approach to the Mongols in western and Japanese historiography also changes considerably compared to the historiography on the Khitans, Jürchens and the Tanguts in terms of quantity and the variety of the topics covered. But before taking the primary and secondary literature into account, it is important to

Written Vernacular in East Asia,” *Language Change in East Asia*, 2001, 180–204; E. I. Kychanov, “Siniform Scripts of Inner Asia,” *The World’s Writing Systems*, 1996, 228; Luc Kwanten and Susan Hesse, *Tangut (Hsi Hsia) Studies: A Bibliography*, vol. 137 (Indiana Univ Research, 1980); E. Grinstead and Mantarō; Nie Hongyin, “Tangutology during the Past Decades,” *Monumenta Serica* 41 (1993): 329–47; Luc Kwanten, “The Lexicography of the Hsi Hsia (Tangut) Language,” *Cahiers de Linguistique-Asie Orientale* 11, no. 2 (1982): 55–67; Stephen Wootton Bushell, *The Tangut Script in the Nank’ou Pass* (publisher not identified, 1899); Ruth W. Dunnell, “Who Are the Tanguts? Remarks on Tangut Ethnogenesis and the Ethnonym Tangut,” *Journal of Asian History* 18, no. 1 (1984): 78–89

¹⁹ Mikhail Viktorovich Sofronov, *Грамматика Тангутского Языка [Grammatika Tangutskogo Yazyka: The Grammar of the Tangut Language]* (Moscow: Nauka, 1968); Evgenii Ivanovich Kychanov, “Два Тангутских Этюда [Dva Tangutskikh Etyuda: Two Tangut Etudes],” *Kunstkamera* 10 (1996): 5; Dmitri Andreyevich Hudyakov, *Место тангутского письма среди письменностей восточной Азии: о генезисе и структуре тангутского письма* (Novosibirsk: Novosibirskiy Gosudarstvennyy Universitet, 2012); Evgenii Ivanovich Kychanov, *Очерк истории тангутского государства [Ocherk Istorii Tangutskogo Gosudarstva: A Brief History of the Tangut State]* (Ripol Klassik, 2013); Evgenii Ivanovich Kychanov, “Тангутское письмо в истолковании самих тангутов [Tangutskoye pis’mo v istolkovanii samikh tangutov: Tangut Writing in the Self-Description of the Tanguts],” *Разыскания по общему и китайскому языкознанию [Razyskaniya po obshchemu i kitayskomu yazykoznaniiyu: Researches on general linguistics and Chinese Language]*, 1980, 209

examine the nature of the nomadic dynasties and their place in history and historiography.

The majority of the primary sources related to the history of both sedentary and nomadic peoples and states are in Chinese. And the majority of these sources in Chinese were composed in China, but it is also possible to find very valuable sources written in Korea and Japan as well. The main bodies of historical chronicles in researching Chinese history is the twenty-four histories. For the Tang dynasty, we have two histories at hand. One is termed the *Jiu Tangshu*²⁰ (The Old Book of Tang), and the other is *Xin Tangshu*²¹ (The New Book of Tang). While the *Jiu Tangshu* is older and was composed at a time closer to the events that it describes, *Xin Tangshu* is more coherent and is more reliable. The reason is that, *Jiu Tangshu* was composed hastily just a few decades after the collapse of Tang by the Jin court of the Shatuo Turks to legitimize their rule. Therefore, it was more like a compilation of court documents and archival materials and anecdotes that aimed to legitimize the Shatuo Turk rule. As a result, it was replaced by the new version written during the Song dynasty. Although the Song court too had its reasons for producing this text, it was more coherent and the events described in it took place at a safe distance to make the writers more impartial to the text and make it safer to the events described lest they touch upon certain sensitive issues such as the Türks, a branch of which was the ruling house at the time of the composition of the old book. Yet, the Song was not totally impartial either. It was founded upon the deposition of the Turkic rule and the Khitans who were seen as their successors as the nomads were seen as one by the

²⁰ Liu Xu, ed., 舊唐書 [*Jiu Tangshu: The Old Book of Tang*], 200 vols., 二十四史: The Twenty-Four Histories (Beijing: 中華書局: Zhonghua Publishing House, 1975).

²¹ Ouyang Xiu, ed., 新唐書 [*Xin Tangshu: The New Book of Tang*], 10 vols., 二十四史: The Twenty-Four Histories (Beijing: 中華書局: Zhonghua Publishing House, 2000).

Confucian elite were still a threat. Nonetheless, the two Tang histories are very valuable sources since they give some of the most detailed accounts of the nomads including Turkic and Mongolic peoples as well as the Khitans and the Tanguts and the tribes belonging to these groups. In addition to the *Jiu Tangshu* and *Xin Tangshu*, during the Song, the *Jiu Wudaishi*²² (Old History of the Five Dynasties), and *Xin Wudaishi*²³ (The New History of the Five Dynasties) were also compiled. These two histories are among the shortest of the histories and are mainly concerned with the five dynasties of the north and the nine kingdoms in the south. But they still report envoys coming from the Tatars and Uighurs as well as the relations with the Khitans and the Tanguts. The Song dynasty which is considered to be culturally one of the most productive dynasties in Chinese history left a huge volume of sources in addition to the formal histories written during the Song. The main primary source is of course *Songshi*²⁴, the formal history of the Song compiled during the Yuan Dynasty. Although it was compiled after the collapse of the Song dynasty, the huge volume of materials left from the Song made it possible to compile such a detailed history. It is one of the most detailed histories among all the twenty-four formal histories of China. In China, it became customary to compile the history of the previous dynasty or dynasties preceding the new dynasty. The History of the Song is by far the most detailed

²² Juzheng Xue, ed., *舊五代史 [Jiu Wudaishi: Old History of the Five Dynasties]*, 二十四史: The Twenty-Four Histories (Beijing: 中華書局, 2000).

²³ In addition to the Chinese original (Ouyang Xiu, *新五代史 [Xin Wudaishi: The New History of the Five Dynasties]*, 二十四史: The Twenty-Four Histories (Beijing: Zhonghua Publishing House, 2000).), this work has also been translated into English by Richard Davis. For the English translation see: Ouyang Xiu, *Historical Records of the Five Dynasties*, trans. Richard Davis, 2nd ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013). It is one of the few formal histories translated into other languages as a whole.

²⁴ Tuotuo [Toqto'a] and Alutu [Altugh], eds., *宋史 [Songshi: History of Song]*, 二十四史: The Twenty-Four Histories (Beijing: Zhonghua Publishing House, 2000).

and the longest of all the official histories. As an example, it is three times the volume of *Tangshu*, ten times the length of *Liaoshi*²⁵ (The History of Liao), seven times the length of *Jinshi*²⁶ (The History of Jin), its contemporaries to its north and three times longer than the *Yuanshi*²⁷ (The History of Yuan). Although considerably longer than the other formal histories, *Songshi* is, in terms of its composition structure, essentially the same with the rest of the histories. The first of the formal histories to be of greater influence on the other dynastic histories was *Hanshu*²⁸(The Book of Han). It was widely studied by the Confucians and was forbidden to be sold to the Northern neighbors. But all the histories including the *Songshi* and *Hanshu* took *Shiji*²⁹(Historical Records) of Sima Qian³⁰, a historian of the early Han dynasty. The *Liaoshi*, *Jinshi* and *Yuanshi* of the other dynasties also followed the same model in this regard. The formal histories start with the *benji*³¹, then they are followed by the biographies of the rulers and important personages, and finally and more importantly for this study with the monographs of the neighboring states and polities including the important tribes

²⁵ Tuotuo [Toqto'a], ed., *遼史 [Liaoshi: History of Liao]*, 二十四史: The Twenty-Four Histories (Beijing: Zhonghua Publishing House, 2000).

²⁶ Tuotuo [Toqto'a], ed., *金史 [Jinshi: History of Jin]*, 二十四史: The Twenty-Four Histories (Beijing: Zhonghua Publishing House, 2000).

²⁷ Song Lian, *元史 [Yuanshi: History of Yuan]*, 二十四史: The Twenty-Four Histories (Beijing: Zhonghua Publishing House, 2000).

²⁸ Ban Gu, *漢書 [Hanshu: Book of Han]*, 二十四史: The Twenty-Four Histories (Beijing: Zhonghua Publishing House, 2000).

²⁹ Sima Qian, *史記 [Shiji: Historical Records]* (Beijing: Zhonghua Publishing House, 2005).

³⁰ 司馬遷

³¹ 本紀 is often translated into English as “veritable records”.

and tribal confederations. There are the archival reports of the events that took place during the reigns of the emperors. They follow a chronological order and are more similar to western chronicles in this regard. The monographs called as *zhuan*³² on the other hand are more about the customs, political structures, histories and other relevant information on the neighbors as well as the related dynasty. In this respect, official histories are the first primary sources that are referred to in the historiography on Chinese History as well as the history of the nomads in this area since their own written records are unfortunately very few in number. But despite providing very valuable information, these sources need to be approached critically. By whom, and why these histories were written matters as much as from which sources they were derived. The formal histories were mostly written by a committee but Sima Qian and Ouyang Xiu wrote their histories individually. These committees or individuals used the state archives that were still extant at the time of the writing as well as the oral tradition and information available to them, especially in the case of the nomads or the more exotic countries. But, although the writers of the formal histories used the state archives available to them, they did not include all the material available to them. They selected the materials to be included in accordance with their purpose. The writers of the formal histories were almost exclusively the Confucian elite in the Hanlin academies, an imperial institution that was founded to support and further improve the imperial ideology and policy to legitimize it. In this respect, it is quite normal that the formal histories were shaped by the ideology of the Confucian elite, and the purpose of writing the history was to legitimize the new dynasty who ordered their writing. When observed in this light, it is no wonder

³² 傳/*zhuan* means biography, but when it succeeds the name of a state or a tribal group, it means monograph. For example the monograph of the Türks is written as 突厥傳/*tujuezhuan*. For further explanations see: Paul W. Kroll, *A Student's Dictionary of Classical and Medieval Chinese* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 56.

that the treaties or other historical events that are very important yet deemed shameful by the Confucian elite such as military defeats followed by indemnities paid to the enemy alongside other conditions such as giving royal princesses or royal hostages are either ignored or summarized in a few lines. Therefore, it should not be forgotten that the documents present in a formal history were undergoing a selective process. The founders of the dynasties with a few exceptions during the five dynasties³³ were demonstrated as heroes worth praising while the last emperors were without exception vilified by the writers to justify their being overthrown by the founder of the new dynasty. This pattern is repeated in all the twenty-four histories as well as some other “informal” histories such as *Zizhi Tongjian*.³⁴ Although there are many reprints of the twenty-four histories, the Zhonghua versions with the punctuations have been selected for use in this study since they are deemed to be the most academically reliable versions both in China and abroad. The only formal histories edited by a non-Chinese are those of the Song, Jin and Liao. Toqto’a a Merkid who is better known with his Chinese name Tuotuo.³⁵ Along with El Temür, a Qipchaq from the western steppe, he was one of the most prominent personages of his time and a chancellor in the Yuan court until his falling from favor.³⁶

In addition to these formal histories, there are also other histories written by court officials or the literati of the time who had access to the court archives and other

³³ The Shatuo rulers were vilified by Ouyang Xiu who was a stout Neo-Confucian.

³⁴ Guang Sima, *资治通鉴 [Zizhi Tongjian: Mirror for Aiding Government]* (Beijing: Zhonghua Publishing House, 1956).

³⁵ 脱脱: Tuo tuo

³⁶ David M. Robinson, *Empire’s Twilight: Northeast Asia Under the Mongols*. 68, vol. 68, Harvard-Yenching Institute Monograph Series (New York: Harvard University Press, 2011).

materials. *Zizhi Tongjian* written by the Song literato Sima Guang was one such example. It contains many important data related to the nomadic tribes living to the North of China during the Tang dynasty. Along with old and new versions of *Tangshu*, it is perhaps one of the most important primary sources in Chinese for the history of the nomads. These histories are also important since they give us a chance to compare with the official histories and verify events from a multitude of sources. The Song dynasty is especially a time of flourishing literature and writing. New history writing genres such as *nianpu*³⁷, *difangzhi*³⁸, *bizhi*, *zhengshu*, *jinshi* began to appear.³⁹ These sources are quite important since they were written by individuals who personally bore witness to the events of the time. Also, one of the most important individual histories of China, *Zizhi Tongjian*⁴⁰ was composed by Sima Guang, one the most important Confucian elite of the Song during the Song. For the Song dynasty, in addition to the personal writing, there is also an informal collection of the archival sources and documents, *Tang Huiyao*⁴¹ which is the most detailed *huiyao*, document collection encyclopedia in Chinese history contains many important documents form the Tang dynasty that are copied from the state archives during the Song by Wang Pu and was

³⁷ 年譜/*nianpu* are chronological biographies written by individuals.

³⁸ 地方誌/*difangzhi* are local gazetteers that report the local events in a chronological order.

³⁹ For a more detailed analysis of these new genres see: Jinyu Wang, *王金玉档案学论著* [*Wáng Jīnyù dǎng'àn xué lùnzhù: Wang Jinyu Archival Studies*] (Beijing: Zhongguo Dangan Chubanshe, 2004); Endymion Wilkinson, *Chinese History: A New Manual*, 4th ed., Harvard-Yenching Institute Monograph Series 100 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015).

⁴⁰ Sima, *资治通鉴* [*Zizhi Tongjian: Mirror for Aiding Government*].

⁴¹ Pu Wang, *唐会要* [*Tang Huiyao: Institutional History of Tang*], 2 vols. (Beijing: Zhonghua Publishing House, 1985).

presented to Emperor Song Taizu. The veritable records of Song Tizong's era were also compiled and published along with others⁴², but it is the only one to survive.⁴³ But another huiyao was compiled throughout the Song dynasty. Like the *Tang Huiyao*, the Huiyao of the Song dynasty was also very detailed. If *Songshi* is detailed and long, *Song Huiyao Jigao*⁴⁴ is even longer and has documents and materials that do not exist in *Songshi*. The huiyao compendiums are important sources not only due to the detailed information and the bulk of material they provide, but also due to their nature as a result of their difference from the official histories. While an official history was written with a moralistic and political purpose to legitimize the rule of the dynasty and to guide the sovereigns, and as a result was selective in the inclusion of archival materials, huiyao compendiums were simply collection of all the materials available to the writer and were compiled more with an academic curiosity than with a moralistic drive. Yet one must still be cautious in the use of the huiyao materials and be critical in reading materials from the *huiyao* as with the other sources. The entries related to the diplomatic affairs of the Song and the neighbors of the Song are especially helpful in understanding the steppe before the rise of the Mongols and the collapse of Jin Dynasty. Also, *Jianyan Yilai Xinian Yaolu*⁴⁵ contains insights into the Song-Jin relations after the Song left Northern China to the Jurchens.

⁴² Xuehui Fan, 宋太宗皇帝實錄校注 [*Song Taizong Huangdi Shilu Jiaozhu: Annotated Version of the Veritable Records of Emperor Song Taizong*] (Beijing: Zhonghua Publishing House, 2012).

⁴³ Wilkinson, *Chinese History: A New Manual*, 756.

⁴⁴ Xu Song, 宋会要辑稿 [*Song Huiyao Jigao: Song Manuscript Compendium*], ed. Lin Liu, 1st emeng wud., 16 vols. (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Chubanshe, 2014).

⁴⁵ Xinchuan Li, 建炎以来系年要录 [*Jianyan Yilai Xinian Yaolu*]: *Records of the Important Events since the Jianyan*, 1st ed., 4 vols. (Beijing: Zhonghua Publishing House, 1988).

These materials do not exist in *Songshi* and are complementary in terms of understanding the Song-Jin diplomacy. Another source related to the Song-Jin affairs which was compiled during the Song was *Sanchao Beimeng Huibian*⁴⁶ which contains information related to the fall of the Northern Song and transfer of the court to Lin'an⁴⁷ (Modern Day Hangzhou⁴⁸) and relations with the Jin during this period. The last of type of the Song sources related to diplomacy were directly written by the people involved in the diplomatic endeavors of the Song. The diplomatic diaries that are left from the Song era give us important details about the protocol and the way inter-state relations were conducted especially between the Song and its nomadic neighbors. Cheng Zhuo's *Shijinlu*⁴⁹, Fang Chengda's mission to the Jin capital Kaifeng⁵⁰, Changchun the famous Daoist Monk's travel to west upon the invitation of Chinggis Khan⁵¹, Zhao Yongchun's

⁴⁶ Mengxin Xu, *三朝北盟会编* [*Sanchao Beimeng Huibian: Document Collection of Treaties with the North During the Three Reigns*] (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Chubanshe, 1987).

⁴⁷ 臨安 / Lin'an

⁴⁸ 杭州 / Hangzhou

⁴⁹ Zuo Cheng, *使金錄* [*Shijinlu: Mission to Jin*] (Xianshang: Qilu Shushe, 1997).

⁵⁰ Chengda Fan, *桂海虞衡志輯佚校注* [*Gui hai yuhengzhi jiyi jiaozha: Annotated Version of Guihai Yu Hengzhi*] (Chengdu: Sichuan Minzu Chubanshe, 1986). Also for an English translation see: Chengda Fan, *Treatises of the Supervisor and Guardian of the Cinnamon Sea: The Natural World and Material Culture of Twelfth-Century China (A China Program Book)*, trans. James M. Hargett, China Program (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2011).

⁵¹ Zhichang Li, ed., *長春真人西遊記* [*Chāngchūn zhēnrén xīyóu jì: Changchun's Travel to the West*] (Beijing: Zhonghua Publishing House, 1927); Zhichang Li, "The Travels of an Alchemist - The Journey of the Taoist Ch'ang-Ch'un from China to the Hindukush at the Summons of Chingiz Khan," in *Medieval Researches from Eastern Asiatic Sources*, trans. Emil Bretschneider (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1888).

work *Fengshi Liaojin Xingchenglu*⁵², *Meng Da Beilu*⁵³, Xishiji and Heida Shilue are the most important diaries related to the relations between the Song China and its nomadic neighbors. There are translations and studies on these travel writings in many languages.⁵⁴ While we have a huge volume of resources left from the Song authors, the resources left from two of its contemporaries, Liao and Jin are very few in number. Though compiled by Toqto'a of the Yuan, Liaoshi and Jinshi are the formal histories of these two dynasties based on their own documents and materials. In addition to these two formal histories for the Khitans we have *Qidan Guozhi*⁵⁵ (The Records of the Khitan Country) and *Dajin Guozhi*⁵⁶ (The Great Jin Country Records). The reason for the scarcity of the sources penned by Liao and Jin authors whether of Han ethnicity or Khitan or

⁵² Zhao Yongchun, 奉使辽金行程录 [*Fèngshǐ liáo Jin xíngchéng lù: Reports of Envoys to Liao and Jin*] (Jilin Wenshi Chubanshe, 1995).

⁵³ Yuanzhong Cao, 蒙鞑備錄 [*xiaozhu Mengda Beilu Xiaozhu: A Refined Report on the Mongols and Tatars to the North*] (Beijing: Beijing Airusheng shuzihua jishu yanjiu zhongxin, 2009).

⁵⁴ Peter Olbricht and Elisabeth Pinks, *Meng-Ta Pei Lu Und Hei-Ta Shih-Lüeh: Chinesische Gesandtenberichte Über Die Frühen Mongolen 1221 Und 1237*, ed. Erich Haenisch, Asiatische Forschungen 56 (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1980).; Hong Zhao, Guoxiong Wang, and Hong Meng, Мэн-да бэй-лу: “Полное описание Монголо-Татар”: факсимиле ксилографа [*Men-da bey-lu: “Polnoye opisaniye Mongolo-Tatar”: faksimile ksilografa: Meng Da Bei-lu: “Full description of the Mongol-Tatar”: facsimile woodcut*], ed. Lazar Isaevich Duman, trans. Nikolai Munkuev (Moscow: Nauka, 1975). Are the best translations available.

⁵⁵ Yan Jiajing and Gui Linrong, 契丹国志 [*Qidan Guozhi: History of Khitans*], 1st ed., 中国史学基本典籍丛刊 [Zhongguo Shixue Jiben Dianji Congkan: Basic Collections of Chinese Historiography] (Beijing: Zhonghua Publishing House, 2014).

⁵⁶ Yuwen Mao and Yin Cuiwen, 大金国志校证 [*Dajin Guozhi Xiaozheng: History of Great Jin with Annotations*], 1st ed., 中国史学基本典籍丛刊 [Zhongguo Shixue Jiben Dianji Congkan: Basic Collections of Chinese Historiography] (Beijing: Zhonghua Publishing House, 1986).

Jürchen ethnicity is not that they did not write, but because the Song author's works were deemed more valuable by the literati of the later generations and the Liao, Jin and to a certain extent the Yuan materials and literary works did not survive. In fact, even *The Secret History of the Mongols* was forgotten in China by the beginning of the 19th century, and it regained importance after Japanese and western authors translated a copy accidentally found in an antique book shop. *Liaoshi* is the shortest of all the twenty-four formal histories and the *Jinshi* is not particularly long either. However, they contain valuable information about the diplomacy and the interstate relations conducted by the contemporary states. They also provide a comparative light to the Song and Yuan sources. *Jinshi* is especially rich in terms of the embassy reports. *Qidan Guozhi* and *Dajin Guozhi* also supplement these two histories and provide a semi-nomadic view of the events.

In addition to the sources written by the Song authors and Yuan authors in China, the Koreans also composed their own histories in the Chinese fashion. Korean History writing also dates back to the early times. Examples such as *Samguk Yusa*⁵⁷ and *Samguk Sagi*⁵⁸ are good examples of Korean historiography in a classical Chinese sense. During the Joseon dynasty after the fall of Goryeo and the Yuan, history of the previous Goryeo kingdom was written as it was supposed

⁵⁷ For and English Translation of *Samguk Yusa* see: Ilyon, *Samguk Yusa: Legends And History Of The Three Kingdoms Of Ancient Korea*, ed. Grafton Mintz, trans. Tae-Hung Ha (Rockville: Silk Pagoda, 2008). For Korean version see: Ilyon, *삼국유사 [Samguk Yusa: Legends of the Three Kingdoms]* (Seoul: Maewoldang, 2011).

⁵⁸ Pusik Kim, *三國史記 [Samguk Sagi: Historical Records of the Three Kingdoms]* (Taipei: 朝鮮研究會 [Chaoxian Yanjiuhui: Korea Research Association], 1914). Also for the English translation of the Baekje and Goguryeo annals of *Samguk Sagi* see: Pusik Kim, *A History of the Early Korean Kingdom of Paekche: Together with an Annotated Translation of the Paekche Annals of the Samguk Sagi*, trans. Jonathan W. Best (Boston: Harvard University Asia Center, 2006); Pusik Kim and Edward J. Shultz, *The Koguryo Annals of the Samguk Sagi* (Seoul: Academy of Korean Studies Press, 2011).

that there was a legitimate dynastic change after the coup d'états and the new regime was sanctified by the Ming. *Goryeosa*⁵⁹, the history of Goryeo was compiled with this in mind. It contains various information relating to the relations of Korea with the Song as well as the Khitans, Jürchens and the Mongols. It is a valuable resource since it provides information from a different angle and contains information that does not exist in the Chinese sources of the time. In addition to *Goryeosa*, there is also *Goryeosa Sagi Gaiyo*⁶⁰, which again complements the Chinese sources and gives information related to the Sino-Korean relations and the relations of Korea with the nomads. Two similar examples also exist in Vietnam under the titles of *Viet Su Luoc*⁶¹ and *Dai Viet Su Ky Toan Thu*.⁶² Although composed outside of China, these four histories were composed in Chinese by scholars of Confucian background. And yet they still provide us with insights into the relations of these countries with much stronger sedentary and nomadic neighbors and their choices in their relations with these powers.

The Yuan period on the other hand provides us with a very large array of resources as indicated earlier. *Yuanshi* is the main source in Chinese related to the Yuan era. Like the other formal histories, it was compiled during the

⁵⁹ Bu Choi, 高麗史 [*Goryeosa: Annals of Goryeo*], 1st ed. (Kunming: Xinan Shifan Daxue Chubanshe, 2014).

⁶⁰ Yan Chun, 高麗史史籍概要 [*Goryeosa Sajeok Gaeyo: Supplementary Historical Materials to Goryeo History*] (Lanzhou: Gansu Renmin Chubanshe, 2007).

⁶¹ Hy Nhan Su, 越史略 [*Viet Su Luoc: Outline of Viet History*] (Taipei: Taiwan Shangwu Yinshuguan, 1983).

⁶² Si Lien Ngo, 大越史記全書 [*Dai Viet Su Ky Toan Thu: Complete Annals of Daiviet*], ed. Kinh Hoa Tran (Tōkyōdaigaku tōyō bunka kenkyū-Sho fuzoku tōyō-gaku bunken sentā, 1986).

succeeding Ming dynasty based on the court documents and the archival materials from the Yuan court. It also includes Mongol oral history codified into a Chinese style. The compilers of the Yuanshi were a group of scholars from different ethnicities and it is in this respect, along with *Songshi*, *Liaoshi* and *Jinshi* an exception. But since the intended audience was the Chinese public for these formal histories, they still carried Confucian moralistic characters. Yuanshi is one of the most controversial formal histories since it was compiled amid the fighting still going on between the Mongols and the Ming dynasty. In addition to Yuanshi, a complementary history was much later compiled during the 19th century and titled as *Xin Yuanshi*⁶³. Though it cannot be taken as a primary source, it was based on the sources of *Yuanshi* and it is sometimes taken as the 25th formal history due to its successful compilation. Unlike Yuanshi which was hastily compile, *Xin Yuanshi* was compiled by Ke Shaomin as a result of meticulous studies of many years. In addition to these formal histories there are three travel reports which are complementing the mission reports explained above. *Xishiji*⁶⁴ of Liu Yu⁶⁵ is an important source since Liu went to central Asia in the embassy mission of Möngke Qaghan and reached Iran. In this respect this is an important source for understanding the Mongol diplomacy during the apex of its power. Although Yelü Chucai, a Jin official of Khitan origin also wrote down his journey to central Asia accompanying Chinggis Khan in his Kharazmian campaign, there is not much detail to report about the way diplomacy is conducted among the

⁶³ Shaomin Ke, *新元史* [*Xin Yuanshi: The New History of Yuan*] (Taipei: Chengwen Chubanshe, 1971).

⁶⁴ Yu Liu, *西使記* [*Xishiji: Record of Mission to West*] (Taipei: Xinyu Publishing Ltd., 1970).

⁶⁵ 劉郁 / Liu Yu

nomads in his *Xiyoulu*.⁶⁶ Although there are other travel reports, local gazetteers and biographies as well, the Chinese sources are few for the Yuan compared to the Song. Again, as in the case of the Liao and Jin, the sources from the Yuan dynasty did not survive the selection process of the Chinese scholars of later eras. But luckily for the Yuan and the Mongol Empire, we have a very vast pool of sources from outside China. One of the most important sources along with *Yuanshi* is *The Secret History of the Mongols*.⁶⁷ As Wilkinson suggests, *The Secret History of the Mongols* gives us “a view from the steppe rather than a view of the steppe from outside”⁶⁸, and is indispensable in this respect along with the Orkhon Inscriptions to understand the nomadic point of view. Alongside *Yuanshi* and *The Secret History of the Mongols*, the most referred sources related to the Mongols come from Iran. Rashid-ud Din Faz-Ullah’s⁶⁹ compendium of history, *Jami al Tawarikh*⁷⁰, Juvaini Ala al-Din Ata Malik’s⁷¹ *Tarikh-i Jahan Gusha*⁷²

⁶⁶ Chucai Yelü, *西遊錄 [Xiyoulu: Record of Journey to West]*, ed. Da Xiang (Beijing: Zhonghua Publishing House, 1981).

⁶⁷ The original text of *The Secret History of the Mongols* that is extant today was written in Medieval Mongolian with Chinese characters.

⁶⁸ Rashiduddin Fazlullah, *Jami’u’t-Tawarikh: Compendium of Chronicles*, trans. Wheeler M. Thackston, vol. 3, *Classical Writings of the Medieval Islamic World: Persian Histories of the Mongol Dynasties* (London: I. B. Tauris & Co, 2012).

⁶⁹ Full name in Persian: رشیدالدین فضل‌الله همدانی

⁷⁰ Rashiduddin Fazlullah, *Jami’u’t-Tawarikh: Compendium of Chronicles*, trans. Wheeler M. Thackston, vol. 3, *Classical Writings of the Medieval Islamic World: Persian Histories of the Mongol Dynasties* (London: I. B. Tauris & Co, 2012).

⁷¹ Full name in Persian: علاءالدین عطاءالله

⁷² Ala’ al-Din ‘Ata Malek Juvaini, *The Tarikh-I-Jahan-Gusha of Ala’ud-Din Ata Malik-I-Juwayni: Containing the History of Chingiz Khan and His Successors*, trans. Muhammad Qazvini (London: Luzac, 1912).

are very valuable sources since they were written in the Ilkhanid court by people who had personal access to not only the written materials and oral traditions, but also the generals and other people in the Mongol administration who eye witnessed the events themselves. In addition to these two compendiums there are also other histories written by the Islamic scholars of the time and later generations. Although they are not always completely reliable, they still can provide an information which can be compared with the Chinese and other primary sources to verify the events. Minhaj-i Siraj Juzjani's⁷³ *Tabaqat-i Nasiri*⁷⁴, though primarily a history of Islam also contains first hand eyewitness of the Mongol expansions until 1260s. Since Minhaj-i Siraj was personally attendant in the defense of cities and castles against the Mongols in Herat and other cities. He wrote his history in the court of the Delhi Sultanate and although he seems to be greatly biased against the Mongols, his first-hand eyewitness is very important. Two travel notes, one from Zhang Dehui⁷⁵, and another by a Nestorian Christian Turk Rabban Savma⁷⁶ was sent by Qubilai Khan to Iran and to Rome. His report was written down in Syriac⁷⁷ after him and is a valuable source as a way of

⁷³ Full name in Persian: منہاج السراج الجوزجانی

⁷⁴ Minhāj Sirāj Jūzjānī, *Tabakat-I-Nasiri* (Sang-e-Meel Publications, 2006). Also for a Turkish translation of the chapters concerning the Mongols see: Mustafa Uyar, trans., *Minhâc-ı Sirâc El-Cûzcânî, Tabakât-ı Nâsirî: Moğol İstilasına Dair Kayıtlar* (Istanbul: Ötüken, 2016).

⁷⁵ 張德輝

⁷⁶ Morris Rossabi, *Voyager from Xanadu: Rabban Sauma and the First Journey from China to the West* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010).

⁷⁷ For a full translation into English see: Rabban Savma, *The Monks Of Kublai Khan Emperor Of China Or The History Of The Life And Travels Of Rabban Sawma, Envoy And Plenipotentiary Of The Mongol Khans To The Kings Of Europe, And Markos Who As Mar Yahbh-Allaha III Became Patriarch Of The Nestorian Church In Asia*, trans. E. A. Wallis Budge, 1st ed. (London: The Religious Tract Society, 1928).

understanding the Mongol missions to outside World outside of the Mongol suzerainty. This report is valuable in terms of seeing the sedentary World from a nomadic perspective since Rabban Savma, though a Nestorian Christian was in many ways representative of the steppe since he grew up in the steppe and his family background was from an important clan⁷⁸. The writings of western travelers to Mongolia and China under the Mongol rule provide us with a fourth angle after the Chinese, Islamic and nomadic points of view. Though sedentary like the Chinese and the Muslim Iran, Catholic Europe and Orthodox Russia and Eastern Rome had different social and political structures from those of China and Iran. Iran and China had central bureaucratic administrations whereas Europe was a feudal society⁷⁹ after the collapse of Western Roman Empire. Therefore, the European Travelers such as Rubruck, Carpini and Marco Polo provided views from a different angle to both the social structure and the way interstate relations were conducted by the Mongols as well as how they viewed legitimacy. Odoric of Perdonone though studies less compared to Marco Polo, Carpini and Rubruck, also gives some insights. Unlike the other three, he arrived China not through the land route via Iran and Central Asia but from the sea entering through the Guangzhou port.⁸⁰ Rubruck, Carpini and Odorico were all Franciscan Monks and Especially Rubruck, though not an official envoy, was a very keen observer. Carpini on the other hand was sent by the Pope Innocentus IV.⁸¹ Marco Polo on

⁷⁸ Rossabi, *Voyager from Xanadu: Rabban Sauma and the First Journey from China to the West*, 27.

⁷⁹ Feudalism is taken as described by Marc Bloch in this context. Marc Bloch, *La Société Féodale [The Feudal Society]* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1968).

⁸⁰ Odorico (da Pordenone), *The Travels of Friar Odoric* (W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002).

⁸¹ Giovanni Piano da Carpini was sent as a legate to the Mongol court to gather information about the Mongols and to start diplomatic affairs with a power that could be

the other hand was a merchant and did not set out as an envoy. But during his stay in China, he was employed by Qubilai and in his return, he was sent as an envoy carrying a princess to Iran. His eyewitness and detailed observations are a good complementary source to the other histories written by Chinese and Persian authors.

Although the history of Liao, Jin and Yuan dynasties and the Mongol Empire have been studied widely, they were mostly approached as invaders who interrupted the course of events in Asia and Europe. both in Asian and Western historiography, as well as the Islamic historiography, the nomads, regardless of their ethnic background, were demonstrated as intruders. Due to the scarcity of sources written by the nomads, most of which re recently discovered during the 19th and 20th centuries, and some of which are still being discovered, the historian has at his disposal only the sources written by their sedentary neighbors. Although the large Eurasian steppe geographically, geopolitically and commercially stood at the very center of the old world connecting the civilization centers of Asia, it has been demonstrated and treated as peripheral by the contemporaries as well as the historiography. Their history was in most cases written as a sideline story to complement the history of the civilized hero. While on the western steppe, especially in central Asia and West Asia, the islamization process of the nomads made them more acceptable to their sedentary neighbors as rulers and heroes in their historiography, in the east their conversion to Buddhism, the universal religion of East Asia did not change the way they were viewed by the Chinese and the Sino-centrally oriented countries such as Korea and Japan, since it was the Confucian tradition that As a result, very few scholars tried to really understand these “barbarians who had faces of men and hearts of

allied with against Islam in West Asia. Johannes de Plano Carpini, *Relation des Mongols ou Tartares* (Paris: Arthus-Bertrand, 1838).

beasts⁸²’. Actually, the Chinese themselves were not stranger to foreign rule by the time Liao, Jin and Yuan dynasties ruled parts of or all of China in consequence. The Zhou dynasty idealized by Confucius and his followers in the later generations were ethnically non-Chinese.⁸³ The founders of the Sui and Tang dynasties the latter of which is seen as the golden age of Chinese history and culture today were of Tabgach⁸⁴ and Türk origin descending from the previous Wei dynasty of the Tabgach. In this regard, it can be concluded that the approach to the steppe peoples was not biased based on their ethnic background but rather on their way of life and the ideology and means of legitimization they used to rule. While Zhou was a dynasty of idealized distant past for Confucius himself and even much more to his later disciples, Tang was a dynasty that embraced Confucian ideals alongside their own steppe background and ruled China in compliance with the Confucians although in their personal lives they could still follow certain cultural traits of the steppe.⁸⁵ This approach to the steppe nomads continued into the modern times especially after the gunpowder Empires of the Ottoman Turks, Russia and China expanded into the nomadic

⁸² Marc S. Abramson, *Ethnic Identity in Tang China* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 27–9.

⁸³ Edward L. Shaughnessy, “Western Zhou History,” in *The Cambridge History of Ancient China: From the Origins of Civilization to 221 BC*, ed. Michael Loewe (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 292–352.

⁸⁴ Tabgach is the Turkic pronunciation of Chinese 拓跋/Tuoba. Since Tuoba is the modern Mandarin pronunciation and the ancient pronunciation cannot be restored in Chinese which is an ideographic writing style and is insufficient in correctly representing the foreign sounds, the Turkic version seen in the Orkhon inscriptions have been taken in this study as an ethnonym of these people since the Turkic runes were a phonetic alphabet more capable of representing sounds.

⁸⁵ Jonathan Karam Skaff, *Sui-Tang China and Its Turko-Mongol Neighbors: Culture, Power, and Connections, 580-800* (Oxford University Press, 2012).

areas⁸⁶ and the nomads began to become economically more dependent of the sedentary neighbors around them as a result of the collapse of the silk road. Beginning from the 19th century onwards, certain theories began to appear regarding the nomads. Barthold was one of the most prominent historians of his time who delved into the history of central Asia by taking the Turkic and Mongolian peoples to the center of the history of this area. As the Russian Empire expanded eastwards into central Asia and Siberia and eventually reached Mongolia and Manchuria, interest in the nomads and East Asia increased. During the Soviet era, works in Russian continued to appear increasingly about the steppe peoples and their cultures but under a Marxist led ideology. French scholars such as Peliot, Chavannes, Jean Paul Roux also made contributions to the study of the nomads but their studies were mostly concentrated on translating the texts and studying their social structure. The same was valid for the German scholars who extensively studied on the philological and sociological areas related to the Turks, Mongols and other nomads. The Turks remained to be the center of the studies on the nomads followed by the Mongols both of which founded Empires that had extensive relations with the West as well as the East on a global scale. But the Khitans and the Jürchens lacked the interest of the western academics for a long time. With a few exceptions, the approach to the Turkic and Mongolic peoples was Eurocentric until recent times, and they differed from the premodern studies mostly in terms of methodology that was applied. Either the modernism theories resulting in comparisons made between the Ottoman and Japanese societies to find clues about their “similar” modernization patterns in their historical backgrounds, or Marxist theories delving into the social and economic structures of the nomadic societies from a modern point of view applying contemporary views and systems into an alien

⁸⁶ Peter B. Golden, *Nomads and Sedentary Societies in Medieval Eurasia* (Washington: American Historical Association, 1998), 36.

society of the past. Beginning from the 1980s onwards with the rise of new historical and social theories, a new approach to the nomads began to appear in historiography. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the independence of the Turkic Central Asian states also invigorated the interest on the nomadic past of these new states. Anatoly Khazanov⁸⁷, Thomas Barfield⁸⁸ brought new theories to the study of the nomads from a perspective that puts the nomads into the center and approach history in a new perspective. While Khazanov focusses on the society and economy of the nomadic peoples, Barfield in his book *The Perilous Frontier* examines the relations between the nomads and the Chinese dynasties from various perspectives. He observes that the foreign dynasties in Northern China, with the exception of the Mongols, were of Manchurian origin and they appeared at the times of political turmoil in China and took advantage of the situation. Turkic and Mongolic peoples on the steppe however, did not settle on Chinese soil and did not strive to establish Chinese style dynasties. Instead they sustained their states through the tribute or other forms of payment that they received from the Chinese dynasties. The Mongols were an exception to this pattern. They did not ask for tribute or payment from the Jürchens, Kharazmians and later the Song. Instead, once the war would begin, the Mongols did not stop until they conquered the enemy as a whole. The exceptions were Egypt, Poland, Hungary and Japan. But the wars with these countries all coincided with times of interregnum in the Mongolian Empire except Japan which managed to defend itself against two Mongol invasions. Most of the studies focus on the Türk Qaghanate and some other Turkic confederations and the Manchuria based

⁸⁷ Anatoly Michailovich Khazanov, *Nomads and the Outside World* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1984); Anatoly Michailovich Khazanov and Andre Wink, *Nomads in the Sedentary World* (Routledge, 2012).

⁸⁸ Thomas Barfield, *The Perilous Frontier: Nomadic Empires and China, 221 BC to AD 1757* (New York: Wiley, 1992).

dynasties, as a result, to theorize about the relations of the nomads. Japanese scholar Sugiyama Masaaki on the other hand focuses on the Mongols and has a different attitude towards the Mongols compared to other Japanese scholars. His books *クビライの挑戦: モンゴルによる世界史の大転回* [*Kubirai no Chôsen- Mongoru ni yoru Sekaishi no Daitenkai: Qubilai's Challenge- The Great Change of the World by the Mongols*]⁸⁹ and *遊牧民から見た世界史* [*Yûbokumin kara mita Sekaishi: World History Seen From the Nomads*]⁹⁰ he questions not only the modern Japanese point of view regarding the Mongols, but also the Western points of view, and reexamines World history from the point of view of the nomads. These studies and others have been important in reestablishing a nomadic image in historiography. Putting the nomads at an equal standing rather than the periphery if not the center for this period is crucial for understanding the interstate relations. But while all these studies make a distinction between the Manchurian based Liao and Jin and the steppe based Mongolian Empire and the Yuan, this study suggests that the Mongols were a continuation of the process which the Khitans started. Although the subject of this study covers only the relations between the nomadic and sedentary states of East Asia, after the collapse of the Türk Qaghanate and the Uighur Qaghanates, a similar process was being witnessed throughout all of Eurasia beginning from the 10th century onwards. The Uighurs gradually conquered and settled in the oases cities of what is now East Turkistan. Other Turkic groups began to conquer and settle in parts of central Asia, Middle East and Europe. Just as the Khitans were conquering the Korean Kingdom of Balhae and parts of China and creating

⁸⁹ Masaaki Sugiyama, *クビライの挑戦: モンゴルによる世界史の大転回* [*Kubirai no Chôsen- Mongoru ni yoru Sekaishi no Daitenkai: Qubilai's Challenge- The Great Change of the World by the Mongols*], 1st ed. (Tokyo: Kodansha, 2010).

⁹⁰ Masaaki Sugiyama, *遊牧民から見た世界史* [*Yûbokumin kara mita Sekaishi: World History Seen From the Nomads*] (Tokyo: Nihon Keizai Shinbunsha, 1997).

a hybrid state after the collapse of Tang and Uighur states, the Oghuz were undertaking a similar steppe in Iran, parts of central Asia and Anatolia after the collapses of or the weakening of the Khazar Khanate (The Seljuq royal house is thought to be originally Khazar aristocrats⁹¹), the Ghaznavids and the East Roman Empire. The Magyars in a similar way established themselves in Pannonia at around the same time with the Khitans, Pechenegs and some other Oghuz tribes entered the Balkans and still live in the North-Eastern parts of the Balkan peninsula. While the previous Türk Qaghanate and Uighur Khanate were nomadic states with minor influences from the Sogdians and the Chinese as administrator, in terms of legitimacy and positioning themselves vis-a-vis China and the other sedentary states of East Asia, they clinged to the steppe traditions, and unless defeated on battle, did not accept Chinese norms. This is because they were founded and took their political power from the core area of the steppe, that is the Altai mountain area and the sacred Ötüken area. While the Altai mountains were viewed as sacred mountains llike the Hua Mountain in China, or the other moutains where imperial sacrifices were made, the Ötüken region bore a significance in that, every nomadic power who claimed to have the mandate of heaven in th,s area settled their capital in the Ötüken region and convened the qurultai for election of the qaghan in this region. The only exception was the Kyrgyz who came from southern Siberia only to devastate and plunder the Uighur area and who went back to their home area without establishing a new dynasty. Even the Mongols as will be seen convened their qurultai and set up their first capital Qara Qorum in the Ötüken area instead of their sacred Burkha Khaldun forest. These were as important to the nomads as political symbols as Hua Mountain core Zhou areas which were called as the middle kingdom were to the Chinese. Every new Turkic or nomadic dynasty had their capital in this

⁹¹ Andrew C.S. Peacock, *Early Seljuq History: A New Interpretation*, Routledge Studies in the History of Iran and Turkey 7 (London: Routledge, 2010).

area and were expected to retain the position of these areas. These areas had such political importance that even long after the Türk Qaghanate collapsed, the Mongols had their most important Qurultais and the first imperial capital Qara Qorum in the Ötüken area. The Khitans, Jürchens and the Mongols on the other hand were far away from these regions, and were situated at the borderland. The Khitans were at the border between the Chinese, Türks and the Koreans in Manchuria and the Korean Peninsula while the Jürchens were a border tribe between the “civilized” Khitans in Manchuria and Siberia. The Mongols were situated at the outer border of even the steppe. They were situated at the North-eastern corner of the Eastern steppe, and their neighbors were the other nomadic tribal confederations. Unlike the Merkids and the Qarais who share borders with the Jin dynasty and the Tanguts, the Mongols were rather unimportant for the Jin and the sedentary World until their rise to power. While the Khitans were Türk, Uighur and Chinese vassals and were influenced by these until they conquered the Balhae kingdom and took it as an example, the Jürchens who were the Khitan vassals founded their own dynasty. In return, they were overthrown by their own vassals, the Mongols as if to prove Ibn Khaldun about his thesis.⁹² Although Ibn Khaldun and others have for centuries tried to explain the nomads in a general theory regarding their rise and fall, none seems to be successful in generalizations since they fail to answer why a certain nomadic group instead of the other, sometimes stronger, nomadic confederations did not succeed. This study on the other hand focuses on the diplomatic and other interstate relations of these nomadic states rather than to give an explanation regarding their rise to power, reasons of their fall or their social structures. Even the inner politics are

⁹² Ibn-i Khaldun in his famous book *Muqaddima*, argues about the relations between the nomads and the sedentary peoples throughout the history. For a translation into English see: Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah : An Introduction to History*, ed. N. J. Dawood and Bruce B. Lawrence, trans. Franz Rosenthal, Bollingen Series (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2005).

taken as much as they are concerned with the external affairs of these states. Nomadic confederations who are contemporaries of these dynasties are also taken into account as much as their relations with these dynasties are concerned. Although the Khitans and the Jürchens were of Manchurian origin with a different way of life from those of the Mongols, as previous Türk vassals and Uighur vassals they inherited the Türk ideas of legitimacy as well as concepts of an inter-state system. In this regard, although they gradually adopted some Chinese state apparatus and created a hybrid state structure, their dealings with China and the other sedentary states were based on a more realistic yet on an ideologically steppe based point despite the use of Chinese terminology in correspondence with these states. The fact that the language and the terminology of their correspondence with their neighbors does not mean that they adopted Chinese concepts wholeheartedly, but because this was the only way they could communicate with these states such as the Song, Goryeo or Japan since they did not comprehend the nomadic concepts in the same way. In this respect, rather than an interruption between the collapse of the Turkic qaghanates and the rise of the Mongols, there was a continuum by the Liao, Xi Xia and Jin of the Turkic concepts of legitimacy and interstate system. Despite the general assumptions that the Mongols inherited the Türk traditions, it seems more likely that they inherited the system and ideas of legitimacy from the Khitans and the Jürchens as a result of their continuous relations with them. Contrary to the general view that the Khitans, Jürchens and Mongols were isolated tribes before their rise to power, they seem to be the continuation of the Türk traditions by replacing the royal house but not the system and the concepts of sovereignty and interstate system. Ethnicity mattered less than the system and ideas on the steppe. The fact that an ethnically different power dominated the steppe did not change the system or the ideas, but brought a terminology linguistically different and a bureaucracy that suited the new environments since these states were founded by the border peoples who inhabited in areas that were partially steppe, partially forest and

partially sedentary. Even the Mongols during their time of Chinggis and later on were divided into two groups, one pursuing a pastoral way of life as nomads, others living in huts in the forested areas to the north and pursuing a semi-sedentary life like the peoples of the Manchurian forests.⁹³ This suggests a relatively new pastoralism among the Mongols who were probably a forest people a few centuries ago like their Tungusic cousins. As a result, they built state structures suited for a wide variety of elements, instead of taking only the nomads or the sedentary population as the model for administration. This flexibility also gave them a flexibility in politics which permitted them to pursue a more real politik based policy rather than an ideology based policy, unlike the Song dynasty. In this regard this study differs slightly from Barfield and is closer to Sugiyama in terms of taking the nomads based more on their worldview rather than their ethnic and geographic background while not refusing the ideas of Barfield altogether regarding the relations of the steppe peoples and states with China.

⁹³ These Mongols were called the “Water Mongols”.

CHAPTER II

THE COLLAPSE OF THE TANG AND THE FIVE DYNASTIES

A political entity that has been called as China⁹⁴ had been evolving for centuries since the first settlements in the Yellow river basin. This political entity is hard to define in terms of set geographical limits since its borders were ever changing for centuries. While its southern borders had been expanding without much disturbance, the Chinese expansion to the east was limited by the Pacific Ocean. To the North and West, the Chinese expansion was either limited or even reversed by the nomadic or semi-nomadic peoples of the steppe, the Tibetan plateau or

⁹⁴ The name of China in English and most of the other Western languages come from the Qin Dynasty (BCE 221-206) which united the Sinitic states and further expanded the borders of the Sinitic people to the South. Until the modern age, the name Cathai was used in western languages. In Chinese on the other hand, China is most commonly called as 中國 (pinyin: Zhongguo) meaning the Middle Kingdom. But China has been called with various names throughout the centuries. The earliest recorded name was in fact 中華 (pinyin: Zhonghua). While the first character 中(zhong) in both words are the same meaning “middle” or “center”, the second characters are different in both in literal and figurative meanings. The character 國 (guo) means country in modern Chinese but it had the meaning of a state, more of a city state with a walled citadel in the original meaning. The character 華 (hua) on the other hand means flower, and refers to the Huashan mountain (華山) in Shanxi province (陝西). This mountain and its surrounding area was seen as the center of the civilized world from the very early Zhou times (circa BCE 1046-256) onwards, and the name of the mountain came to be associated with China itself. While the character 國 can be used for any political entity, the term 華 has been reserved only for China. Thus, the term 中國 can be used in Hanshu (漢書) for naming a kingdom in Central Asia (see: Ban Gu, 漢書·匈奴傳 [*Hanshu-Xiongnuzhuan: Hanshu-Hun Monograph*], vol. 203 (Beijing: Zhonghua Publishing House, 1962), 1122.) as used in its literal meaning as a kingdom in the middle of other kingdoms in a central geographic position, we never see the term 中華 used for a country other than China in any known document. For the sake of practicality and due to common usage in English language however, the term China will be used for defining the political entities that defined itself as zhonghua.

Manchurian rivers and forests. Until the Tang times (CE 618-907) however, the peoples to the North and west were mostly under the organization of tribal confederations and although there was a set of fortifications later to become the wall of China, there was no set border between these peoples and the Chinese. By the beginning of the Tang times however, these peoples on the borders of the Tang dynasty began to organize into coherent political entities with their own institutions, either inspired by the Chinese or the sui genesis developments within their own traditions. Thus, although there had been relations between the Northern, Eastern, and Western “barbarians” from the very early times onward, it would be convenient to start our narrative of diplomatic relations between China and its neighbors from the Tang dynasty.

The Tang Dynasty (CE 618-907) has long been considered as one of the greatest dynasties of Chinese and in deed World History by historians. Especially during the reign of Tang Taizong (CE 626-649), China had subdued the Turkic and Mongolian tribes to its north and Tibetans to its west as well as moving further south down to Vietnam. In addition to these political and military successes, the Tang Dynasty had a more important success which was to become the suzerain state of its neighbors even without resorting to military means as in the case of Japan for a while, and even the Silla Kingdom (BCE 57-CE 935) of the Korean Peninsula which accepted Tang suzerainty despite having bested the Tang in war and driving it out of the Korean Peninsula in 676 in the aftermath of Tang invasions in alliance with the Silla kingdom between the 647-668. The states and tribes that willingly became Tang vassals without a fight or even without having a direct border with the Tang had two kinds of interest in doing so. One advantage of such a relationship was economic. The Tang Dynasty had prospered greatly and became the economic and cultural center of the East Asian World. Economically, culturally and politically, China had become the Middle

Kingdom⁹⁵ not only in Chinese theory and rhetoric as in the Qin (BCE 221-206) and Han Dynasties (BCE 206- CE 220) but also in practice. But nevertheless, the Tang Empire had its limits. Although they had subdued the Türk Qaghanate and the Turkic and Mongolian tribes to its North, the Great Tang Taizong himself was defeated by the Goguryeo Kingdom in Manchuria in 645. It is obvious that from the Tang time onwards, its neighbors were attracted to the economic wealth and the cultural influence of China and in most cases, became voluntary vassals as in the case of the Silla Kingdom, who after allying with the Tang Dynasty defeated and annihilated the Baekje and Goguryeo Kingdoms but then also ousted the Tang forces who helped them and united Korea. Soon after they united Korea, the Silla Kingdom and the following Goryeo and Joseon Dynasties all pledged their loyalty first to China without being forced but then were forced by Manchurian powers as we shall see to become their allies and vassals.

The inclusion of nomadic tribes to the North and West of China to the imperial system and their growing presence within the army ranks could be controlled when the Tang Empire was strong. Also, the policy of dividing the tribal confederacies through different means also worked for a long time. Even when the Empire was not so strong due to inner political turmoil, they could somehow be checked through sending off imperial princesses or buying them off through

⁹⁵ China is called as the “Middle Kingdom” (p.y.: Zhongguo/中國) in Chinese language as well as many other East Asian languages even today in the daily usage although the formal name of the People’s Republic of China is not so. The English name China along with many other Western languages comes from the Qin (秦) Dynasty (221-206 BCE) which had trade relations with the Romans through the silk road whereas the Russian and other Eastern European and Central Asian languages call China as Kitai deriving from the Khitans who founded the Liao (遼) Dynasty (and had extensive relations with the Tanguts and other Turkic tribes of Central Asia.

gifts and money. But when the An Lushan⁹⁶ rebellion⁹⁷ broke out in 755 the central authority came to the brink of collapsing altogether along with the dynasty. An Lushan was of Turkic-Sogdian origin person who was employed by the Tang within the army and who quickly rose within the ranks of the army through both merit and political cunning. Through his personal relationship with the emperor Xuanzong⁹⁸ (reign period: 712-756) and the Empress Guifei⁹⁹ as well as the head of the state Li Linfu¹⁰⁰ and thanks to his military successes, he was appointed as the military governor of the Hebei¹⁰¹ region with enormous authority and privileges for 12 years. Historical records as well as historians have been speculating on the motives of An Lushan for rebellion such as his ethnic origins, politically volatile atmosphere and the insecurity that he felt after the death of Li Linfu, or his seeing an opportunity to seize the power seeing the weakness of the Tang dynasty. Whatever his reasons were, he was well prepared. He had an elite unite made up of nomadic steppe horsemen of eight thousand as

⁹⁶ An Lushan/ 安祿山 (An Roxan?). This name has been considered as a Manicheist name taking into consideration that his father was thought to be a Sogdian. The surname An (安) meant safe, secure, peaceful, and was a common surname given to people of non-Han origin who came to servet the Chinese and were deemed to be trustworthy.

⁹⁷ For a detailed account of the rebellion see: Jonathan Karam Skaff, “Barbarians at the Gates? The Tang Frontier Military and the An Lushan Rebellion,” *War & Society* 18, no. 2 (2000): 23–35.; Edwin G. Pulleyblank, “The An Lu-Shan Rebellion and the Origins of Chronic Militarism in Late T’ang China,” *Essays on T’ang Society*, 1976, 32–61.; Edwin G. Pulleyblank, *The Background of the Rebellion of An Lu-Shan*, vol. 99 (Greenwood Press, 1982).

⁹⁸ 玄宗

⁹⁹ Yang Guifei 楊貴妃 (719-756)

¹⁰⁰ 李林甫

¹⁰¹ Hebei/河北

well as regular forces in the Hebei region totaling to two hundred thousand.¹⁰² His rebellion has been seen by many historians as the main cause of the collapse of the dynasty although the rebellion itself did not bring an end to the dynasty. Another major change that this rebellion brought about was the collapse of the central authority, especially in the border regions.¹⁰³ But to fully understand the rebellion's background and aftermath in terms of the changes that it brought to the political sphere in China and East Asia, we need to understand the political and economic changes that took place within and without China at around this time before and after the rebellion.

By beginning of the reign of Xuanzong in 712, the borders of the empire stretched to an area so wide that, the military organizations of the previous eras were not sufficient to protect these borders, especially in the north and west where highly mobile nomadic peoples' confederacies rose to power at around these times. The Tibetans established an empire¹⁰⁴ and began to threaten the western regions. The Khitans became a formidable power in the North East against whom An Lushan fought successful wars but also faced crushing defeats at times. In order to deal with these problems, the government established border provinces which were ruled by military governors. Unlike the other central provinces where the military generals could only organize the military for security issues and did not perform any kind of authority over the civilian administration in any way, the military

¹⁰² Michael T. Dalby, "Court Politics in Late T'ang Times," in *Cambridge History of China*, ed. Denis Twitchet, vol. 3 Sui and T'ang China, Cambridge Histories (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 562.

¹⁰³ Pulleyblank, *The Background of the Rebellion of An Lu-Shan*, 99:99.

¹⁰⁴ The Tibetan Empire (Bod Chen Po/བོད་ཆེན་པོ་: Great Tibet) also called as Tubo (吐蕃) by Chinese reigned in Tibet as well as other parts of China and Central Asia between 618 and 842)

governors in the border provinces for the practical reasons of dealing with the nomadic tribes with a free hand, were given right to collect taxes and perform also the civil administrative authority in their spheres for the facility of overcoming bureaucracy related to logistics which was perhaps one of the most basic problems if the central authority tried to send soldiers to the spot from the center.¹⁰⁵ The western and northwestern provinces which were poor were always obliged to the central government for provisions since the production in these provinces were low. But the Hebei region was rich in resources and could feed a huge army without any support from the central government. At first the military governors were given short tenures in these border regions in order to prevent their becoming too strong in a province. But as time elapsed, the Tang court became laxer in its treatment of these military governors and like An Lushan, many other military governors were given extraordinarily long tenures in their provinces which gradually became their seats of power. From the point of view of dealing with external threats, this system worked out very well and this success along with allowing the government to give longer tenures to these governors as a reward for their successful defense also made the government feel safer militarily.¹⁰⁶ The militia system which was previously used was gradually abandoned and the military power of the central government in the central regions away from the border became weaker and weaker to the point that when the An Lushan rebellion broke out, the central government did not have any sound army of its own but had to desperately depend on the armies of the border generals. After many years of devastating battles between the rebels and the Tang generals, population, wealth, land and even more the prestige of China decreased

¹⁰⁵ Charles A. Peterson, "Court and Province in Mid-and Late-T'ang," *The Cambridge History of China* 3, no. part 1 (1979): 500–510.

¹⁰⁶ Pulleyblank, "The An Lu-Shan Rebellion and the Origins of Chronic Militarism in Late T'ang China."

vis-a-vis its neighbors.¹⁰⁷ This was around the time that Japan began to turn inwards and decrease its missions to China. Korea and Vietnam also began to lessen their tributary missions due to difficulties of safe travel as well as uncertainties within the empire. But this was a gradual process and did not take place immediately after the rebellion, though one of the consequences of the rebellion was the loss of prestige along with territory. The Tibetans had built their empire and the Tang Emperor had to accept the Tibetan Emperor as an equal. But the government was in a more urgent situation than thinking of its prestige outside of China. As a result of the rebellion, the military commanders saw that the government needed them and they had the chance to act more independently in their own regions. Also as a hasty military precaution against the army of An Lushan who marched to Luoyang and Chang'an, both capitals of the Empire, the government had to set up military governors also in the central provinces to stop him. Most of these proved to be permanent even after the rebellion. So, a high level of militarization of the populace also took place during the rebellion and the government's efforts to demilitarize and disband the regional armies proved to be futile.¹⁰⁸ Hebei region stayed as a semi-independent region thereafter and the government faced embarrassing defeats even years after whenever it tried to remove a governor or march to Hebei region. As a result, other governors also began to become more autonomous and the central government gradually became weaker. The consequence of such internal weakness was the loss of especially the vast western regions to the Tibetan Empire and the recognition of this short lived Tibetan Empire as an equal. Chang'an, the Western Capital was even invaded and raided by the Tibetans in 763, though for a short time and this equality and the existence of another empire and emperor on the same footing

¹⁰⁷ Dalby, "Court Politics in Late T'ang Times."

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 579.

with China set an example for the upcoming events. Its neighbors began to realize that China was not as strong as it used to be during the reign of Taizong. Vietnam¹⁰⁹, Nanzhao, Tibetan Empire and other steppe peoples in the north were ready to take land or goods from China by force rather than becoming its vassal by now, but still China had the upper hand in the cultural and political sphere and this gave China a bit more time. Many of its neighboring kingdoms still felt the need to be legitimized by the Chinese emperor. This trend continued until the end of Tang and the beginning of the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms Era (907-960) when China truly became a state among equals.¹¹⁰ The legitimacy of a king or a tribe leader or a governor who became a governor through inheritance or through self-declaration after mutiny and force on site, mostly needed to be confirmed by the emperor of China not because China was militarily strong or would always intervene politically or militarily to its neighbors or even to its own governors after the An Lushan rebellion, but because the leaders who came to throne by force or through inheritance all felt the need to be legitimized to ensure the loyalty of their subjects. This process had been built over many centuries. At first it began through conquest or trade with China. But then once the system was established and recognized by the majority of its neighbors, any new native dynasty or king who came to throne felt the need to be sanctified by the Chinese emperor just like the kings of medieval Europe did in the west with the pope in Rome. But unlike the Pope, the Chinese emperors ruled a huge empire and huge armies when they were strong and did not hesitate to use this power to dictate

¹⁰⁹ The North of modern Vietnam began to assert its independence from the Chinese during the political turmoil that followed the An Lushan rebellion and the collapse of the Tang.

¹¹⁰ Although there was an uprising in the 3rd century to gain independence from the Chinese, the Vietnamese independence under a native dynasty had its background in the late Tang times when the Vietnamese chieftains decided to rule over Vietnam themselves rather than by a new Chinese lord.

their will on their neighbors when the conditions were right. As in the case of the Korean unification by the Silla Kingdom, the Chinese sent a huge army and fleet to the Korean Peninsula and although they were driven out by their Silla allies in the end, the Tang showed that it could use force on a neighbor if necessary to force the mandate of heaven which the Baekje and Goguryeo kingdoms did not seem to revere much. But as it became apparent after the An Lushan rebellion and the sack of the Western Tang capital by the Tibetan Empire that the Tang no longer had the military power to dictate its will through military, its militarily stronger neighbors to the north and west became less attracted to the cultural values or political arguments of the Tang as well.

The Tibetans were one of the first to defy the Chinese superiority. They had united Tibet under a strong dynasty for the first time in their history and built up an empire through conquests in the east from Chinese lands and in the north from the Central Asian Turkic peoples. They were never subjected to the Chinese culture and civilization as the Koreans, the Japanese or the Vietnamese did and they needed the Chinese tributary system only for trade purposes not for legitimacy since they derived their legitimacy from other sources. The Tibetan Bön religion was one the sources to legitimize the Tibetan chieftains from early times onwards. Later on, as the Tibetans were united under the Songtsän dynasty. Songtsän Gampo (569-649) was the first Emperor of Tibet to put Tibet on an equal footing with China. He did not only enlarge the Empire towards China through conquest, but he also managed to get a Tang princess for his son after a campaign in western China in 635.¹¹¹ This was of course not the first occurrence that a Chinese princess married a foreign monarch. For many centuries, the

¹¹¹ Christopher I. Beckwith, *The Tibetan Empire in Central Asia: A History of the Struggle for Great Power among Tibetans, Turks, Arabs, and Chinese during the Early Middle Ages*, 4th ed., Princeton Paperbacks (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1993).

Northern nomadic chieftains as well as Khans had been marrying Chinese princesses. And this was also not the first incidence that a Chinese emperor had to accept equality with a foreign monarch whose military might was stronger than him and who through military threat forced him to accept equality. The originality of the Tibetan case was that, there were two separate ceremonies in two capitals binding the two monarchs as equals and in the Tibetan case the Tibetan rules, and rituals were applied instead of the Chinese rituals which was the case with the other Northern nomadic peoples. The Tibetans were not so much influenced by the Chinese culture, and there were also influences of Indian culture and thought on Tibet through Nepal and the trade routes through the Himalayas from Ghandhara in Modern day Pakistan.¹¹² As a result, the idea of mandate of heaven given to the Chinese emperor was not influential in Tibet as in the other countries. The Tibetan monarchy and the aristocracy initially derived their legitimacy from the local Bön religion like the Japanese monarchy and aristocracy initially did with Shinto. Later Buddhism entered Tibet and it was also used to legitimize the monarchical house of Tibet. As a result of these two religious tools that were effectively used by the Songtsän Dynasty, Tibet was solidly unified.¹¹³ As a result of this, the Tibetan Empire saw itself on an equal basis with the Tang Empire unlike its other neighbors. The northern nomadic federations also revered the idea of mandate of heaven but for the Tibetans it was solely a Chinese idea that had no effect on Tibet. As a result, the Tibetans demanded equality in their diplomatic relations with China and received it through their show of force. This created an exception in the East Asian system of diplomacy and hierarchy in that Tibet for the first time in its history became not only a state, but also an empire on the

¹¹² Michael L. Walter, *Buddhism and Empire: The Political and Religious Culture of Early Tibet*, vol. 22 (Leiden: Brill, 2009).

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

same level with a Chinese dynasty, and a Chinese dynasty not only recognized the equality of another state but also accepted using its partners norms and languages alongside Chinese norms and language. Although the life of the Tibetan Empire was relatively short and did not live to see the end of the Tang, it gave precedence to the latter Empires to be founded in Manchuria or Mongolia to claim equality and later even superiority to the Chinese dynasties. Tibet would in this respect constitute an exception within the sphere of East Asian diplomacy even after its conquest by the Mongolians and incorporation into the Mongolian system of states that will be discussed later in the following chapters.

Another challenge to the Chinese hegemony in the diplomatic sphere came from the Japanese. But in the case of Japan, the Japanese did not have the military power that the Tibetans had. In fact, during the unification of the Korean Peninsula by the Silla Kingdom, the Japanese were allies with the Baekje Kingdom and they received a blowing defeat against the Tang navy on the western coast of the Korean Peninsula and for many years after this, they expected a similar naval invasion force to invade the Japanese islands either from the Silla Kingdom or the Tang. But like the Tibetans, the Japanese had also declared their empire regardless of their relatively smaller land and military power. The Japanese Emperor coming from the Yamato clan derived his legitimacy not from the mandate of heaven or the sanctification from the Chinese emperor but from the Shinto and his claim of being descended from the sun goddess Amaterasu in the Shinto myths. As a result, the Japanese monarchs did not seek any Chinese legitimization for their rule, and since they did not have any other contending house or state directly neighboring them like the Tibetans on their high plateaus, they felt safe at home even without Chinese legitimization. In fact, seeking legitimization from a source other than the Shinto myths would jeopardize their situation since Shinto unquestionably put the house of Yamato on the apex and a Chinese Emperor could only be an equal of the Japanese

Emperor on any area. In fact, the introduction of Buddhism by the ethnically Korean nobility to Japan was heavily opposed by the native nobility at its initial stages since these families like the imperial family derived their legitimacy from the Shinto deities that they claimed descent from.¹¹⁴ During the Tang times however, the Japanese were more than willing to take anything Chinese on the cultural sphere. They sinified their state structure to a great extent, they embraced many of the Chinese ideas such as Confucianism, Daoism and Chinese writing system as well as other literary and philosophical approaches. Although this current of Chinese culture and ideas had been flowing towards Japan for a long time since early times onwards, it definitely became a boom during the Tang period at the apex of Chinese cultural and political power. But then again, the Japanese had the luxury of taking these cultural assets indirectly from Korea. Until the unification of the Korean Peninsula by the Silla kingdom, the Kingdom of Baekje and the Gaya city states which were Japanese vassals of some sort were the main source of this flow rather than China itself. The Chinese characters, Buddhism, Confucianism, silk weaving, tea and many other important Chinese cultural values were introduced to Japan by the Baekje kingdom and other Korean kingdoms. And after the fall of Baekje and Goguryeo kingdoms, a huge portion of their aristocracy and intellectuals were welcome in Japan. And after a while as their relations were normalized with the Silla kingdom, the Japanese continued their cultural and commercial relations with the Korean Peninsula as well as the Balhae kingdom in Southern Manchuria. So, risking to sever the cultural and commercial flow directly from China by not recognizing the Chinese Emperor as a suzerain of the Japanese Emperor would not necessarily affect the matters at home for the Japanese. As a result of this, Buddhism remained to be

¹¹⁴ Koyu Sonada, "Early Buddha Worship," in *Cambridge History of Japan: Heian*, ed. John Whitney Hall, 3rd ed., vol. 1, 8 vols., Cambridge Histories (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

the center of relations between Japan and China and the Chinese preferred to ignore the Japanese defiance of their system rather than taking military action or cutting the ties and antagonizing them. As the Tang state withered so did the Japanese central authority independent of the developments on the continent. After more than a century of central rule, the lands and sources were slowly passing into the hands of the aristocracy in Japan, and Japan was more concerned with inner politics than diplomacy with China, so especially after the political turmoil in Tang, the relations between the two courts came to a halt and Japan did not constitute a legitimacy issue for the Chinese diplomacy or world view. A Japanese form of feudalism had been slowly but incessantly developing on the peripheries of the empire and the military class that evolved on these peripheries were slowly taking control of land and sources from the hands of the aristocracy by the end of the Heian Period (794–1185) in late 11th century. But even after Japanese central authority disintegrated and Japan began to be ruled by regional warlords headed by the Shogun during the Kamakura Period (1185–1333), it was convenient to keep the Japanese Emperor and derive legitimacy as a shogun from him then replacing him and try to derive legitimacy from an alien emperor. So, Japan remained out of the Chinese tributary system for the rest of its history.

Another less studied neighbor of the Tang dynasty was the Nanzhao Kingdom¹¹⁵ (738–937) in modern day Yunnan. The area of Yunnan was initially ruled by tribal chieftains but later during the early 7th century they were united by the help of a Tang general under the leadership of one of these chieftains and organized into a kingdom. The Nanzhao kings initially owed their strength to the help from the Tang in the early 8th century. Later on, it came under the suzerainty of the Tibetan Empire but then again allied with the Tang. But as time passed they consolidated their power and eventually declared themselves independent of the Tang Empire

¹¹⁵南詔 in Chinese

in 750 and defeated two campaigns by the Tang which also coincided with the Battle of Talas in the west against the Abbasid Caliphate in 751 in the same year. And later on, the catastrophe of the An Lushan rebellion fell on the Tang dynasty from which it never fully recovered until its fall as a result of yet another rebellion, the Huang Chao Rebellion. By the second half of the 8th century, the Tang dynasty was on the defensive and Nanzhao kings exploited the situation and invaded much of Sichuan and took the city of Chengdu at the height of their power in 829. But later on, the dynasty fell as a result of inner political struggles, three successive dynasties followed until the Dali Kingdom¹¹⁶ (937-1253) was established in 937 and this kingdom also survived for a long time until it was conquered by Qubilai Khan during his campaign against the Southern Song while he was still a prince and his brother Möngke was the Qaghan. Yet the Nanzhao kingdom and the succeeding Dali kingdom presented another challenge to the Chinese world order. They had an independent state and a writing system of their own much like the Chinese writing system made up of glyphs and syllabic symbols but developed independent of the Chinese characters. Militarily they even held against the Mongols for a long time and they were able to control areas out of their homeland such as Sichuan, parts of Burma, northern Thailand and Laos. Their Kingdom outlived both the Tibetan and the Tang Empires and managed to retain their independence from both.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁶大理國/Daliguo in Chinese

¹¹⁷ For a detailed history of the Nanzhao Kingdom see: Xilu Zhang, *南诏与白族文化 [Nanzhao Yu Baizu Wenhua: Nanzhao and Bai Ethnicity Culture]* (Beijing: Huaxia Chubanshe, 1992); Da Xiang, “南诏史略论 [Nanzhao Shilüe Lun: On A Brief History of Nanzhao],” *唐代长安与西域文明 [Tangdai Chang'an Yü Xiyu Wenming: Tang Era Chang'an and Western Regions Civilization]*, 1957; Kunsheng Li and Qingfu Qi, *南诏史话 [Nanzhao Shihua: History of Nanzhao]* (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1984); Xianshu Shao and Jun Shi, *南诏和大理国 [Nanzhao he Daliguo: Nanzhao and Dali Kingdom]* (Jilin: Jilin Jiaoyu Chubanshe, 1990); Linan Li, “南诏大理国新资料的综

Thus, when the Tang dynasty was founded, the only neighbor with a direct border that had an organized state structure was the Goguryeo Kingdom in Northern Korea and Manchuria. But by the beginning of the 8th century it was surrounded by organized states instead of tribes and semi-nomadic societies. These states coincided with a time that the Tang military power was descending. As a result, the Chinese idea that China is the central kingdom and every country under heaven should obey its will willingly and the rulers of the neighboring states should pay tribute to the Chinese ruler did not comply with the realities of the time, especially after the An Lushan rebellion and the sack of the Tang capital by the Tibetans in 763. Although they maintained the city for a very brief period of a few months, it was a great loss of prestige for the Tang. In addition to the Chinese inability to impose its will on its neighbors, its neighbors were now conducting diplomacy on their own accord as organized states rather than tribal chieftains trying to conduct trade on the Chinese soil. The Tibetans, the Türks first and then the Uighurs following them and the Arabs in the west were negotiating on their own without the sanction of a “son of heaven”. In the same manner, the Korean Silla Kingdom and Balhae kingdom and the Japanese had their own network of diplomacy and were exchanging embassies with each other more often than with the Tang court¹¹⁸. Thus, it can be argued that a multi-state system of diplomacy in which states were equals began to be shaped long before the Song dynasty. But the Tang still retained a superior title and at least nominally superior position in its dealings with its neighboring states, the only exception

合研究 [Nanzhao Daliguo Xin Cailiao de Zonghe Yangiu: A Comprehensive Research on the New Materials from Nanzhao Dali Kingdom” (Taipei University, Central Research Institute, Ethnic Studies Center, 1982); Charles Backus, *The Nan-Chao Kingdom and T'ang China's Southwestern Frontier* (Cambridge University Press, 1981).

¹¹⁸ Don J. Wyatt, *Battlefronts Real and Imagined: War, Border, and Identity in the Chinese Middle Period*, The New Middle Ages (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 2–4.

being the short-lived Tibetan Empire which managed to assert itself as an equal. But after the Huang Chao rebellion broke out in 874, the Empire collapsed totally even though the rebellion was suppressed. In 904, the last Tang Emperor was deposed by a military governor and the Tang dynasty officially ended.

After the last Tang Emperor was deposed by one of his own military governors and later poisoned in 907, China entered into an era of fragmentation. The Later Liang Dynasty¹¹⁹ (907-923) founded by the military governor Zhu Wen¹²⁰ had limited power to control all of China. He was only one among equals of the military governors who appeared as local strongmen during the latter half of the Tang dynasty. He also lacked the moral authority since he lacked legitimacy as a founder of a new dynasty in the Chinese world view he needed to conquer, but he simply overthrew a child and later poisoned him. As a result, the Tang polity dissolved into many pieces. The Later Liang dynasty did not possess enough power to impose its will to the south of the Yangtze River, so in the South nine separate kingdoms evolved who nominally pledged their loyalty to the succeeding dynasties in the North but were de facto independent states both in their internal and external affairs. Some of them even sent and received embassies to foreign countries such as Korea, Japan, Vietnam and Dali. None of the first four dynasties lived long in the North. The Later Liang dynasty lived for only fifteen years and then was replaced by the Later Tang¹²¹ (923-936). The Later Tang Dynasty was established by Li Cunxu¹²², son of a famous Shatuo Turk

¹¹⁹後梁/Hou Liang

¹²⁰朱溫/Zhu Wen (Born: 852-died:912; Reign: 907-912)

¹²¹後唐/Hou Tang

¹²²李存勗/ Li Cunxu (Born: 885-died:926; Reign: 912-926)

general Li Keyong¹²³ in the Shanxi¹²⁴ region. They had been under the Tang military service for a long time and they established their power base in Shanxi. Li Keyong was given the Tang imperial family name Li (李) after his services in quelling rebellions during the end of the Tang Dynasty. So, it was no coincidence or pure admiration that Li Cunxu named his dynasty as Later Tang. While he was one of the few Emperors of China to worship the Turkic gods officially and hold official ceremonies and altars for them, he was still trying to appeal to his Han Chinese subjects as well and both for his Han and Turkic or Mongolian or any other Non-Han subjects, descent from Tang, albeit through adoption was a more legitimate tool than usurpation through dethroning and poisoning a child emperor. But the Later Tang also did not live long. In 936, 13 years after its foundation in 923, it fell to yet another Shatuo Turk Shi Jing Tang¹²⁵ who with the help of the Khitans defeated the later Tang and established the Later Jin¹²⁶ (936-947). But only seven years after its foundation, in 943 it was invaded by its Khitan allies who from the very beginning saw the later Jin as their puppet. However, the Khitans realized that they would not be able to control China at this stage on their own, so they left the last of the Turkic dynasties, the Later Han¹²⁷ (947-979) as a puppet government to fill the vacuum. However, four years after its establishment in 947, one of the Chinese Generals within their ranks made a coup and established the last of the five dynasties in the north. Later Zhou

¹²³李克用 / Li Keyong (856-908)

¹²⁴ 陝西

¹²⁵石敬瑭/Shi Jing Tang (Reign: 936-942)

¹²⁶後晉/Hou Jin

¹²⁷後漢/ Hou Han

Dynasty¹²⁸ (951-960) was founded by the coup of General Guo Wei¹²⁹ in 951 but soon he died without a natural born heir and his adopted son Chai Rong¹³⁰ became the next and the last Emperor. However, he can be credited as the man who after long decades decided to reunite China instead of trying to only keep the status quo. Although he was successful in his campaigns towards the Southern Tang Kingdom which was the largest and strongest of the southern kingdoms, he died during campaigning against the Khitans and one of his generals made a coup and established the Song Dynasty.¹³¹ Thus the second phase of the unification began in China. First North was unified and Khitan attacks were repelled by successive dynasties, now the Song dynasty was also reconquering south. One by one the southern kingdoms fell against the Song dynasty, either through military conquest or mutual agreement as in the case of the Wuyue kingdom.¹³² The last of the ten kingdoms to defy the Song was the Later Han kingdom in the North which was a continuation of the Later Han Dynasty and the last Shatuo Turk stronghold in the Shanxi region. Though they were protected by the Khitans their capital fell to the Song before the Khitans could send them effective military

¹²⁸後周/ Hou Zhou

¹²⁹郭威/ Guo Wei (Reign: 951-954)

¹³⁰柴榮/ Chai Rong (Reign: 954-959)

¹³¹ For a detailed account of the Five Dynasties in English see: Naomi Standen, “The Five Dynasties,” in *The Cambridge History of China: The Sung Dynasty and Its Precursors, 907-1279*, vol. 4, 12 vols., Cambridge Histories (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009). Also, an English translation of the annals of the Five Dynasties periods is available in: Xiu, *Historical Records of the Five Dynasties*.

¹³² Hugh R. Clark, “The Southern Kingdoms between the T’ang and the Sung,” in *The Cambridge History of China: The Sung Dynasty and Its Precursors, 907-1279*, ed. Denis Twitchet, vol. 4, 12 vols., Cambridge Histories (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

aid in 979. However, this relatively short term of fifty years which is usually seen as a mere disruption of order in Chinese history had long term important consequences within the framework of interstate affairs in East Asia. By the second half of the Tang era as it was mentioned, the Tang dynasty had to face the humiliation of being equals with one of its neighbors, the Tibetan Empire. This was not a new thing in Chinese history however; the Xiongnu had already been treated as equals before, although for their inner consumption the Chinese scholars refrained from iterating it openly.¹³³ Also the diplomatic networks that were established around China within its neighbors which did not necessarily put China into the center was also nothing new since the tribal federations in the North and in the west of China and others in the South had long been in contact with their neighbors without the proxy of China for a long time. Especially Korea and Japan had long standing ties due to their natural geographical and cultural proximity. Also, the fragmentation of China was not a new event either; China had such times of chaos and fragmentation throughout its history.¹³⁴ But for the first time in its history China had fully organized states, not tribal confederations on its borders at a time that China was fragmented. And the Chinese states in the south and the consecutive five dynasties all established relationships with their neighboring states. The dynasties in the north tried to continue the façade of a superior China whenever they could but like the Song dynasty to follow them, in most cases they had to accept the realities of the time and give up the claim of superiority against their Khitan neighbors in the North-east. Also, the fact that

¹³³ Nicola Di Cosmo, *Ancient China and Its Enemies: The Rise of Nomadic Power in East Asian History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 168.

¹³⁴ Ozaki Takashi, "Japan and the Continent," in *The Cambridge History of Japan: Ancient Japan*, ed. John Whitney Hall, vol. 1, Cambridge Histories (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993).; Bruno Lewin, "Japanese and Korean: The Problems and History of a Linguistic Comparison," *Journal of Japanese Studies* 2, no. 2 (1976): 389–412.

there were Chinese states which engaged in a diplomacy putting all sides concerned on an equal basis undermined the Northern dynasties' claim to superiority towards their neighbors in the field of tributary relations. Korea was forced to accept the suzerainty of the Khitans. In fact, four of the five dynasties themselves had to accept the superiority of the Khitans in their diplomatic affairs. The Later Jin dynasty ceded sixteen prefectures in the North East which fell within the traditional Chinese homeland to the Khitans in return for their help and these sixteen prefectures would never be restored to China until the Yuan Dynasty. The loss of Korea as a tributary state and loss of land settled by Chinese people had constituted a legitimacy and prestige issues for the Song dynasty throughout its reign. Especially the sixteen prefectures became the reason of the loss of whole Northern Chinese homeland and Song exodus to the South of the Yangtze river in 1127. Then another attempt at recovering the Northern Chinese homeland started the wars with the Mongolians who had just conquered the Jin Empire and Song dynasty fell after a long series of struggles. Therefore, many of the roots of the problems surrounding the East Asian foreign relations lay in this relatively short fifty years which needs a closer examination.

The Northern Chinese plain saw five consecutive dynasties as had been mentioned above until the Song dynasty was established in 960. However, the southern kingdoms were more stable and in the south a new Chinese world based on equality of the sovereign states was beginning to take shape. These nine kingdoms still held onto some of the Chinese perceptions but mostly their movements in the interstate arena was as a sovereign state rather than a military governor who had autonomy as a result of his military strength. Their roots lay in the military governorships but after the Tang collapsed they truly became sovereign states. All nine kingdoms in ceremony and diplomacy began to act as kingdoms, not provinces of a Chinese empire. As a result, the relations between these nine kingdoms and the ever-changing northern regimes also took the shape

of diplomacy rather than internal affairs of a state. They applied the precedents of the Tang and previous eras in their ceremonial approach for sending and accepting embassies. Some of these kingdoms like Wuyue or Southern Tang who even had imperial ambitions sent emissaries to Korea, Japan, the Khitan Liao Empire and Vietnam.¹³⁵ These kingdoms and their interstate relations in a way set the example also for the non-Chinese states in East Asia such as Korea, Japan, Vietnam and Dali. And this pattern of equality among states did not change to a great extent even after the Song dynasty united China and the East Asian states continued to exercise diplomacy based on equality of sovereign states in the field of interstate relations. This in a way helps to explain the Japanese, Vietnamese, Korean or Dali kingdom's unwillingness to accept Mongolian superiority in their mutual relations.

One of the most important and longest living of the ten kingdoms was the Wuyue Kingdom (907-978) which centered around the modern-day Zhejiang province, some parts of Jiangsu and at the height of its power Northern parts of Fujian that it absorbed from the Min Kingdom. The name of the Wuyue kingdom came from the combination of Wu (吳) which was the name of a kingdom in the Spring and Autumn period (771 BCE-476 BCE) and Yue(越) another kingdom from the same period. Qian Liu¹³⁶(907-932), the founder of the kingdom was given the title of the Prince of Yue by the Tang emperor in 902 in return for his military services and in 904 he was also awarded the title of the Prince of Yue. When the Tang dynasty fell and the later Liang dynasty was declared in 907 in the North, he declared himself the king of Wuyue kingdom and thus the hegemony of the Qian family began in this region. Their most dangerous neighbor was the Wu

¹³⁵ Clark, "The Southern Kingdoms between the T'ang and the Sung."

¹³⁶ 錢鏐/Qian Liu

kingdom which was also named after the Wu kingdom and on whose territory, the Wuyue kingdom also laid claim. The claimants were aware of the fact that they were not in reality the descendants of these ancient kingdoms, yet clinging to the legitimacy of these ancient precedents was more convenient than the source of a legitimacy obtained from a northern dynasty none of which did not last more than two decades. In fact, the Wuyue leaders promoted not only political independence but also cultural and even linguistic independence in their kingdom. The Wu dialect of Chinese which contains Shanghainese began to take shape during this period. Buddhism, architecture and other cultural pursuits were patronized by the Wuyue kings. It was one of the richest kingdoms and due to its position, it was one of the most diplomatically active kingdom of this era. The Wuyue kings sent embassies especially to Japan and Korea and to the Liao court as possible allies. At the center of the Wuyue efforts at establishing relations with these “foreign states” was economic ties and Buddhism. The Wuyue kings actively supported Buddhism and sent emissaries to Japan and Korea to obtain some of the Buddhist sutras that were lost due to the ravages of war at the end of the Tang. Their relations with the Korean and Japanese courts were based on equality and they were using the title of king (王 : wang) instead of a military governor, which they were just a decade ago. The Wuyue kings also established relations with the other Chinese kingdoms in the South. They were allies with the Min (閩) Kingdom (909-945) against the ever-aggressive Wu (吳) Kingdom (907-937) first and then the Southern Tang (南唐) which replaced it with a coup. In the West and North, it was surrounded by the Southern Tang and in the South, it neighbored another maritime kingdom, the Min. Later on, the Min Kingdom was absorbed by the Southern Tang but despite military pressure from its giant neighbor the Wuyue kingdom outlived the Southern Tang and was the last kingdom to be incorporated into the Song Empire. Diplomacy played an

important role in the Wuyue kingdom's survival, maybe more than the military might.¹³⁷ A sort of localism had been in place in China beginning from the decline of the Tang and some of the Southern kingdoms were very successful in getting this local support in times of emergency. The Wuyue, the Min and the Southern Han kingdom (Located approximately in modern day Guangdong) were prominent examples of this. These three areas on which these kingdoms were founded developed their distinct cultures as well as their distinct colloquial languages starting from the late Tang times and the Five Dynasties era accelerated this process. The Min and Southern Han kingdoms were established on the former Yue (Viet) tribal areas. The Han Chinese that immigrated south and the Yue people here made a mixture of culture and ethnicity in these regions. Thus, the local languages of Minnanese spoken in Fujian, Taiwan, Singapore and other overseas Chinese communities of South East Asia and Cantonese spoken in Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macau still bear resemblances to the Vietnamese language today. In a way, the situation was like Europe after the collapse of the Roman empire. The peoples living in these areas mixed together and during the five dynasties era could be said to set on the road of becoming independent states, like Korea and Vietnam with their own language and culture though still within the Chinese sphere, had the Song dynasty not conquered them. But at that stage there was a historical consciousness rather than a national or an ethnic consciousness. The leaders of most of these states were ex-military commanders not locals, but they were trying to appease the local people through their conscious choices of names, titles and support for the development of the local culture. The character to describe the Min kingdom was for instance a derogatory

¹³⁷ Edmund H. Worthy, "Diplomacy for Survival: Domestic and Foreign Relations of Wuyüeh, 907-978," in *China among Equals: The Middle Kingdom and Its Neighbors, 10th-14th Centuries*, ed. Moris Rossabi (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 17-47.

character used to describe the Viet originated from “southern barbarians” occupying the area of modern day Fujian and the eastern part of modern day Guangdong province. Wuyue's Yue was also used to describe these southern Barbarians. But by going back to the legitimacy of these ancient kingdoms founded or populated¹³⁸ by “barbarians”, the ruling houses of these kingdoms were freeing themselves of the burden of owing the Northern rulers for their legitimacy in addition to obtaining a degree of local support. There was another reason lying in the Huang Chao rebellion and other rebellions of the Late Tang period for the Southern kingdoms' development for becoming independent states. The Tang dynasty was unable to protect these economically rich and productive areas and the locals had to protect themselves. As Clark explains if they had not put their allegiance in some other dynasty, it was because there was no other dynasty than Tang¹³⁹ unlike we will see in the case of Song where many Chinese would prefer a “barbarian” dynasty that could protect them to a Chinese one. Thus, the Southern provinces evolved into separate kingdoms. It would not be quite possible for the ruling houses of these kingdoms to hold into power without the local support. But it would be wrong to exaggerate the influence of the non-Chinese culture upon these kingdoms. The Chinese culture was prevalent, especially after the arrival of the elite from the north who immigrated to avoid the wars and destruction in the North beginning from the An Lushan rebellion

¹³⁸ The Yue kingdom in modern day Jiangsu might well have been ruled by an ethnically Chinese family, similar polities also existed in Manchuria and Korea for a long time and the Nanyue kingdom which gave its name to modern day Vietnam with its modern Yuenan version was also established in Northern half of modern Vietnam by a family of Chinese descent although it was populated by the Viet or Yue peoples. Ethnicity of the population and the ruling house might not necessarily be the same in the case of Ancient East Asia.

¹³⁹ Clark, “The Southern Kingdoms between the T'ang and the Sung,” 139–40.

onwards¹⁴⁰. The Northern Han kingdom in the North China plain was the only kingdom of these ten to be in the North and it owed its long existence more to diplomacy than to its military might. It was the continuation of the Later Han dynasty established by the Shatuo Turks and they retained relations with the Khitan Liao dynasty, the Tangut Xi Xia dynasty and the other Dynasties either of Shatuo Turkic or Chinese in the Northern China plain until its annexation by the Song dynasty. Thus, the relations of Wuyue with Japan, Korea, and Liao, the relations of the Min kingdom as a maritime trade kingdom especially with Southeast Asia and the North, and the relations of Southern Han with Vietnam and South-East Asia were important in shaping the East and South East Asian conception of diplomacy from a Sino-centric to egalitarian basis.

The Wuyue was chronologically first and the last kingdom to be founded and absorbed by the Song. As mentioned above it had a strong cultural and economic basis in its heartland of the Jiangsu and Zhejiang provinces. It was militarily not the strongest state. The founder of the Wuyue Kingdom Qian Liu was a local bandit during the Huang Chao Rebellion (881-884). He joined the local militia to protect the area and he consolidated his power throughout time. When the Tang dynasty fell and the Later Liang was established, he simply declared himself the King of Wuyue Kingdom. Although he was an ex-bandit, due to the lack of protection from the Tang during its last phases, he seemed to be a better option for the local people than a figurehead Liang Emperor in the North. So, he became the ruler of a kingdom that he carved out through his military strength without much resistance from either the local populace or the last remnants of the Tang administration in the region who were also in disarray and confusion. Afterwards, the Wuyue Kingdom did not see any coups which were very frequent in the Northern dynasties and other Southern Kingdoms of the age and was

¹⁴⁰ *ibid.* pp.134-5

administered by the Qian family until its annexation by the Song without a fight. In fact, the fact that Qian Liu was coming from a poor village family and spent his youth as a bandit¹⁴¹ makes it doubtful that he himself decided on many of the issues concerning the state. He should have received advice and help from the remainders of the Tang bureaucracy and elite in the region. Without their help, it would be impossible for any of the Southern kingdoms established by bandit leaders to administer their realms with banditry and use of force alone. In many of the kingdoms the bandits and other outcasts created the core of the new ruling elite. Their following was mostly military men rather than civil servants. But within a short time, they managed to attract the intellectual elite both from their own localities and from the Northern elite who were now immigrating to the stability and security of the rich southern lands which were previously seen as exile places. As a result of this there was a continuity of Tang ideology about legitimacy. In fact, although all the Southern Kingdoms initially recognized the later Liang dynasty they did not change the era name in their use of the calendar and stick to the Tang. This was a symbolical yet an important protest. Later on, the Southern Tang as the name suggests would claim the Tang mandate and the relations in the south within the kingdoms would be shaped around the Southern Tang's actions to impose its imperial claim. Not surprisingly, Southern Tang along with Wuyue was one of the two best governed states thanks to the migration of elites as well as their own well developed educational systems. The continuation of the Chinese order and ideas during such times perhaps can be best explained by the enduring scholarly culture. While the Roman system and ideas collapsed in the West after the fall of the Western Roman Empire China was more resilient in terms of continuity of ideas and institutions.

¹⁴¹ Xiu, *Historical Records of the Five Dynasties*, 645; Xiu, *新五代史 [Xin Wudaishi: The New History of the Five Dynasties]*.

One of the initial problems for these states was legitimacy and the diplomatic arena was the most important area where states sought their legitimacy. All the Southern states recognized the Northern dynasties at least nominally at certain times and at certain times defied them and even declared them as bandits and rebels. Except for the Southern Tang, none of the kingdoms in the south did not have a serious imperial claim. The Southern Han kingdom in Guangdong also declared an imperial title and calendar but not being able to even subdue the Annam area in modern North Vietnam and facing military defeats they were realistic enough not to pursue an aggressive stance towards their neighbors. The initial concern of the kingdoms in the south was to prevent war within their borders as well as to legitimize their rule on the diplomatic arena through their recognition of each other. Furthermore, trade was an important source of income for these states, especially the Min Kingdom in Fujian, Wuyue Kingdom to its North in Jiangsu and the Southern Han to its East, the three coastal kingdoms were the richest yet the most dependent kingdoms on trade. They were trading both with the Dynasties and kingdoms to their North, that is the Chinese Dynasties in North China and the Khitan Liao Dynasty in Manchuria and Mongolia, Goryeo kingdom in Korea, Japan and also with the Southern seas comprising the various South East Asian kingdoms as well as Indian, Arabic and other seafarer merchants. When we look at the relations between these three kingdoms it can be seen that they were nearly always cordial and cemented with marriage alliances. As an example, when the relations between the Wu Kingdom (later Southern Tang) and Wuyue got worse, the Min King did not hesitate to kill the Wu embassy, since although smaller and militarily weaker Wuyue was more important to the survival of the Min kingdom¹⁴². These kingdoms treated and

¹⁴² Hanguo Pan, 隋唐五代史纲 [*Sui Tang Wudai Shiwang: An Outline of History of the Sui, Tang and Five Dynasties*] (Beijing: 人民出版社: Renmin Chubanshe, 1979).

recognized each other as equals and also in their dealings with other foreign states outside the Chinese realm. They established a diplomacy that was based on equality of the parties involved rather than a set hierarchy. After the Han and Tang dynasties, there was a multi-state system evolving in East Asia. Even though the Khitan Liao Dynasty was militarily stronger than all of its neighbors, it still lacked the rhetoric and self-confidence to universal claims that the Tang had in East Asia. The relations between the Chinese states and other East Asian states were mainly based on three topics. The first and the most important for the southern states was, as mentioned above, trade. They were instrumental in carrying necessities as well as luxuries from South to North and North to South. Although their area was also agriculturally productive, the income from silk, tea, spices and other luxury commodities was more essential for these states. The other topic that was frequently a common interest was Buddhism. Many monks came to and from Japan and Korea and even the Mongols used Buddhism as a means of diplomacy since they knew that the Buddhist monks were revered by the Japanese and had a better chance of success in their diplomatic affairs. The Wuyue kings sought for Sutras and other relics in Japan and Korea and their emissaries were respectfully received. The Min kingdom in Fujian had been trading with South East Asia and some of the initial Chinese settlements in South-East Asia began during this era from the Fujian region and Guangdong region. Even today the majority of overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia mainly speak the Minnanese and Cantonese in their daily life as a result of this historical trend to migrate to South East Asia in pursuit of trade and adventure from the Fujian and Guangdong regions. And while they were trading, Buddhism was also a matter of exchange in their relations, although Mahayana Buddhism was prevalent in China, in Fujian and Guangdong even today some forms of local Buddhist beliefs and rituals closely related to the Southeastern forms exist. The third subject was possible political alliances with the neighboring states. Southern Tang and Wuyue tried to establish an alliance with the Khitans as well as the Koreans and Japanese

in many futile events against the Northern regimes but Southern Tang was never strong enough to campaign against or oust the Northern dynasties that fell within or to the Khitan pressure. The other kingdoms on the other hand were trying to keep the equilibrium without fight and the main concern of their diplomatic efforts on the political scene was to preserve peace and avoid invasion the tiny principality of Jingnan surrounded by strong states on all sides was a good example of this diplomacy to their North they had the Northern China plain, to their South the aggressive Chu (楚) Kingdom (927–951), to their West the Shu (蜀) Kingdom (907-965) of Sichuan and to their East the Southern Tang. In the end, none of them did not invade the Jingnan (荆南) State (924-960) despite its military weakness, recognizing its mutually beneficial role as a buffer state until the Song reunification of China. However, these Southern Chinese kingdoms easily fell in the face of a strong Northern Dynasty and internal strife within the monarchical houses of these kingdoms. A detailed account of the intrigues and coups that occurred from the 950s onwards would fill many pages and yet repeat similar patterns of fratricide or patricide for gaining the throne or coups by the courtiers. As a result, when the consequent Northern dynasties slowly but determinately stabilized the North and the Zhao family asserted their power based on the institutions founded by the previous five dynasties, the Southern kingdoms were in a position of disunity. Maybe as a united front they could have been a more formidable enemy with their resources and manpower, as it would be proven by the Southern Song when they were thrown out the Northern China plain by the Jin. Song Dynasty resisted in the area South of Yangtze to the Jin and the Mongols very resiliently for nearly two centuries despite the military superiority of the enemies, but the Southern kingdoms were divided both within themselves and inside their own courts. As a result the Song dynasty reunited China by 960, by incorporating the Southern kingdoms either through conquest

or with diplomacy as in the case of Wuyue. But the Southern kingdoms despite their short spans of reign had a longer lasting effect on the following Song dynasty in terms of its intellectual elite that came from the South and dominated the court politics and the economic arena where the Song court increasingly turned to Southern areas as an economic base and the fiscal systems based on the systems that were established by these Southern kingdoms. Also on the diplomatic arena their long-lasting effect was the continuation of the multi-state system both by the Song dynasty which was militarily or politically not strong enough to impose its will on its neighbors. In fact, the Khitans and later the Jurchens were more successful in creating their own orbits of tributary satellites and a new realm of their own in the center of which their dynasties, not the Chinese Song dynasty, stood.

CHAPTER III

THE SONG DYNASTY

The Song (宋) Dynasty has been one of the longest enduring and culturally and economically most developed dynasties in Chinese history. On the other hand, it is one of the most culturally and politically introverted and exclusive dynasties in Chinese history. The Song dynasty is marked by economic growth, the widespread use of paper money, printing and gunpowder which were previous inventions but were developed further during the Song and more importantly the rise of the Neo-Confucian schools. However, despite all the cultural and economic as well as scientific developments, the Song Dynasty could not reach the political power or influence of the previous Tang Dynasty, and was forced to accept a status of a regional power rather than the central power of East Asia as a result of the military defeats to its northern neighbors who established dynasties of their own and now had more stable political structures thanks to the adaptation of Chinese and balhae style bureaucracies as well as the local developments of their own.

In fact, the rise of the Neo-Confucian school was in a way a protest against the new status quo in East Asia in which the Song dynasty became the periphery rather than the center and this posed a danger to the inner stability of the Song dynasty itself putting the legitimacy of the Song royal house in question since as the son of heaven and having received the mandate of heaven, he was supposed to be the supreme leader and not accept becoming vassal or inferior in position, in fact not even equals, with a northern “barbarian”. This chapter examines the relations of the Song dynasty with its neighbors and the role legitimacy, clashing concepts of sovereignty and political hierarchy played from the second half of the 10th century until the Mongol conquest and the foundation of the Yuan

Dynasty by Qubilay Qaghan during the late 13th century. Although the focus of this study is the nomadic dynasties which were founded on the northern borders of the Song dynasty, it is vital to understand the Song policy and point of view as their main adversary and partner in the political arena during this period.

3.1. The Northern Song (960-1126)

The Song Dynasty was established by Zhao Kuangyin in 960 after ousting the last of the five dynasties in the Northern China plain by a coup, simply continued many of the policies of these Northern dynasties which established enduring institutions to reunite the country again. The Later Zhou (951-960) was in fact, the architect of the reunification but when the strong Chai Rong got ill during a successful campaign to counterattack the Khitan-Northern Han attack in 959 and to reclaim the lost sixteen prefectures, and one month later he died in his capital Kaifeng and left the throne to his five-year-old son. His son Chai Zongxun was dethroned the same year by his generals who anticipated that a strong leadership was needed at a time of war and unification. Zhao Kuangyin upon the support of generals and the main army ascended the throne and founded the Song Dynasty that was to last three centuries. He consolidated the power in the North, further strengthened the centralized government and army and in the end when he reunified the country, he cleverly eliminated the strong generals who could possibly be new rivals to oust him or his successors from the throne and reestablish a new dynasty and restart the same vicious cycle of inner strife of the five dynasties era. Since bloodshed of assassinating or using force against the generals who supported him through the hardest times would alienate the military, he used a cleverer tactic of awarding them with lucrative civil posts outside the capital. Thus, he both rewarded his generals richly and eliminated

possible rivals in the future. *Songshi* relates this event to a feast where he asked his generals whether a possible coup against him was possible and the generals all disagreed the next day they all peacefully resigned their military posts as the *Songshi* suggests:

“The emperor said, 'The life of man is short. Happiness is to have the wealth and means to enjoy life, and then to be able to leave the same prosperity to one's descendents. If you, my officers, will renounce your military authority, retire to the provinces, and choose there the best lands and the most delightful dwelling-places, there to pass the rest of your lives in pleasure and peace...would this not be better than to live a life of peril and uncertainty? So that no shadow of suspicion shall remain between prince and ministers, we will ally our families with marriages, and thus, ruler and subject linked in friendship and amity, we will enjoy tranquility'...The following day, the army commanders all offered their resignations, reporting (imaginary) maladies, and withdrew to the country districts, where the emperor, giving them splendid gifts, appointed them to high official positions.”¹⁴³

Thus, the military threat to the dynasty from within was eliminated peacefully and the Song dynasty did not face any major threat of a military coup or mutiny to threaten its own existence throughout its whole reign unlike the Tang. The unification of South was relatively easy and the main threat was in the North rather than the South. In fact, the Song was simply following the historical trend of the Chinese dynasties to expand southwards and to hold the enemy on the North and West.¹⁴⁴ After the conquest of the Southern kingdoms, the Song dynasty turned its eyes on the Northern Han kingdom of the Shatuo Turks in

¹⁴³ John Needham and L. Wang, *Science and Civilisation in China: Introductory Orientations*, vol. 1 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1954), 132.

¹⁴⁴ Gari Ledyard, “Yin and Yang in the China-Manchuria-Korea Triangle,” in *China among Equals: The Middle Kingdom and Its Neighbors, 10th-14th Centuries*, ed. Morris Rossabi (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983).

Shanxi and the sixteen prefectures ceded to the Khitans by one of the preceding dynasties, the Later Jin. These two areas, although economically not so significant constituted two major problems for the Song. The first problem they posed was of a military nature. The sixteen prefectures were the gates to and from China proper to Manchuria. They were strategically very important in defending the Northern China plain from an invasion coming from the North East. The Northern Han kingdom was also like a dagger towards the heart of the Chinese homeland and their alliance with the Khitans was a menace for the long-term stability of the new Song dynasty. Their allied attack to the Later Zhou when the Later Zhou's last able Emperor Chai Rong was campaigning against the Southern Tang in the South was a proof of how dangerous it was to have two enemies within the threshold of the empire. The second threat that the Later Han and the Khitan Liao dynasty and later the Xi Xia of the Tanguts was of a political nature. All these three "Empires" had lands on which there were settled Chinese, and all these three regimes had imperial aspirations. Thus, if these regimes were successful in attracting the Han Chinese within their own domains why should they not be successful in attracting any disappointed Song subject as a legitimate alternative to the Song regime? Another issue that made the conquest of these areas was that if the Song rulers were to continue their legitimacy in the eyes of their subjects they would have to unite the whole of the Chinese homeland at least, not the majority of it. The Confucian ideology that became prevalent by now within the state ideology clearly dictated that the Chinese could not be subjugated to the "barbarians" and by leaving Chinese people under the Khitan, Shatuo and Tangut rule, the Song rulers were not fulfilling their obligation as the holders of the mandate of heaven which meant that that mandate could be passed to any other contender strong enough to reunify China and "all under heaven". The Song claim that the Liao, Later Han and the Xi Xia dynasties were not "Chinese" would also not be so effective since there were many precedents of Non-Han peoples founding dynasties such as the Wei dynasty of the Tuoba, or

Tabgach as they were called in old Turkic¹⁴⁵. In fact, the three of the Five dynasties were Shatuo Turks just some decades ago and the Sui and Tang imperial houses themselves had close relationship with the Türks and other ethnically Non-Han northern border peoples. Therefore, the Song dynasty's rulers and intellectuals had a certain degree of obsession about the legitimacy of the house of Zhao, especially in the face of military incompetence in first reconquering the sixteen prefectures and then in defending the Northern China plain, the original homeland of the Chinese civilization. The later Han kingdom did not prove to be a difficult target though. The campaign against the Later Han Kingdom was executed under the personal command of the Song Taizong (Zhao Kuangyin, the founder of the dynasty, was posthumously renamed as Song Taizong) who had just finished the conquest of the South. The capital of Northern Han Taiyuan fell in 978 and the end of the Northern Han had to be recognized also by the Liao who could not effectively help its ally. But the sixteen prefectures still remained under the Liao rule and in fact modern day Beijing was selected as the Southern capital of the Liao (Yingzhou). The Song attempts to reconquering this territory began immediately after annexing the Northern Han kingdom. Song Taizong was defeated soundly on his way to the sixteen prefectures by the Khitan forces and his generals even planned a coup to replace him with another Zhao.¹⁴⁶ The struggle that began in 979 continued until the signing of the Chanyuan treaty without any of the party being able to take the upper hand in 1005. The Chanyuan treaty was to be a cornerstone in the relations of the Song dynasty until its exodus

¹⁴⁵ The Tuoba clan later on changed their name to Yuan (元) which was also the chosen character by Qubilai to name his dynasty in China. It is possible to assume that there is an intentional choice of the name of a preceding non-Han dynasty for choosing the name Yuan.

¹⁴⁶ Peter Lorge, "The Great Ditch of China and the Song-Liao Border," in *Battlefronts Real and Imagined: War, Border, and Identity in the Chinese Middle Period*, ed. Don J. Wyatt, The New Middle Ages (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 66–68.

to the South after the Jin invasion. The treaty decreed that the Song and the Liao dynasties were to be equals as members of a fictive family. The Song was to be the Southern Dynasty while the Liao was to be the Northern Dynasty. The Song was to pay annual tribute to the Liao; the borders were to be drawn and the parties were not to try changing these borders by force. Also, the border trade was to be established and the parties were not to harbor the political refugees or criminals from the other side. As mentioned before, the Tang court also signed a similar treaty which treated the Tibetan Emperor and the Tang Emperor as equals and recognized the existence of a second empire. But this treaty went further recognizing that the Liao Emperor also had the mandate of heaven and there were two sons of heavens. Also, in the fictive family relationship, the Liao Emperor was the elder side on a superior position. Paying tribute was not the first of its kind and the treaty was drafted in two versions for each side's inner consumption. The Liao version clearly mentions tribute while the Song version considers this as a payment to help the Liao side economically. There are other face-saving alterations for the Song version but the treaty clearly put the Song on an equal basis with the Liao.¹⁴⁷ Later on this treaty set the example for the Song relations with the Xia and Jin dynasties. Both dynasties also demanded the recognition of their equality and also extracted tribute from the Song court in the form of silver, silk and tea. After the Chanyuan treaty was signed, the relations between the Liao and Song were normalized, the treaty demanded that they regularly exchange embassies on certain occasions in addition to the tribute missions. The Song court was careful to pick its best men for these missions. The Liao court was still rather less developed in terms of institutions and rituals compared to the Song but they

¹⁴⁷ Tianxiang Lin, “宋辽 ‘澶渊之盟’- 古代少数民族与汉族长期和好的范例 [Song Liao Chanyuanzhi Meng- Gudai Shaoshu Minzu Yu Hanzu Changqi Hehao De Fanli: The Song-Liao Treaty of Chanyuan- the Premodern Treaties Relations between the Minorities and the Han Chinese],” *平原大学学报 [Journal of Pingyuan University]*, no. 4 (2001): 20–21.

still had Chinese advisers and a sinified native intellectual class so much so that the Song court had to censor some of the books lest the Liao intellectuals get hold of them and be offended by the pejorative terms used to describe the Khitans¹⁴⁸. Of course, the level of intellectual life was still low compared to the Song in terms of assimilating the Chinese ideas and World view, but it would be wrong to imagine the Khitan court as a horde on horseback and living in tents. In fact, the Khitans even had their own writing systems as has been noted before.

Similarly, the Tanguts of the Xi Xia dynasty also had a writing system of their own, were patronizing Buddhism and arts, had extensive relations not only with China but also with Tibet, and Central Asia. They were on the Ordos region containing some of the ex-Tang prefectures and a portion of their population was also Chinese. The Song dynasty attacked the Xi Xia in order to take back the Ordos region that belonged to the Tang dynasty, but a series of unending wars yielded no satisfactory results for each side. In the year 1038 the Tangut ruler Li Yuanhao also declared himself the Emperor of China and sent emissaries to the Song court to be recognized as the Son of Heaven and an equal of the Song Emperor. He was claiming to be descended from the Tuoba or Tabgach rulers of the Wei dynasty, he also was the ruler who ordered the creation of the Tangut script which continued to be used long after the collapse of the Xi Xia dynasty. He also built an altar for heaven worship and used the Tangut title of Son of Blue heaven¹⁴⁹. The Tanguts were actually a mixed group of Tibetans, Turks, Mongols,

¹⁴⁸ Even Sima Qian in his famous historical work “The Mirror for the Wise Ruler” had to alter the offending words and comments towards the Khitans since the Liao elite surely followed up the intellectual debates and writing in the Song.

¹⁴⁹ Micheal McGrath and Don J. Wyatt, “Frustrated Empires: The Song-Tangut Xia War of 1038–1044,” in *Battlefronts Real and Imagined: War, Border, and Identity in the Chinese Middle Period*, The New Middle Ages (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 157.

Chinese and other ethnicities settled in the Ordos region during the troubled times of the late Tang. After the Tang dynasty collapsed and China fell into chaos, the Tangut rulers consolidated their power in the region and became increasingly independent. Now that the Khitans could claim equality with the Chinese Emperor the Tangut rulers felt no less fitting. Although the Chinese did not accept this, the Xi Xia rulers, at least for inner consumption, continued their imperial claim. The peace between the Xi Xia and Song was less stable and both sides continued to fight with each other until the Song was exiled from the North altogether by the Jürchens in the 12th century. In many of the cases the Song was the side reverting to war. Contrary to the general belief in popular historiography that the Song was the victim of attacks from foreign “barbarians” trying to defend its homeland, the Song did not hesitate to use force and invade whenever it saw the opportunity. During the Xi Xia wars, they invaded portions of the Tibetan settled territory marking their westernmost border with the Xi Xia in Xining and Haidong in the Qinghai corridor. These new territories were incorporated into the regular Song administration as prefectures.¹⁵⁰ It is true that these territories taken from the Tibetan tribes and the ordos region were under Tang rule but these areas were loosely controlled by the Tang and mostly through the proxy of the autonomous rulers who became independent after the collapse of the Tang. Setting up prefectures was the Song approach. Another front that the Song opened was in the South. Northern part of Vietnam had been under Chinese rule approximately for a millennium but as mentioned before, the Ly dynasty of Vietnam also became independent and even expelled to Chinese invasion forces sent by the Southern Han. After a series of events in Northern Vietnam, the Ly dynasty was established as an independent political entity. After the Song forces incorporated the Southern Han, an uneasy peace between the two states

¹⁵⁰ McGrath and Wyatt, “Frustrated Empires: The Song-Tangut Xia War of 1038–1044.”

continued. In 981 a decisive battle at Bach Dang river determined the independence of the newly founded Ly dynasty after they soundly defeated the Song invasion forces and until the eleventh century, the relations remained tense but cordial. In 1050s there were a series of tribal uprisings as well as Chinese settlements along the border. The Ly dynasty for a while did not intervene in the Chinese actions and settlements within its Northern borders but the tension was rising as the Chinese also sought an alliance with the kingdom of Champa in South Vietnam apparently against the Dai Viet kingdom of the North. A series of diplomatic maneuvers by the Ly court and raising of new militia forces on its borders ended in a superiority of the Dai Viet on both fronts and in 1075 the Dai Viet attack carried the war to the Song territory, they quickly gained some prefectures and cities and beheaded the Governor of the Guangnan circuit and took thousands of prisoners. But the Song reply of over 100000 soldiers drove them back to their soil. Once the Song army crossed the Dai Viet border they came close to the Dai Viet capital Thang Long and were stopped at the Nhu Nguyet river. The war came to a stalemate by Song forces losing many casualties especially to the tropical climate and diseases and the Vietnamese side unable to push them back. In 1084 both sides agreed on a peace settlement, both sides gave back the lands that they took as well as the return of the Chinese prisoners by the Vietnamese. The border between the two countries was fixed. Afterwards no large military action occurred between the two countries and the Vietnamese side sent embassies and tribute to the Song court whenever it saw it fit to its own advantage.¹⁵¹ Also many Song loyalists sought refuge in Vietnam later when the Song was being conquered by the Mongols. In fact, some of the influential figures

¹⁵¹ James A. Anderson, "Treacherous Factions: Shifting Frontier Alliances in the Breakdown of Sino-Vietnamese Relations on the Eve of the 1075 Border War," in *Battlefronts Real and Imagined: War, Border, and Identity in the Chinese Middle Period, The New Middle Ages* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

offered to seek refuge in Vietnam for the government in exile of the Song in their desperate run from the Mongols. But as this incident suggests, the Song was not merely a peace-loving dynasty in pursuit of cultural achievements and resorted in diplomacy to solve its problems with its neighbors as the classical historiography suggests. Like any other dynasty, the Song also used military means whenever it felt strong enough to gain new territories. In fact, as will be seen in the following pages, it was mostly the Song side who broke the long running alliances and attacked its Northern neighbors whenever the Northern dynasty fell victim to an internal strife or external invasion.

Korea had been one of the oldest and most important diplomatic actors in the Chinese politics. But the fall of the Tang dynasty also saw the fall of the Silla¹⁵² Kingdom (BCE 57-CE 935) and Korea also entered into a short internal strife until its reunification by the Goryeo¹⁵³ Kingdom □ 936-1392 □ in 936 and the kingdom was at a good and stable position until it was invaded by the Liao dynasty and was forced to send its tribute missions to the Liao instead of the Song Dynasty in 993. This was a serious blow for the Song since Korea had been traditionally a Chinese ally since the Silla unification for centuries and the Korean kingdoms had been important in their tributes and recognition of the Chinese dynasties since their regular missions enhanced the Chinese monarch's prestige inside and outside. Secondly, the Liao managed to gain a tributary satellite state which was a sedentary state like the Chinese dynasties. The Liao had already established a system of tributary states at the center of which it stood. But these relations were almost always with nomadic or semi-nomadic peoples such as the Mongols, the Jürchens and other tribal federations, and after the Later

¹⁵²실라 / 新羅

¹⁵³고려 / 高麗

Han dynasty fell, only Xi Xia and the Uighurs were left as semi-sedentary states with a clear organization. But their allegiance was bleak and did not bring as much prestige as that brought by the vassalage of a Korean king. Although the Khitans wrestled the Koreans as allies and vassals by use of sheer force, it was an important turning point in the East Asian diplomatic arena nonetheless. Later the Jürchens and the Mongols also turned to invade Korea for the same reason of gaining its vassalage for prestige rather than economic gains brought by tribute. But in Korea where the Confucian cultural patterns in politics took deep root, acceptance of a Non-Chinese emperor and sending tribute to these Manchurian or Mongolian based neighbors was more humiliating than for the Chinese intellectuals living under the rule and in service of these new alien regimes since they were used to the Non-Chinese peoples for centuries since Tang times. One of the reasons for the Goryeo to have difficulty in accepting first Liao, but later more importantly, the Jürchen suzerainty lay in the very foundation of the Goryeo state. The Goryeo state named itself after the Goguryeo¹⁵⁴ Kingdom (BCE 57- CE 668) of the Ancient Three Kingdoms (BCE 57- CE 668) which ruled the Northern and central parts of Korean Peninsula as well as still larger lands in Manchuria. Thus, one of the first intellectual debates on foreign policy after the foundation of the kingdom was rather to cling to the Goguryeo legacy and pursue an expansionist policy towards Manchuria or to cling more to the Silla legacy and to adhere to the Korean Peninsula. When the Balhae¹⁵⁵ Kingdom (698-926) founded by the remnants of the fallen Goguryeo was invaded by the Khitans, the Goryeo kings accepted the immigrants as fellow countrymen. The kingdom also expanded further North up to the today's North Korean Chinese border of the

¹⁵⁴고구려/高句麗

¹⁵⁵발해 /渤海)

Yalu river through various campaigns and agreements with the Liao in return for allegiance and breaking away from the Chinese system. The Jürchens were also paying tribute to the Korean kings for generations along with other tribes on the border. In a way, there was a small Chinese modeled universe between Korea and the Manchuria based tribes. But this changed with the Liao dynasty taking Manchuria under its firm control from its base in Eastern Mongolia. From the Liao-Goryeo alliance onwards, which was forced on the Korean side, the Song side was mostly cordial but cold towards the Goryeo embassies and in most cases perceived them as spies. In fact, in many cases the Chinese court officials suggested a united attack by the Song and Goryeo against first the Liao and then the Jin and lastly against the Mongols, but the only time that the Koreans decided to move their army was in defense of the Mongolian Yuan dynasty when it was ousted from China by the rebels who would establish the Ming dynasty.¹⁵⁶ And after the whole of China was conquered and reunited by the Mongols, a deed that the Song could not accomplish, the Koreans had to accept this fact and become one of the most loyal vassals of the Mongols. But until then, during the Song, it was an undesirable alliance for the Goryeo dynasty with first the Liao and then the Jin dynasties and they tried to break with it whenever possible.

However, the Chanyuan treaty remained as the determining factor in the Song diplomacy and foreign policy and the inner politics that resulted from the foreign policy and the legitimacy concerns. The Chanyuan treaty's equality or rather a slight Liao supremacy on the ritual and protocol could be though hardly accepted by the realist politicians of the Song and also the loss of the sixteen prefectures to the Liao and other areas formerly under Tang control with heavy Chinese

¹⁵⁶ Peter Yun, "Balance of Power in the 11th~ 12th Century East Asian Interstate Relations," *Journal of Political Criticism*, no. 9 (2011); Peter Yun, "Rhetoric and Reality of the Tribute System: Interstate Relations in the 10th-11th Century East Asia," *Journal of Political Criticism*, no. 9 (2011).

settlements to the Xi Xia was also within the framework of realpolitik accepted by the Song ruling elite during the Northern dynasty in their relations with the Liao. Similar treaties were also signed with the Xi Xia but since the Song, although could not defeat, was still at a superior position to the Xi Xia, the treaty with the Xi Xia was on better terms. The Song could buy peace by annual “payments” to the Xi Xia through peace treaties on the model of the Chanyuan treaty and did not have to accept also the Xi Xia dynasty as an equal and did not recognize the Xi Xia ruler as an emperor.¹⁵⁷ Thus when the Yuan historians compiled the dynastic histories of the previous era, the Liao, and Jin were given the right to have dynastic histories and take their place as rightful dynasties on a Chinese model with legitimacy yet the Xi Xia was treated as a mere kingdom and a Xi Xia history was never written. But even still, the Song had unending and destructive wars with the Xi Xia which always ended badly for both sides and soon the Northern Song politicians realized that opening markets and sending payments to the Xi Xia in return for a continuous peace was more advantageous. Only the Vietnamese were not given payment and were not equals with the Chinese, but were demanded to send tribute and recognize the Chinese suzerainty. But, other than keeping the borders intact, the Song later never had the military power to impose its political will to the Dai Viet kingdom and the Dai Viet kingdom sent tribute and embassies whenever it needed some prestigious title or trade rights for inner politics. But the inability to reclaim the sixteen prefectures was creating an inner political problem for the Song rulers. The Liao dynasty had a superior position in the diplomatic affairs now and also if their rule over their Chinese subjects could prove to be more successful than the Song rule over its subjects, it was possible that Liao despite its ethnic background could come up as an alternative to the Song ruling house within the

¹⁵⁷ McGrath and Wyatt, “Frustrated Empires: The Song-Tangut Xia War of 1038–1044.”

Song subjects as well. The Goguryeo Kingdom which was followed by the Silla and Balhae kingdoms represented a Chinese model state with Confucian institutions and other trappings of being civilized in a Chinese sense had emerged before but was positioned in Manchuria and Korea and never ruled any Chinese territories. The Liao who invaded and inherited the institutions of the Balhae Kingdom however, also had the sixteen prefectures with a considerable Chinese population under its rule. But for a long time, the Song court adhered realistically to the Chanyuan Treaty and peace in the face of superior Khitan military power. The relations between the courts continued cordially with the Song accepting equality with the Khitans whom they considered as uncivilized barbarians, and the Liao trying to avoid slighting behaviors towards the Song whose cultural achievements they admired and tried to emulate in their own empire. In fact, many of the Liao intellectuals were either ethnic Chinese or had a very good Chinese education. The Liao was trying to copy the Chinese examples in many facets of its diplomacy and administration.¹⁵⁸ The imports from the Song had already exceeded the annual tribute taken from the Song court and as a result the Song did not feel this treaty as an economic burden. But the things changed when the Jürchens, vassals of the Liao dynasty rebelled and decided to ally with the Song to overthrow them.

3.2. Southern Song Dynasty (1127-1279)

The Jürchens had been paying their homage first to the Balhae kingdom which was established by the remnants of the ancient Goguryeo kingdom and then to

¹⁵⁸ Denis C. Twitchett and Klaus Peter Tietze, "The Liao," in *The Cambridge History of China: Alien Regimes and Border States, 710-1368*, ed. Denis C. Twitchett and Franke H. Fairbank, vol. 6, Cambridge Histories (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

the Goryeo dynasty in Korea who claimed descent also from the Goguryeo kingdom. Even many centuries after its destruction by the unified Silla and Tang forces, the memory of the Goguryeo kingdom was still fresh among the Manchurian and Korean peoples. Therefore, new rulers rising to power claimed descent from the Goguryeo Kingdom in order to gain legitimacy and prestige in the eyes of their own subject peoples and other tribal neighbors.¹⁵⁹ In fact, the Goryeo Kingdom in Korea had internal conflicts within the allies whether to go on an adventurism in Manchuria and follow the legacy of Goguryeo in practice or to stick to the Silla borders, but the defeat at the hands of the Liao limited them.¹⁶⁰ Even still, the bordering Jürchens and other tribes were paying homage to both the Liao and the Goryeo until the Jürchens had initially problems with the Goryeo and raided their territory and then with the Liao and brought about the end of the Liao dynasty. In the year 1114 the Jürchen chieftain Wanyan Aguda united the Jürchen tribes under his banner and led a successful rebellion against their Liao overlords. As he declared his independence and his Jin¹⁶¹ Dynasty (1115-1234), the Song court officials learned of the successful rebellion and approached the Jürchens secretly in 1118. After a series of negotiations, the two sides agreed on an alliance. They would simultaneously attack the Liao from two

¹⁵⁹ Gari Ledyard, “Yin and Yang in the China-Manchuria-Korea Triangle,” in *China Among Equals: The Middle Kingdom and Its Neighbors, 10th-14th Centuries*, ed. Morris Rossabi (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983).

¹⁶⁰ Morris Rossabi and Michael C. Rogers, eds., “National Consciousness in Medieval Korea: The Impact of Liao and Chin on Koryo,” in *China Among Equals: The Middle Kingdom and Its Neighbors, 10th-14th Centuries* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 313–7.

¹⁶¹ 金/Jin means gold in Chinese and the name derives from the river Anchuhu which meant gold in the Jürchen language. It is interesting that the Jürchens copied their enemies the Khitans, who also picked the name of the Liao river in their homeland as their dynastic name. This was probably a conscious choice of name suggestive a dynastic change.

fronts and eliminate the Liao Dynasty. The Song would receive the sixteen prefectures that it so desperately wanted but failed in all its solitary attempts to reconquer. The Jürchens would take the lands that they conquered. But when the war began in 1120, the Song armies could not put any tacit performance on the battlefield and themselves were unable to retake even Yanjing (Modern Beijing), the Southern capital of Liao, which was only lightly guarded by the Liao while their efforts were directed at defending their main capital. The main forces of the Song under General Tong Guan's command faced defeats against the by now weakened Liao forces who were very short in numbers. In 1123 after taking the Liao main capital, the Jürchens finally took the areas that the Song General Tong Guan three times tried to take against the fewer force of the Liao who easily defeated him. The initial agreement was that the parties would keep whatever land they took from the Liao but the Song forces took none and the Jürchens ended the Liao without Song help to a great extent. Having got rid of their erstwhile enemies, some of the Song courtiers unaware of the battlefield realities held a bold posture towards the Jin and demanded the sixteen prefectures. After diplomatic negotiations, the Song managed to gain most of the sixteen prefectures. Even Yanjing which had been conquered, sacked and enslaved by the Jin was given to the Song. But scarcely after an agreement on advantageous terms for the Song which ceded the majority of the sixteen prefectures in return for an annual payment that the Song had already been doing to Liao was reached, the Song betrayed the treaty by accepting a defector beyond the Song territory, the military governor of Pingzhou who was of Liao origin and killed the Jin administrator sent by the Jin Emperor. Song accepted his plea to serve the Song dynasty and incorporated the Pingzhou province. However, he was soon beaten by the Jin and fled to Song where the Song officials, although late, understood their mistake and executed him. But his execution did not change the result. Already angry at the constant Song demands for land for which they did not put a fight, this latest betrayal of trust became the *casus belli* for the first Song-Jin war.

In fact, after Aguda died, the new ruler Taizong was hesitant for war and even gave two more prefectures to Song. He preferred to consolidate his power in these newly conquered and ethnically and politically volatile lands. The Jurchens were the leading ethnic group but they were a minority among their Chinese, Mongol, Khitan, and Turkic subjects. But the Jurchen warrior nobility was feeling insulted after many Song demands for land without earning it and the Jin side taking the heavier burden, and the betrayal of trust between allies was the last drop. Taizong in the end decided on war rather than to risk a coup from within. The Jin made peace with their western neighbor Xi Xia state and caught the last Liao emperor in the Ordos area in 1124. After preparing their forces for the invasion, in 1125 they attacked the Song from two sides. One army approached from the west and invaded the Shanxi province, previously ruled by the Shatuo Turks, but was held while besieging Taiyuan, the provincial capital. The other army came from the East and more easily advanced laying siege on Kaifeng, the Song capital, the Song Emperor Huizong abdicated and fled the capital while a new emperor was enthroned hastily with the reign title of Qinzong. The Jurchen army in the West was held by the forces in Shanxi province and the Eastern army was unable to take the city. As a result, the two sides came to an agreement. A huge amount of money and some provinces were to be left to the Jin including Taiyuan which still held against the Western Jin army. The new emperor agreed after an unsuccessful night attack on the Jin forces failed. But after the Jin forces left, the Emperor sent reinforcements to the promised provinces which had already been invaded and the Jin quickly defeated a Song force of sixty thousand and ninety thousand sent to Zhongshan and Hejian to save these provinces. Another expedition to help Taiyuan also failed. In 1125, the Jin forces besieged Kaifeng once more and this time they were successful. The Jurchens pillaged the city and took the Emperor and many other imperial family members to Manchuria as well as courtiers and even servants and palace women

along with the royal treasury¹⁶². In the aftermath of the fall of Kaifeng and the capture of the Emperor, a new Emperor was enthroned in the south and after a series of battles between the two sides there was a stalemate. The Jurchens were also anxious about their new territories that they gained from the Liao. They set up two puppet dynasties in the North by the names of Chu and Qi but after these short-lived dynasties fell to the Song pressure, the fighting resumed but in the end, they came to an agreement. In 1142 the treaty of Shaoxing was signed. According to the treaty the Song was to pay annual tribute to the Jin, accept the Huai river as the border and also become a Jin vassal which was the first time that a Chinese Emperor accepted becoming a vassal. The treaty ensured a peace for nearly seventy years which was interrupted only two times by Jin adventurism and Song revanchist policies. Both sides accepted the fact that they could not advance further through military means. Thus, with the signing of the Shaoxing Treaty the era called “Southern Song” by the historians began.

The Southern Song period for China was a relative time of peace on which economic ties and trade gained an ever-growing importance for the dynasty. As the dynasty lost huge lands on the Northern China plain, it compensated these tax losses through levying new taxes on trade. In fact, by the end of the dynasty, the

¹⁶² *The Accounts of Jingkang* which tells the story of the second Jurchen siege of Kaifeng vividly testifies the looting and the humiliation of the Song court as can be seen in the following lines:

「二十四日，開寶寺火。二十五日，虜索國子監書出城。」次年正月，「二十五日，虜索玉冊、車輅、冠冕一應宮廷儀物，及女童六百人、教坊樂工數百人。二十七日，虜取內侍五十人」：*"On the 24th, Kaibao Temple was burnt. On the 25th, books were looted from the Imperial College."* *"On the 25th of the first month of the following year, official records, chariots, royal head wear, ritual instruments, and 600 young girls and some hundreds of imperial musicians were captured and enslaved. On the 27th, 50 inner palace servants were captured"*. Yin Cuiwen, *靖康稗史箋證 [Jingkang Baishi Jianzheng: The Accounts of Jingkang]* (Beijing: Zhonghua Publishing House, 1988).

state revenues were higher than the Northern period¹⁶³. The paper money was also put into use for the first time during the Southern Song. The previous Southern kingdoms' legacy on the economic and cultural fields was felt heavily during the Southern Song. People from Fujian and other Southern provinces began to dominate the state service exams and a new form of Confucianism was developed by Zhu Xi¹⁶⁴ and his associates which is called as Neo-Confucianism in the English language and Dao Xue (道學) in Chinese. This form of Confucianism in time began to dominate not only the Southern Song but also the neighboring countries of Korea, Japan and Vietnam to this date. The followers of the Neo-Confucian school were initially university students and they advocated a more aggressive stance towards the Jin. Initially, they were not tolerated and were in some cases even persecuted. But their hold on the educational institutions, especially in the provincial schools that provided the students for the imperial university and eventually the state officials, gave its fruits and by the latter half of the Southern Song, the university students were a force to be reckoned with in the inner politics of the Southern Song. They managed to have two councilors and many other bureaucrats removed through their demonstrations and the Neo-Confucian idealism was effective in the Song decision to go to war against the Mongols and reclaim the Northern territories once more which was to bring about the end of the dynasty. But until the arrival of the Mongols the Neo-Confucians were mostly an inner issue for the Song.

Trade with the South-East Asia and the West Asia expanded during the Southern

¹⁶³ Shigeru Kato, *唐宋時代に於ける金銀の研究 [Tō Sō Jidai Ni Okeru Kingin No Kenkyū: Research on Tang and Song Era Money]*, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Toyo Bunko, 1925).

¹⁶⁴ 朱熹/Zhu Xi (1130-1200) was one of the most important thinkers of his time and his Neo-Confucian school became the dominant ideology in East Asia.

Song. As its connection with central Asia and the silk road was cut, maritime trade gained ever more importance for the Southern Song. The trade with the Jin Empire in the north was also resumed soon after the Shaoxing Treaty which put an end to the constant war between the two sides. This trade was with the Jin and trade with the western frontier were politically more important than the economic benefits which were also considerable. In Sichuan region, a form of trade that was based on the exchange of tea for horses became the norm since tea had become a luxury item for the peoples surrounding China on the north and west. Since the Jin, for obvious reasons, prohibited selling horses to the Song just like its Liao predecessors, the Song turned to the Tibetans and other nomadic or semi-nomadic peoples for horses. The trade with the Jin on the other hand both lifted the economic burden of the annual tributes since this trade was more profitable to Song¹⁶⁵ and also ensured that Jin also did not seek further war since peace was more profitable than an unpredictable possibility of looting on the Song territory.

Another trade that developed and gained more importance as the time passed was the trade with Japan. This trade had been going on for many centuries since very early times but the developments in the shipping technology brought from West Asia by Arab and Persian merchants that were applied to Chinese and then Japanese ships made the previously perilous journey between the two countries easier. Before, the Japanese could go either to the Korean Peninsula or the Shandong peninsula in the North which was under Jin control now, but the new developments in the shipping technology made it possible to directly trade with Southern China. A thriving trade especially with the ports in the Fujian region began during the Song dynasty. Along with the goods as it always had been the

¹⁶⁵ Yoshinobu Shiba, "Song Foreign Trade, Its Scope and Organization," in *China among Equals: The Middle Kingdom and Its Neighbors, 10th-14th Centuries*, ed. Morris Rossabi (Berkeley: Univ of California Press, 1983), 89–115.

case in World history, ideas also flowed to and from China. Neo-Confucian books and ideas spread to Korean, Vietnamese and Japanese intellectuals who enthusiastically not only consumed these ideas but also applied them to their states. Perhaps this was one of the reasons for the persistent resistance in the face of much superior Mongol forces in these three countries. But of course, the local culture and the monarchs' decision to risk their lives or kingdoms rather than to lose face to their subjects were also important as can be seen in the case of Burma which was hardly touched by Neo-Confucian ideas.

The Southern Song has been acclaimed for the cultural, economic and intellectual developments that it boasted vis-à-vis its Northern neighbor. Throughout the Southern Song period, the problem of the legitimacy of the ruling house became more acute. Lin'an was designated as a "temporary" capital (Xingzai/行在). But as the time passed, it became apparent that the hopes of recovering the North was a distant possibility. But, if the dynastic house was not even able to defend or reclaim the ancestral homelands of the Chinese, the issue of legitimacy would be asked more openly. Many of the Chinese initially rebelled against the Jurchen in the North when the fighting was still going on, but this was more due to the rapacious movements and looting of the Jurchens than a loyalty to the Song.¹⁶⁶ But as the Jurchens settled in North China and set up a government in the Chinese model in Kaifeng, many Chinese happily served under the Jurchen rule. In this regard, a successful Jurchen rule and administration was a more important threat in the eyes of the Song ruling house than the military threat that the Jin imposed. The Song armies in the South were able to repel Jin invasions with their superior numbers, superior fleet and economic power which they used to buy off peace.

¹⁶⁶ Herbert Franke, "The Chin Dynasty," in *The Cambridge History of China: Alien Regimes and Border States, 907-1368*, ed. Denis C. Twitchett and John King Fairbank, vol. 6, Cambridge Histories (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

But the problem of legitimacy could not be solved with money or the military. The Song elite responded to this threat by legitimizing themselves through Confucianism while the Jin like their Liao predecessors and Mongol successor both supported Confucianism as a useful tool for administration which was necessary, especially for administering the Chinese domains with large populations, and more importantly to Buddhism which was a better unifying element compared to Confucianism which excluded people illiterate in Chinese ways as barbarians. While it was required that a ruler must be a model of virtue and he was considered to be the center of the human realm, all under heaven would be by heaven's mandate under his service. But now the Song ruler was out of the traditional center of Chinese civilization in the south, which was until less than a century ago, a place for exile and considered as uncivilized. The Jin ruler on the other hand was the suzerain of the Song ruler and his capital was at the heart of the Chinese civilization. Although a Jürchen himself, he was definitely ruling over a Chinese state, not a horde. The Jürchen could be horsemen at war times, but although technically less developed, they were a sedentary people contrary to the popular belief. In fact, within a century they adapted to the Chinese culture so much that, many of the Jürchens served also under the Mongols as able administrative staff and bureaucrats. Therefore, the classical rhetoric of “barbarians” was far from the reality for the Song. At this point the Neo-Confucians produced many works and arguments that served to legitimize the Song dynasty in the eyes of at least the Southern Chinese. As a result, the Song rulers came to depend more heavily on this new movement for self-legitimization. The Neo-Confucians demanded a revanchist and an aggressive policy towards the Jin. This was not a realistic option for a long time until the rise of the Mongols.

The events that led to the fall of both the Jin and Song consecutively to the Mongols began after the rise of the Mongols who were united by a Khamag

Mongol chieftain by the name of Temujin who took the title of Chinggis Qaghan (universal ruler) in the Mongolian Qurultai of 1206. This was clearly an imperial aspiration. The Khamag tribes had been enemies with the Jin to their west and the Tatars to their west who gave their khan to the Jin for execution and caused a series of wars until the Mongols were disunited. Thus, when Chinggis Khan, a previously insignificant tribal leader rose to power, he began taking revenge from the Tatars and other tribes whom the Mongols held responsible by conquering and incorporating them into the Mongol armies and realm. After the Mongols consolidated their power on the Mongolian plains, they turned their attention to the Jin in the 1240s. At this point the aggressive Neo-Confucian school was in the ascendancy in the Southern Song Court. An alliance with the Mongols seemed to be the better option than clinging to the humiliating Shaoxing treaty. This time however, it was the Mongols who approached the Song, unlike the Jin-Song alliance which was proposed by the Song. And unlike the Jürchens who overran the Khitans with ease, the Mongols had difficulty in the Jürchen territory. In Shandong, a so-called Song loyalist uprising took place near the Song border. These rebels claiming to be loyal to the Song were in fact self-serving bandits in a time of war and turmoil. But the Song, although with some hesitation, supported these rebels at the initial stages of the war and stopped the annual tributes to the Jin which it desperately needed in the face of the Mongol threat. The Mongols and the Song made an agreement for sharing the Jin territories in return for the Song help. Unlike the campaign against the Liao where the Song armies could not show any effectiveness the campaigns against the Jin were more successful this time. After a long time, the Song was successful in gaining back some territory in the North. Emboldened by the military successes against the Jin, Song courtiers decided to go further by reconquering Kaifeng, the old Song capital. The Mongols were busy in the west for conquering Russia and other areas, but once the war broke out between the Mongols and the Song, the Mongol war machinery turned towards China. The Song even still, put up a long and persistent

fight against the Mongols. The Song court maintained an at least commercial alliance with the Japanese until its fall which was one of the reasons for the campaigns of Qubilai Khan to Japan. Also, the Koreans bitterly resisted the Mongols in the North which slowed down the Mongol occupation of the South. The Mongolians could not end the Song dynasty until the battle of Yamen in 1279 where the escaping Emperor and his last forces made a last stand and many officials committed suicide with the eight-year-old last Emperor Huaizong. In 1271 Qubilai had already declared the Yuan dynasty and in a gesture of goodwill he did not harm the remaining Song royal family. The end of the Song dynasty and the beginning of the Yuan dynasty signaled not only a new dynastic era for the Chinese, but also a totally new era on the diplomatic, cultural, commercial and cultural areas began. China had become part of a greater Mongolian Empire for a time, until its breaking up in to Khanates and even after that, the borders of the Yuan dynasty was larger than any previous Chinese dynasty. Also unlike the Song dynasty which was only a state among other equal states or sometimes even lower to the Northerners, the Yuan dynasty under Qubilai Khan forced the mandate of heaven and the superiority of the “middle kingdom” through both military and diplomatic means. After the fall of the Tang, for the first time an Emperor was strong enough to send armies abroad to assert his superiority as the son of heaven and the great Qaghan. The trade routes also linked China with Europe, Middle East, South-East Asia, Russia, and India on an unprecedented level. Thus, it has been argued that the Yuan dynasty was perhaps stronger than even the Tang in many ways as will be discussed in the following chapters.

CHAPTER IV

NOMADIC DYNASTIES

This chapter examines the non-Chinese or the so-called alien regimes within and around the borders of China proper after the fall of the Tang dynasty. These regimes especially in the North have played significant roles in the political arena of East Asia. 8th century has witnessed the consecutive falls of the Tang, Türk and Tibetan Empires in East Asia and the rise of Northern regimes first in Manchuria and then in the Mongolian plains. These regimes were the predecessors of the following Mongolian Empire and the Mongols owe much to these regimes in the institutionalization of their empire, not only in China but also in other places such as Russia and Iran where they continued the use of institutions such as darugachi which is borrowed from the Khitans. In this respect, the novelties that these regimes brought to the sedentary and nomadic realms of East Asia before the rise of the Mongols is essential in understanding not only the background of the situation in East Asia before the rise of the Mongols, but also in understanding the roots of the Mongol institutions and concepts of sovereignty and diplomacy. In this respect, this chapter does not only give a political background to the rise of the Yuan dynasty, but also an institutional and conceptual background to the rise of the Mongol supremacy in the political arena.

The rise of the nomadic power as a coherent political entity on the Northern borders of China began with the rise of the Huns¹⁶⁷. They were succeeded by a

¹⁶⁷ They are referred to as Xiongnu/匈奴 in the Chinese sources.

series of other nomadic tribal federations after more than four centuries of domination on the steppe, but all of these tribal federations proved to be ephemeral. However, the Türk Qaghanate which was established by a branch of the Huns proved to be more permanent. The ruling house of the Türks are mentioned by the name of Ashina in the Chinese sources. This clan continued to rule the Türks until their empire fell apart¹⁶⁸, and even after that, some clan chieftains with the same family name continued to rule patches of land in Mongolia. This development proved to be important since dedication to a certain clan or a house was not so important beforehand after the fall of the Huns. The Ashina clan, in a similar way to the Japanese Yamato clan, claimed descent from a divine ancestry and therefore could not be replaced by another clan unlike the Chinese son of heaven who could be changed when he lost the mandate of heaven. This pattern continued after the Borjigins, and in particular the Chinggisid line united the Mongols and other nomadic tribes of Eurasia. Like the Ashina clan, they claimed a divine descent, and therefore, only those of the Chinggisid line could rule in the name of God or tengri. Therefore, even long after their heyday was over, Tamerlane saw it prudent to rule in the name of the Chaghatai khans rather than rule in his own name, and he could not the title of Khan. The Khitan Yelü clan also continued this tradition of a divine ruling house after their Türk overlords were eliminated and before the Mongols arrived in the scene. This was why the Türk Qaghanate could be reestablished for a second time after it was swallowed by the Tang and why the Yelü clan members could find refuge and establish a second empire (Qara Khitai) in central Asia. In fact, another ruling house that could rival the Chinggisid line in terms of roots and divineness was that of the Tanguts. Although they came originally from Tibet,

¹⁶⁸ There were actually two Türk Qaghanates, the first one was established in 552 and continue until 659, and the Qaghanate was reestablished after a successful rebellion against the Tang in 682 until its fall in 744.

the ruling house claimed descent from the Tabgach clan of the ancient Wei dynasty in Northern China. This also helps to explain why the Mongols were so ruthless in eliminating the ruling houses of the Qara Khitai and Xi Xia states while they tolerated other ruling houses to a certain extent such as the Rum Seljukids or the Wang clan of Goryeo in Korea. This was mainly because neither of these local ruling houses could have any universal claim rivaling those of the Chinggisid line. In this respect, legitimacy of ruling houses and their self-positioning vis-a-vis their counterparts greatly affected the diplomacy in East Asia as the Chinese son of heaven lost his seat as the mere universal ruler.

Another novelty that the nomadic tribes of the north experienced and brought to the scene of East Asian politics was that of diplomacy based on equality of the players. As the Tang collapsed as the hegemon power of the sedentary world and to a certain extent the nomadic world whenever the Türks lost power, and the Türks fell as the hegemon power of the steppe, the East Asian states began to experience diplomacy based on realistic terms rather than ideology alone. The nomadic confederations formed into states as the Liao, Xi Xia and later the Jin and lastly the Mongolian Empire and rivaled China in the South first as equals and later as superiors and conquerors.

4.1. Türk Qaghanates

Although the Xiongnu and the Rouran are older entities in the northern steppe which were established by nomadic peoples, the Türks have a special role in that, they established a more enduring and an institutionalized legacy as far as legitimacy and sovereignty are concerned. They have created an alphabet of their own, inscribed steles detailing the deeds of their Qaghans and established certain

norms and rules that would endure into the Mongolian era. These three steles known as the Orkhon inscriptions are not only important in giving a view from the Türk and nomadic angle and thus making a counter argument against the stereotypical Chinese historiography that pictures the nomads as uncivilized barbarians, but also sheds light into the inner workings of these nomadic states and their view of China. The mere fact that the Türks managed to create a writing system of their own rather than simply using Chinese, attests to the fact that they were not savages solely after booty when we compare the early dates that Türks and Uighurs began to use their own scriptures with the Koreans who created Hangeul inspired by the Mongol Phagspha system ordered by Qubilai Khan after the 14th century, and the Japanese who created the kana syllabic scripture at a much later day and did not employ it other than women's writing until the 19th century. Thus, in cultural achievements and level, the nomadic peoples should be looked at under a more objective light after a careful and objective analysis of the sources, most of which reflect the Chinese Sino-centric point of view. Unfortunately, the uncritical acceptance of Chinese sources has so far influenced the Chinese and western historiography until recently.¹⁶⁹ Earlier states were mostly tribal confederations, and they would collapse as fast as they were established. But the Ashina family of the Türks legitimized their rule not only

¹⁶⁹ For a more detailed criticism of Chinese historiography, see: BJ Mansvelt Beck, *The Treatises of Later Han: Their Author, Sources, Contents, and Place in Chinese Historiography*, vol. 21 (Leiden: Brill, 1990).; Hok-lam Chan, *The Historiography of the Chin Dynasty: Three Studies*, vol. 4 (Franz Steiner, 1970).; Alvin P. Cohen, "Avenging Ghosts and Moral Judgment in the Ancient Chinese Historiography: Three Examples from Shi-Chi," *Legend, Lore, and Religions in China: Essays in Honor of Wolfram Eberhard on His Seventieth Birthday*, 1979, 97–108; Joshua A. Fogel, "Race and Class in Chinese Historiography Divergent Interpretations of Zhang Bing-Lin and Anti-Manchuism in the 1911 Revolution," *Modern China* 3, no. 3 (1977): 346–75; Charles Sidney Gardner, *Chinese Traditional Historiography*, vol. 11 (Harvard University Press, 1961); Earl H. Pritchard, "Traditional Chinese Historiography and Local Historiés," in *The Uses of History*, ed. William John Bosenbrook and White (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1968).

through military might but also in a way similar to the Chinese rulers, through concept of sovereignty bestowed by heaven. Of course, this idea probably existed among the nomadic peoples of the stepped before the Türks, but they were successful in institutionalizing and legitimizing their rule through *qut*¹⁷⁰ bestowed upon them by *tengri*.¹⁷¹ *Zhoushu*¹⁷² places the Ashina tribe within the Hun confederation¹⁷³. Whether the idea of *qut* passed to the nomads from Chinese concept of mandate of heaven or the opposite happened or both developed their own ideas independently is hard to determine since similar ideas of kingship through divine bestowal is found in many other cultures. What differed in the Turkic and Chinese concepts from others such as the Japanese was that, the mandate which was divinely given to one ruler and his descendants was not eternal. Once a ruler did not live up to the expectations, the heaven could take away the *qut* and bestow it upon another ruler who was not necessarily of the

¹⁷⁰ Qut is the near equivalent of mandate of heaven or 天命 (pinyin: tianming)

¹⁷¹ Tengri is the highest god and is the god of sky in what can be called an Altaic mythology shared by the Turkic and Mongolic peoples. Many scholars also argue that it is a common concept with the Chinese as well *tengri* corresponding to their idea of Tian. For details on this theory see: Zhuanming Rui, “关于古突厥人的敬天与事火 [Guanyu Gu Tujueren De Jing Tian Yu Shihuo: On the Old Turks Veneration for Heaven and Fire],” *铁道师院学报 [Tiedao Shiyuan Xuebao]*, no. 01 (1988): 28.

¹⁷² The Book of Zhou or Zhou Shu in Pinyin (周書) is the official history of the Northern Zhou dynasty which was established by the remains of the Wei dynasty after it broke up into two states. Like the Wei, they were also made up of a ruling class containing Tabgach or Tuoba elements. The Book of Zhou was compiled by the Tang scholar Linghu Defen in 636 by using the archive materials of the Northern Zhou dynasty.

¹⁷³ Linghu Defen, *周書 [Zhoushu: The Book of Zhou]* (Taipei: 史學出版社 [Shixue Chubanshe], 1974).

same lineage¹⁷⁴. The Ashina tribe took the mandate in a similar fashion from the Avars to whom they were vassals. The establishment of the Türk Qaghanate takes place in the Chinese sources with detail. The Türks are recorded as having run away from China to the Avars after the Huns were relocated into the Chinese territory as a result of the Northern Wei Tuoba attack to the territory that they were settled in modern day Gansu region. They are reported as Avar vassals and Bumin who was their leader is reported to win a victory against the Tiele (Tölös) tribes who revolted against the Avars and then after taking these tribes under his control he asked for the hand of the Avar Qaghan's daughter for which he was deftly rebuked and refused by the Qaghan. Marrying the daughter of a superior house was a prestige for any leader in East Asia. But the ruling houses were also careful not to marry off their daughters to houses that are far below them. Thus, the Chinese emperors would give their daughters to Khans or Tibetan Emperors etc., but rarely to a Vietnamese or a Korean king or the Japanese. At some point the Chinese would try to marry the daughters of Khans in the North to obtain their military support or to neutralize them¹⁷⁵. Thus, Bumin, who was the leader of the Türks, a tribal federation that had recently escaped from China and became vassals of the Avars as their iron workers were seen too below the Avar Qaghan's level to marry off his daughter and this move was further seen as a challenge to the Avar Khan's authority.

Bumin then revolted and annihilated¹⁷⁶ the Avar Qaghanate in 552 and unified the steppe tribes from Manchuria to the North of the Black sea under their banner.

¹⁷⁴ Igor de Rachewiltz, "Some Remarks on the Ideological Foundations of Chingis Khan's Empire," *Papers on Far Eastern History* 7 (1973): 21–36.

¹⁷⁵ Skaff, *Sui-Tang China and Its Turko-Mongol Neighbors*.

¹⁷⁶ Liu Xu, 舊唐書 [*Jiu Tangshu: The Old Book of Tang*], 1087.

He was proclaimed Qaghan and the Ashina family began to rule over the steppe tribes. The Khitans came under Türk domination during this take-over. These events took place during the latter half of the 6th century. One general mistake about the Türk Qaghanate like many other nomadic khanates of the region is the assumption that these tribal confederations were made up of homogeneous ethnic groups. The Türks, as they called themselves, were made up of different ethnic and linguistic groups¹⁷⁷. In this respect, it is wrong to assume that the Türks shared a common language, culture or even a geographically common background. These nomadic clans were unified under the Ashina clan with their military might, but more so with their claim to legitimacy and the prestige that was associated with the membership to this clan just as it would be seen with the Chinggisid line¹⁷⁸. After Bumin Qaghan established his own dynasty, he sent envoys to China. As mentioned in *Zhoushu* and *Suishu*, the Türks had fled from Gansu within Chinese sphere of government and influence, though heavily inhabited by either nomadic or sedentary foreigners to the Mongolian steppe and became vassals to the Avars until they overthrew them. Therefore, it should be expected that the Türks at least had some rudimentary knowledge of the Chinese institutions and statecraft and the concepts underlying in the legitimacy of these institutions and ideas. Yet, as the Orkhon inscriptions point out, they were not mere copy-cats of the Chinese institutions to the extent that the Japanese and the Koreans and later the Vietnamese were. They were aware that their nomadic lifestyle and environment were unsuited for a total adaptation of the Chinese

¹⁷⁷ There are personal names as well as vocabulary obtained from Mongolic, Samoedic and Ungric languages in the Orkhon inscriptions. See: Denis Sinor, *The Cambridge History of Early Inner Asia*, Cambridge Histories (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

¹⁷⁸ Golden, “Imperial Ideology and the Sources of Political Unity Amongst the Pre-Chinggisid Nomads of Western Eurasia.”

statesmanship and Chinese style government. As a result, they created a hybrid system. They took Chinese style titles and institutions in name and modified them in accordance with their needs. They applied this system also to their vassal states and tribes amongst whom were the Khitan who would later both establish the Liao dynasty and influence the Jürchens and Mongols through interaction until their annihilation by the Jürchens and the Uighurs and the Oghuz who would later establish states of their own after the dissolution of the second Türk Qaghanate in 744.

One important concept that was not invented but widely used by the Türks was the idea of a mandate to reign given by tengri to the Ashina clan. All under heaven was to be ruled by a single Qaghan. The same concept was also prevalent in China, but what differed was the extent of all under heaven. The Chinese saw China and the sedentary world in the peripheries as all under heaven and the steppe, the Tibetan plateau or the deserts and Jungles were unsuited for the civilized to go and settle, at least in theory. For the Türks however, all under heaven was the people of the felt tent as described in the Secret History of the Mongols or the Orkhon inscriptions before. But, after the Mongols united the nomadic people of the felt tent, then they set their eyes on the sedentary world and in this respect, they were the first of the nomadic steppe peoples to attempt a global domination. The Tabgach as pronounced in the Orkhon steles or the Tuoba Wei as the Chinese and western historians call them were coming from the Northern steppe to conquer and govern a sedentary part, in fact, the by then heart of China, the Northern China plain. Yet once they conquered China, they felt that their nomadic institutions and governmental skills were not sufficient for the task of governing a sedentary alien people whose population was much above them. Thus, they opted for assimilating themselves into the Chinese culture willingly and sinifying themselves along with the other nomadic vassals that they have within the Chinese territories. The Ashina clan was among the clans that opposed

this policy and as a result they initially fled the Tuoba Wei territory and then once they established a dynasty of their own in the north after overthrowing the Rouran Qaghanate of the Avars, they pursued a policy that favored the nomadic lifestyle and government in accordance with this lifestyle. In fact, this heritage of a dilemma and struggle between the nomadic and sedentary lifestyle, and political cultures would haunt the so-called alien regimes in China and elsewhere even after the Mongolian conquests in China, Russia, and Western Asia. This dilemma was not new to the nomadic peoples as mentioned above in the case of the Tuoba Wei. But the Tuoba were not the only people having to choose between the two options. The Huns were settled within Chinese territory by the Han dynasty after their defeat and most of those belonging to the southern branch were in time assimilated while the Northern branch opted for immigrating north westerly, possibly stimulating a wave of migrations westward¹⁷⁹. The Ashina clan of the Turks are cited as being among the Southern branch of the Xiongnu tribes who were settled within the borders of China. But they opted for continuing their nomadic lifestyle and in a dialogue between Tonyukuk and Bilge Qaghan where Bilge Qaghan wants to build walled cities, adapt Buddhism and build temples within the Türk territory, Tonyukuk replies with the logic that if they begin a sedentary life like the Chinese they can easily be defeated by the Chinese since the Chinese population is much more than theirs. This idea might have been proven in the eyes of their leaders after the demise of the Goguryeo state who could oppose much larger armies of the Sui and Tang against great odds but began to build cities and promote Buddhism and were unable to defend their cities in siege warfare against the allied armies of the Tang and Silla¹⁸⁰. But the only

¹⁷⁹ Karoly Czegledy, *Bozkır Kavimlerinin Doğu'dan Batı'ya Göçleri*, trans. Mutlu Gün (Ankara: Doruk Yayınları, 2006).

¹⁸⁰ Iryon, *Samguk Yusa : Legends and History of the Three Kingdoms of Ancient Korea*, trans. Tae Hung Ha and Grafton K. Mintz (Rockville: Silk Pagoda, 2006).

problem underlying behind the tension between the parties that opposed and supported a sedentarization of at least the ruling elite were much more complex than a choice of lifestyle or strategic concerns. The same tension that can be seen yet resolved in favor of those supporting the pro-nomadic party in the case of the Türks was to be in favor of the sedentary parties in the cases of the Khitans and the Jürchens. But even still, it could be said that a considerable level of sedentarization was begun during the Türk era. Previous Khanates and confederations also had cities but during especially the second Türk Qaghanate (682-744), the Turkic speaking peoples began to settle in cities gradually assimilating the Sogdian and Tocharian cities in the areas which were later to be called Turkistan, and are even today named as Eastern and Western Turkistan. Thus, the Turkic khans began to be more and more associated with the sedentary culture and institutions. Their application of the Chinese diplomatic patterns in their own sphere of influence had a profound effect on their subject peoples. Just like the Chinese emperor who called himself a son of heaven, the Türks, or the Heavenly Turks also claimed themselves superior to other clans and possessors of mandate of heaven in their own right. The Uighurs who would inherit this mandate from the Türks and later the Khitans were both vassals to the Ashina clan and as a result were influenced by the Chinese ideas of sovereignty and interstate relations. In the nomadic world, the form of relationships was modified to befit their environment. The Khitans for instance began sending envoys to the Chinese as well whenever they felt the Türk grip on them was loose to benefit from what can be called a tribute trade¹⁸¹. Thus, the Khitan chieftains also began to develop a rudimentary knowledge of the Chinese court system and ideas. But

¹⁸¹ In the traditional Chinese application, when a king or a chief sent tribute to the Chinese emperor, the emperor as a benevolent ruler would give back gifts and these gifts would mostly exceed the tribute brought to the court. As a result of this economic burden, some dynasties would try to limit the number of embassies from certain states at times who were trying to take a commercial advantage of this tradition.

they were more interested in the economic advantages of direct trade with China in the guise of tributary missions and the prestige that titles given by the Chinese emperor brought with it to a chieftain distinguishing him from the other chieftains within his territory. The Türks also used their claim to mandate of heaven to bestow titles upon their dependent chieftains. They saw that this system worked for both parties involved. The Ashina Qaghans legitimized their rule without having to resort to arms against other tribes and the chiefs of other tribes in return legitimized their rule through the titles bestowed upon them by the Qaghan.

Commerce also developed along the silk road and remained a vital source of income for the rulers of the countries on this route. The Tibetans and the Türks initially rivalled each other for the hegemony of trade from China to the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. The Türks went all the way to Caffa called Feodosia back then on the Crimean Peninsula and fought wars against the Sassanid in Iran for the sake of dominating trade routes in central Asia. While the Turkic speaking peoples, who would initially come to the cities to exchange their goods during certain seasons on the markets outside the cities began to gradually settle in the cities and gradually Turkish took the place of Sogdian as a *lingua franca* in this region for the local people. This assimilation of the Sogdian culture into the Turkic culture also had profound effects on the nomadic culture in the region. The Sogdians were an Iranian people scattered around the trade routes between Iran and China. Some of the Ashina Khans also intermarried with Sogdians and their sons from these wives could also inherit the throne but sometimes the nomadic elements would oppose their enthronement. The Sogdians also played a role in China as well. In fact, An Lushan who brought about the beginning of the end of the Tang dynasty had a Sogdian father and a Turkic mother. He was not only supported by Turkic and Khitan troops, but also many Sogdians in his rebellion who were in return killed or forced into hiding in

Northern China¹⁸². But this Sogdian connection continued well into the 10th century in the nomadic domains and the Türk Qaghanate continued to rely on the Sogdians as diplomats and merchants in their affairs with the sedentary world surrounding them. They also brought ideas and religions between China, nomads, Iran and India. Xuan Zang¹⁸³ describes the Sogdians' cultural and commercial talents in his records on his famous pilgrimage to India. The Sogdian influence did not fade out with the collapse of the Türk Qaghanate. The Uighurs who were more commerce oriented compared to the Türks made good use of them and even adapted their script which they later passed on to the Mongols who did not previously have a writing system of their own. Originally a sedentary people, the Sogdians who lost control of their own homeland in Sogdiana which is approximately in Modern day Tajikistan's Sughd province, Kyrgyzstan and Eastern parts of Uzbekistan and had Marakanda or Samarkand as the main center to the Greeks after Alexander's campaigns, began to thrive as merchants rather than soldiers or conquerors and were not united by a polity of their own for long time. But their city states were united by the conquerors. Yet the Sogdians with their extensive trade networks along the trade routes of Central Asia made good use of the protection brought by Pax-Turkica, and later by other khanates and lastly by the Mongols to their own advantage. Later on, as the Turkic speaking peoples began to settle in their cities and intermarry with Sogdians or rule their cities, and the arrival of Islam, most of the Sogdians converted to Islam and were in time assimilated by the Turkic speaking peoples. Later on, the Mongols also made use of the people in the region who were by now Turkified. Thus, the Turkification of Central Asian cities which was started by the Türks and

¹⁸² Jenny Rose, "The Sogdians: Prime Movers between Boundaries," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 3, no. 30 (2010): 417.

¹⁸³ 玄奘/Xuanzang (602-664) was a Buddhist monk who travelled to India from China through the silk road and became famous for his journey.

continued heavily by the Uighurs and the use of Sogdians in the state service gave an advantage to the nomadic empires in their external dealings with their sedentary neighbors. They did not only use the income coming from commerce, they also used the Sogdians as bureaucrats and envoys. In fact, there were also Chinese or sinified peoples who also served within the Türk Qaghanate. Tonyukuk, the famous Prime Minister of Bilge Qaghan for whom one of the Orkhon steeles was erected was originally a Tang official who was assigned the task of controlling the Türk tribes settled within the Tang territory after the collapse of the first Türk Qaghanate. Later on, he was charged with certain crimes and ran away to Mongolia and joined Bilge Qaghan and his group of Ashina rebels who founded the second Türk Qaghanate¹⁸⁴. Many Chinese would also flee to the northern steppe regions in times of crises in China proper and provide their services to the nomads. In this respect, the extensive use of sedentary people in the state service was initiated by the Türks and continued by the following nomad states afterwards.

The Tumen system which was according to the sources invented by the Huns was used by the Türks as well. The main difference that the Türks brought about this military organization would also have political implications as well and was cleverly further extended by Chinggis Khan and his successors. In the original version, it is thought that the Khans initially used this system of decimal units in their personal entourages as explained in the famous story of the killing of Xiongnu Khan Tuman (Spelled as Teoman in modern Turkish historiography and Touman in modern Mandarin Chinese) by his son Modu (Mete in Modern Turkish historiography). The Tumen system organized the army in a decimal system and the largest unit was a tumen which was made up of ten thousand

¹⁸⁴ Fikret Türkmen, “Kök-Türk Âbidelerinde Millî Kimlik Hassasiyeti,” *Milli Folklor* 25, no. 97 (April 2013): 31–38.

soldiers in theory. The problem was that each tumen was in application a clan led by its chieftain and therefore the armies of the nomadic confederations were similar to European medieval feudal armies. But the Türk Khans began to appoint their close relatives from the Ashina clan to lead these tumen and began the process of curbing the feudal chieftains' powers. Once the soldiers in these tumen were lead and inspired by charismatic Ashina leaders, their loyalty would shift from tribal chieftains to the Ashina royal house. This was essential in maintaining a durable state in the steppe since the biggest threat for the nomadic Khanates mostly came from within rather than an external invasion. In fact, the Türks themselves were within the Rouran confederation lead by the Avar royal house and their coming to power was an internal revolution rather than an invasion. The same pattern can be seen in the case of the Khitans who were overthrown by their Jürchen vassals and the Jürchens themselves were overthrown by their Mongol vassals. But beginning from the Türks onwards, the army organization became more and more centralized and the vassals who overthrew their masters would come from the peripheries of their empires. In the case of the Mongols, they were mostly nominally vassals of the Khitans and later the Jürchens. The centralization of armies was a common problem not only for the nomads but also for the sedentary world of east Asia. In China, Korea, and Japan, the uncentralized armies of warlords posed the greatest threat to the established order and therefore it is a historiographic fiction that the Confucian society and state were based on benevolence unlike the “barbarian” nomadic societies and states¹⁸⁵. The Chinese and the Koreans however were more successful in keeping centralized armies whereas whenever they failed this aim a dynastic change would take place as in the case of Tang and Silla kingdoms who were overthrown by warlords and the

¹⁸⁵ Anne E. McLaren, “History Repackaged in the Age of Print: The ‘Sanguozhi’ and ‘Sanguo Yanyi,’” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London* 69, no. 2 (January 1, 2006): 293–313.

who were previous warlords or chieftains before unifying their own countries¹⁸⁶. Therefore, the centralization of the right to use military power was essential for both establishing and maintaining a dynasty. Although a total centralization of the armies as Chinggis Khan could do to a certain extent was not achieved by the Türks, the centralization of right to command armies gave them the loyalty they needed from their vassals to maintain a more durable nomadic polity. Compared to the other nomadic confederations who would dissolve within a generation or two after a charismatic leader that united them would die, the Türk Ashina clan through appointing governors or commanders to the tribal areas made foundations of a loyalty based on the royal clan which explains the loyalty shown to the Türk Ashina clan, the Khitan Yelü clan and the Jürchen Wanyan clan even after they experienced crushing defeats or their states were annihilated as in the Türk and Khitan cases whose royal houses could establish a state for the second time with the help of their loyal vassals. As can be seen more closely in the Secret History of the Mongols, not only the leaders of the royal clans but also their relatives would establish close personal relations which would create a network of friendships and alliances that surpassed the boundaries of clan loyalties.

These novelties that the Türks brought to the nomadic world of the steppe would become permeant until the very modern era and would be adopted by the succeeding states that followed them. In this respect, the Türks did not only make their mark by giving their name to a whole group of peoples speaking a common language group, but they influenced the whole nomad and semi-nomad world that stretched all the way from Manchuria to Hungary. Until the arrival of concepts such as nationalism and nation state in the modern era the ethnic

¹⁸⁶ The Li family who founded the Tang dynasty were relatives with the Sui Emperors and they emerged as warlords and border commanders during the turmoil that brought about the end of the Sui dynasty.

boundaries were very bleak in this vast region and as Gumilëv points out, the Ashina clan and the name Türk itself could be of Mongolic origin. Chinggis Khan himself, the one who in theory gave the Mongols their distinctive characteristics and organization had Turkic speaking people around him such as the Naimans, Karait (Qara Tatar in many sources), and the Mongolic speaking peoples themselves came under Türk suzerainty and cultural influence. Therefore, the continuity of certain ideas and institutions and patterns from early times onwards might give a better historical background to the swift rise of the Mongols rather than taking the Secret History of the Mongols, the Chinese and European Sources who either had political intentions to glorify or demonize the Mongolian rise to power or were at a loss about the nomadic warfare, statecraft and historical development.

4.2. The Tibetan Empire (618-842)

The Tibetans or rather the Tibetan speaking peoples were not united under a single polity until they were united by the state which was centered around Lhasa. Around the end of the 6th century and the beginning of the 7th century, Namri Songtsän established this kingdom by conquering the areas around Lhasa and taking the clans in this area under his control. He sent two envoys to the Sui Dynasty in China in 608 and 609. These two envoys are the earliest appearance of Tibetan envoys to China in the Chinese sources¹⁸⁷. However, after uniting the Tibetan tribes in the region he was assassinated in 619. but his state continued to

¹⁸⁷ Beckwith, Christopher I. *The Tibetan Empire in Central Asia: A History of the Struggle for Great Power among Tibetans, Turks, Arabs, and Chinese during the Early Middle Ages'* (1987) Princeton University Press. p.17

grow in size and influence. The Songtsän dynasty continued with his successor Gampo who expanded the borders and the influence of the kingdom. During his reign Buddhism was introduced to Tibet. This created a political struggle between the supporters of the Bön religion and the supporters of Buddhism. A similar struggle also took place in Korea and Japan as well. In all these three countries, the new religion was used to politically unify the country under the royal house by curbing the political power of the aristocracy who took their legitimacy from their claim to descent from the local deities. But this struggle ended in favor of Buddhism. The process was similar to the Christianization of western Europe in some ways. The Pope would legitimize Charlemagne and Charlemagne would support and announce Christianity as a state religion. But unlike Europe, East Asian kings did not banish or suppress the local religions from which they also took their legitimacy. Buddhism in East Asia was more eclectic compared to Christianity in West Europe. The Buddhist clergy in East Asia adapted itself to the environment that they entered and they made a syncretic system of Bön and Buddhism that could live side by side like Shinto and Buddhism in Japan. Many Bön deities became Buddhas. The Tibetans also continued to grow in political power. Gampo asked for a Chinese princess from the Tang court in 634, but he was refused upon which he campaigned against the Chinese in 635-636 and the Chinese Emperor later agreed to a marriage between a princess and Gampo's son. This marriage brought him further prestige in the Tibetan plateau and he continued by conquering ancient Zhangzhung kingdom in western Tibet and the Tuyuhun city states to the north. The Tibetans then turned southward and conquered as south as Bengal and Nanzhao (approximately modern Yunnan). During the 8th century the political scene of Asia was in a change. The Abbasid Caliphate entered central Asia after conquering Iran. The Tibetans were initially allied to both the Türks and the Abbasids. The Tang dynasty on the other hand initially used an alliance against the Türks with the Abbasids and inflicted a defeat on them. The Tibetans on the other hand fought their way in Central Asia

and continued to play a significant role against the Chinese and the Arabs. They even entered Kashmir and Fergana valley at one point but were driven out. As the Tang were defeated by a coalition of the Abbasids and Qarluq Turk tribes and driven out of the Tarim basin and the trade corridor, the Tibetans pressed even further and took advantage of the An Lushan rebellion and even invaded Chang'an, the capital of the Tang dynasty in 763. The Tang were in return helped by the Uighurs who also began to have a growing power in the region after they founded their own Khanate following the collapse of the Türk Qaghanate. The Qiang tribes who were also called as Sumpa by the Tibetans at this point began migrating between the Tibetan, Uighur and Chinese territory as well as having their territory conquered by one side or the other. The Tang dynasty gave up its claims to hegemony in central Asia along the silk roads after a defeat in Talas against the Abbasids and the Qarluks in 751, and more importantly after the devastating An Lushan rebellion. Some of the Tanguts who fled the Tibetans were during this turmoil settled in the Ordos region by the Tang, and they were to become the Tanguts of the Western Xia state later who would play a major role. In 821, the Tibetans concluded a treaty with the Tang on equal terms. This treaty was signed during the reign of Tritsu Detsen who was one of the three Dharma Kings of Tibetan Buddhism. His support for Buddhism helped Buddhism to flourish in Tibet and had an enduring effect on the territories under Tibetan control. Also, the Qiang tribes were further Tibetanized.

After him however, the Tibetan Empire also did not survive long. During the reign of Langdarma (838-842) the Uighur Khanate with whom the Tibetans had been fighting over the territories on the trade routes collapsed under the pressure from the Kyrghyz tribes who had previously been further north in Siberia. This on the other hand brought further pressure on the Tibetans' northern borders rather than relief since there was a huge population movement towards the Tibetan territories from the formal Uighur Khanate. The Uighurs who became

semi-sedentary during their reign in central Asia adopted Buddhism and were more trade oriented than martial oriented unlike their Türk Qaghanate. The settlement of the Uighurs to their current homeland occurred during this turmoil. Langdarma was killed by a Buddhist monk who was also fleeing this Kyrgyz invasion and following his death, the succession struggles brought about a civil war and the end of the Tibetan Empire.

After the collapse and the fragmentation of the Tibetan Empire, Tibet became a backdrop of the East Asian political scene and never played as significant a role as it played during its imperial era. But it had long lasting influence in the cultural and political spheres on its formal vassals such as the Qiang peoples some of which formed the Tangut state, or the Nanzhao people who also formed a state of their own with the name of Dali kingdom both of which survived until the Mongols swept across whole of the continental East Asia. Before the Tibetans took control of Amdo in modern North Eastern Tibet and the Yunnan area, the tribal peoples here were not united and through the Tibetan horn system of setting up governmental posts (there were six horns altogether) in these tribal areas, the tribal chieftains were introduced with the rudimentary basics and ideas of state building based on a territorial state with certain boundaries rather than a tribal government based on blood relations and tribal association. The Tibetans were semi sedentary peoples, but they could also mount armies on horseback and in this respect, were more similar to the peoples and states of Manchuria. They could organize their military like the Turco-Mongolian nomads to their north but their state organization was more sedentary. In this respect, the Tibetans played the role that the Sogdians played among the nomads of the north by introducing certain ideas, institutions and titles to the nomads and tribes of the Tibetan plateau as well as the jungle and mountain tribes of Sichuan, Yunnan and Bengal.

Another important and more widely known influence of Tibet was that of

spreading Buddhism. The Tibetan kings favored and lavishly supported Buddhism. During the late 8th and early 9th centuries, there was a massive movement of translating and collecting of Buddhist canons and libraries that could rival the Tang China. Even after the dissolution of the empire the local warlords and kings continued to support Buddhism, and Tibetan Buddhism developed on its independent path. They then continued to play a prominent role in spreading Buddhism especially among the nomads. The Tibetans were mainly sedentary, yet through the horns system they also had nomadic subjects whom they directly controlled unlike the Chinese Jimi system of loose reigns. Therefore, the Tibetan Buddhist clergy could better adapt itself to the nomadic environment of the north and could better answer to the needs of the tent governments compared to the Chinese clergy who grew up in a sedentary environment and would mostly despise the nomads as warlike and uncivilized vandals. The Tibetan clergy would especially come to the fore with the advent of the Mongols.

Thus, although their imperial institutional heritage which could have evolved into a greater civilization like China and India did not survive the collapse of the Empire except for the Tanguts who made an amalgam of Tibetan, nomadic and Chinese institutions, Tibetan Buddhism continued to thrive in Tibet to the extent that it came to dominate all of Tibet and become the dominant form of Buddhism among the nomadic peoples of the steppe. Therefore, it is no wonder that the Mongols adopted Tibetan Buddhism and the Yuan dynasty used Buddhism as a tool for diplomacy as well. The use of Buddhism in settling disputes dated back to the times that the Tibetan Empire and the Tang dynasty went to a protracted war in the early ninth century, and this continued during the five dynasties era of China. Although Tibetan Empire collapsed and Tibet itself became a backwater mountainous country, it continued to boast of its Buddhist clergy and institutions which trace back their origins to the Tibetan Empire. Later on, especially the

Tanguts who were subjugated to the Tibetan Empire during the 7th century along with other Sumpa or Qiang clans. But rather than becoming a part of the horns system in which the Tibetans would send a governor of their own to replace the tribal aristocracy at the top of the hierarchy, some of the Tangut aristocracy immigrated to China and were settled in the Ordos region as border guards and governors by the Tang. They brought the Tibetan Buddhist institutions and beliefs along with them and also adopted some of the Tibetan statecraft from their early times onwards which would also put a mark on the Mongolians after the Tanguts were conquered by Temujin which also was his last campaign.

4.3. The Liao Dynasty (907-1125)

The Liao¹⁸⁸ Dynasty was established by the Khitans during the turmoil that followed the collapses of the Türk Qaghanate and the Uighur Khanate consecutively in the Northern steppe and the Tang Empire in China. As the power base in the North gave way to tribal warfare and disintegration and the central authority in China gave way to nine kingdoms in the South and consecutive short lived five dynasties in the Northern Plain of China, the Khitans for the first time in their history had the opportunity to establish their own independent state. But it must be noted that the Khitans themselves were undergoing changes during these times of turmoil and fundamental change in the East Asian region. The Khitan tribes had been under the rule of the Türks, The Tang and the Uighurs for more than four centuries switching their allegiance to whoever was stronger in the region. Their ethno genesis is hard to follow, but they are considered to be

¹⁸⁸ 遼/Liao the name of the dynasty derives from the Liao river which flows through the Khitan homeland.

either proto-Mongols or a mixture of proto-Mongol and Tungusic speaking groups in Manchuria. They were settled in the Liao river basin, especially in the south near the Liaotung peninsula. They are thought to be a part of the Rouran Khanate which succeeded the Huns¹⁸⁹ and preceded the Türks. The Khitan are thought to be a part of the Shiwei¹⁹⁰ group which also consisted the Turkic speaking Shi¹⁹¹ people. The Türks and the Tang would initially compete with each other for the vassalage of the Khitans as well as other tribes along the Sino-Türk border. Whenever the Türk Qaghans were strong at home in the Orkhon and Ötüken regions, they would extend their influence and authority over the Gobi Desert towards the Chinese border as well as the West to take control of the trade routes which was an essential income for the Türk economy. In the same manner, the Chinese beginning from very early times onward tried to stop the expansion of the nomadic tribes towards south by either fighting them or trying to incorporate them into the Chinese realm¹⁹². With the establishment of the Tibetan Empire to the west of these two competing powers, albeit under different

¹⁸⁹ The term Hun has been a contested term, since the Chinese called them Xiongnu and it has long been discussed whether the Huns were the same people with the Xiongnu of the Chinese. But Karoly explains the issue in a convincing way by referring to ancient Chinese phonology as well as comparing the documents from the Iranian, Roman and Indian sources of the time. (Karoly bozkır kavimlerinin göçü)

¹⁹⁰ Sinor, *The Cambridge History of Early Inner Asia*, 405–6.; Tuotuo [Toqto'a], *遼史 [Liaoshi: History of Liao]*.

¹⁹¹ Wolfram Eberhard, *Çin'in Şimal Komşuları* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1996).

¹⁹² The most detailed account of the pre-dynastic Khitan is by Otagi Matsuo, “契丹古代史の研究 [Kittan kodai shi no kenkyū: Research on Khitan Ancient History],” *東洋史研究叢刊 [Toyoshi Kenkyu Sokan]*, *東洋史研究 [Toyoshi Kenkyu]*: Kyoto, no. 6 (1959).

dynasties, in the North the Xiongnu were followed by the Avars¹⁹³ and then the Türks, in the South one Chinese dynasty followed the other and sometimes both the nomadic federations and the Chinese dynasties collapsed altogether creating a power vacuum until they were again unified under a certain dynasty. Tibet which had been a mountainous backwater created a third party in this equilibrium. But after this, until the coming of the Mongols, none of the parties within this equilibrium did not wish a fourth participant to their sphere of political affairs in East Asia. The other surrounding states and tribes were vassals to either one of these three Empires.

In fact, before the Tibetans, the Goguryeo state based in Manchuria was part of a similar system but it was never strong enough to impose its equality in the treaties with the Chinese until it was eventually swallowed by the Tang and their Silla allies in the Korean Peninsula. And yet the remainders of the Goguryeo state would help the Khitans a lot in establishing their own state. But the Khitans never rose to even statehood until the tenth century. Whenever their tribes would become too strong to pose a danger to the Türks or the Chinese they were crushed by either one of these or by both of these powers. This was due to many reasons. First of all, as described above, their chief neighbors, the Türks and the Tang were not willing to let a nomadic state develop on their borders that had the potential to unite the peoples of Manchuria and become a new equal participant in the political arena to them. This would have political implications for their inner courts and legitimacy as well. In fact, the first thing that the Khitans would do as soon as they established their independent state was to steal away vassal states from the Chinese orbit. And of course, such a thing would not only bring external threat to the Chinese or the Türks but also would create internal stress. In the case of Türks, it would create an alternative to the Ashina rule for the nomadic tribes

¹⁹³ Czegledy, *Bozkır Kavimlerinin Doğu'dan Batı'ya Göçleri*.

that made up their empire and subjects. For the nomadic states, the tribes were more important than land, unlike the Chinese and other sedentary states. As can be seen in *The Secret History of the Mongols* or the Orkhon inscriptions, the leaders would give tribes and people to their generals or sons rather than land. As long as you did not have the loyalty of the tribes to fight alongside you to defend your lands, the ownership of a piece of land did not matter too much in the steppe. In this respect, creation of an ideology to bind the subjects to the ruler mattered more in the nomadic states than the sedentary states. Contrary to the general debate about the Song dynasty for instance, the ideological polemics with the court circles and scholars did not bring about the end of the Song dynasty, nor did its subjects ever rebelled to the Song based on ideological or political reasons on a great scale. The same was true for almost any Chinese dynasty. Throughout the Chinese history, all dynasties were brought down through internal strife or external invasion not due to the disloyalty of their subject who lost belief in the legitimacy of their rulers but because of economic and military weaknesses. But nomadic powers could easily be dissolved once the tribes that were under the vassalage of the ruling dynasty ceased to support them willingly. Temujin could hardly have achieved his goals if he could not create a loyal following among the tribes in the steppe through marriage alliances, personal relations and other diplomatic maneuvers. As a result, the Türks could not let another nomadic state that could become an alternative to the Ashina clan. Another reason was the internal disunity of the Khitans themselves. The Chinese sources mostly mention the Khitan tribes as being independent of each other and mostly also in feud against each other. At times, some charismatic leader with unite them shortly with the promise of gains through raids to the Chinese or neighboring territories but these would prove either short-lived or unsuccessful alliances. And lastly, in addition to being politically disunited, the Khitans were less developed compared to their neighbors and they did not have any experience or even the aspiration of establishing a state like those of the Türks for a long time until they were united

under more ambitious chieftains and overcame their feuds within themselves.

Abaoji who later became the Khan of the Khitans and the Emperor of the Liao dynasty was the leader of the Yelü clan of the Khitan confederacy. At that time, there are thought to be eight Khitan clans within this confederacy and although the Yelü were the strongest among them, the Yaolian clan chiefs had been traditionally selected as Khans for over a century. Abaoji was selected as the chieftain of the Yelü clan by the elders' council in 901 following his father and after this he was appointed the general commander of the Khitan confederacy. This title gave him powers like those of the shogun in Japan. His only nominal superior was the Khan who came from the Yaolian clan. But the Yaolian clan was no more as strong as the Yelü clan by now and their legitimacy was mainly derived from the titles that they were given by the Tang dynasty which was at the brink of collapse after the devastating An Lushan rebellions, Tibetan invasions and rebellions. It was a time of general change in East Asia by this time. In year 907 Abaoji peacefully became the Khan of the Khitans through diplomacy and success as a military commander in campaigns. In the same year, the Tang was ended by Zhu Wen who enthroned himself as the Emperor of the Later Liang dynasty which lasted only five years and began the era of five dynasties in Chinese history.

Abaoji did not have any serious titles given to him by the Chinese Tang emperors unlike his predecessor Yaolian clan. This on the other hand was sidelined with his successes on the battlefield and the diplomatic arena. He realized that the Tang Empire collapsed and the Chinese were not at a position to either threaten him or to help him against his rivals. In fact, humbling himself before a usurper would rather threaten his own position in the eyes of his people. Therefore, he opted for legitimizing his rule in the steppe fashion. He had either the Tabgach Wei dynasty model before him or the Türk Ashina model to build up his state and

this state of having to choose between the two would haunt his empire to the end though mostly those in favor of a nomadic style prevailed at crucial points. When he announced the Liao dynasty in 916. He had to crush opposition within his own clan however. He was trying to centralize his state and although he favored many of the Khitan institutions over Chinese ones, he was copying the Türks and the Chinese as well. In fact, for Abaoji like many other nomadic leaders China was not the center of the world or the center of human civilization. As suggested by Twitchett and Tietze, China was only source of economic wealth and products that were needed as necessities, luxuries or trade goods by the non-self-sufficient nomads¹⁹⁴. This made any Chinese title given to him by a series of five consecutive short-lived dynasties and their unsuccessful rulers meaningless. One aspect of sovereignty which was different for the Türks and the Chinese from the traditional Khitan way of selecting a ruler was the time period that a Khan served. For the Türks and other Turkic tribal confederations, a Khan was chosen for life and unless he was defeated and dethroned which meant the loss of mandate of heaven in the Turkic and Chinese traditions, he would continue to rule as a Khan until his death or abdication. In the Khitan tradition however, a Khan was chosen to serve for only three years. Three years later he could be replaced by another Khan in the Qurultai. In addition to this, the Turkic tradition dictated that the ruler could be initially followed by persons of his first blood, especially the sons. But in the Khitan tradition, the strongest relative from the male lineage was eligible whether he is a son, a nephew, a cousin or a brother. This created a problem for Abaoji who wanted to build up a more permanent state. Therefore, before announcing the founding of a new dynasty based partly on Chinese partly on Turkic models, he had to overcome and crush the opposition. He killed most of

¹⁹⁴ Twitchett, Denis; Tietze, Klaus-Peter (1994). "The Liao". In Franke, Herbert; Twitchett, Denis. *The Cambridge History of China, Volume 6, Alien Regime and Border States, 907-1368*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p: 53-4

the chieftains who could rival him after he was elected Khan. He did not experience a serious opposition from the other clans following this. In 910 he also did not have a new Qurultai to either reelect him or elect a new ruler. However, there was a resistance growing within his own clan to his omission of the Khitan tribal traditions. These traditions dated back to very early times of a rather egalitarian society in Manchuria which would be also witnessed by the Chinese and Koreans regarding the Jürchens and Mongols who followed the Khitans and who like Khitans had always been vassals of other states. Due to this, a centralized clan administration that could lead to larger confederations or states based on a determined succession of a ruler coming from a certain bloodline did not develop among these peoples until they had the opportunity to establish their own states. In fact, this rather primitive structure in the first place enabled Abaoji to assume the throne without having to fight his way for a dynastic change from Yaolian to Yelü. But this structure also would not enable for a permanent state or a confederacy to exist for a long time under a strong leadership and continue an expansionist policy as can be seen from the feuds and inner wars within the Khitans for as long as historical records kept by the Chinese and the Koreans shows us. In fact, as Twitchett and Tietze suggest, one of the reasons behind the dynastic change within the Khitans could be the danger brought with the chaos following the collapse of the Tang. As the Tang empire collapsed, the threat from the south ironically increased. The governors on the border regions militarized their provinces further for the inner strife and since they were no more strained by the Tang court against raiding the vassal tribal territories, the Chinese border generals often turned to raid the nomad neighbors and take their people as slaves as well as their horses and sheep¹⁹⁵. Therefore, he might have decided to rule for a lifetime at such a critical point without having

¹⁹⁵ Twitchett and Tietze, "The Liao," 56.

to bow to the clan elders for his reelection. In 912 and 913 there were two rebellions to his rule mainly by his brothers. He crushed these rebellions and had the rebels executed except for his brothers who again rebelled in 916 and 917 as he was announcing a Chinese style dynasty in 916. but these rebellions also gave him a chance to curb the power of the Yelü clan aristocracy who could pose a greater threat to his and his lineage's rule if unchecked. As he announced the founding of the Liao dynasty, he also initiated a new calendar and an era name as well as establishing a Chinese style capital city named Shangjing (上京 means upper capital). Lastly, he also erected two Confucian temples which is unfailingly a symbol of his inclinations towards establishing a Chinese style state. Later on, the Liao dynasty also reestablished the state examinations system based on Confucianism. But the Khitans were barred from entering these exams in order to prevent them from being assimilated by the sedentary Chinese culture. But despite assuming all these trappings of a Chinese emperor, Abaoji and most of successors still remained as nomads. Classical Chinese thought and historiography mostly anticipates civilization of barbarians through being introduced to Chinese culture and willingly giving up their barbarian ways. Thus, the Chinese description of Khitans who were crude and understanding of the ways of the sedentary world (though their institutions were primitive compared to even the previous nomadic states) was a one-sided view. For instance, when they invaded huge Chinese territories, they only took what they could, which is treasures rather than land. But Abaoji and his successors initially had to turn to an example for their state since they did not have an experience in governing a state rather than a tribal union which could easily dissolve or change hands.

On the other hand, Abaoji did not establish the Liao dynasty solely on Chinese example. While it is generally assumed that he established the institutions of the state based on the Chinese example and yet modified them to suit their needs, the

influence of the Balhae kingdom and its institutions are mostly overlooked. Until recently, the Balhae kingdom which was founded in 698 by the remainders of the Goguryeo kingdom has been ignored by the Korean and foreign historians as a part of Korean history. But it should be noted that especially the sedentary population of the kingdom who later heavily influenced the Khitan state were of Goguryeo origin with close ethnic ties to the Koreans of the Silla kingdom to the south. In fact, the Goryeo dynasty received the Balhae nobility and immigrants fleeing the Khitan invasion as fellow countrymen since the founders of Goryeo, though fictively claimed to be the reestablishment of the Goguryeo state during the second three kingdoms era of Korea¹⁹⁶. Balhae kingdom was ruled by an ethnic Goguryeo aristocracy closely related to the people of the Korean Peninsula, and yet had many subjects of Mohe ethnic origins who were closer the Jurchens or the later Manchus. Goguryeo people are also thought to be of originating in a Manchurian homeland but their horse riding skills distinguished them from the neighboring peoples and a branch of them soon also invaded the south-western part of the Korean Peninsula and established the Baekje kingdom and allied with the Japanese and probably also established a dynasty there¹⁹⁷. After their demise at the hands of the unified Tang and Silla forces, the Goguryeo aristocracy either had to submit to Silla or run away. The remainders had the opportunity to reestablish a state in the late 7th century and even regain territory in western Manchuria which would bring them later to conflict with the Khitans

¹⁹⁶ For further details on the three kingdoms era of Korea see chapter iii, also see: Ilyon, *삼국유사 [Samguk Yusa: Legends of the Three Kingdoms]*;

¹⁹⁷ For theories on the Korean origins of the Japanese imperial clan, see: Lewin, “Japanese and Korean: The Problems and History of a Linguistic Comparison”; Herman Ooms, *Imperial Politics and Symbolics in Ancient Japan: The Tenmu Dynasty, 650-800* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2009); Wontack Hong, *Relationship Between Korea and Japan in Early Period: Paekche and Yamato Wa* (Seoul: Ilsimsa, 1988).

who also laid claim to the same territory. But as the Khitans rose to power during the ninth century, the Balhae kingdom was in social and political turmoil like all of its neighbors. The Balhae aristocracy were sedentary people living in walled cities. They continued the Goguryeo tradition successfully and even sent embassies to Japan contributing to and influencing especially the Buddhist culture in Japan remaining as their only continental link following the wars between the Tang and Silla forces against the Baekje and Goguryeo where Japan sided against Tang and Silla on the side of Baekje and expected a Tang and Silla attack for a long time and cut its ties with China and the Korean Peninsula which were the main sources of cultural flow to Japan. The Goguryeo culture was no inferior to the Chinese. Although they could not develop their own writing system like the Turks, they erected steles, rivaled Tang not only in military but also in art and other areas of culture creating a unique cultural sphere in Manchuria. Balhae Kingdom further expanded this and continued to develop cities and arts. Like Goguryeo and Baekje Kingdoms, the Balhae kingdom also had five capital cities which would later be taken by both the Khitans and the Jürchens. They also established state universities and held state exams on the Chinese model the graduates of which were recognized even by the Chinese. In fact, Balhae was called as a shining land in the east by the Chinese whose country was in turmoil and rumbles after the An Lushan rebellion and many Chinese also immigrated to their land. But this did not continue long. There were frictions between the Balhae aristocracy and their subject peoples who were ethnically and linguistically different. The Balhae people who dwelled in cities were economically exploiting the Mohe people who dwelled in villages and huts. These Mohe people were later called as Jürchen and finally as Manchus. Like early Mongols, they were hunters and peasants rather than herdsmen and they did not own many horses contrary to the general assumption of their image in historiography. These frictions soon turned into rebellions and the Balhae state was already in an internally and economically weak position by the time of the Khitan invasions. But on the

cultural sphere their influence grew further as the Balhae people were the only population initially available to the Khitans and later the Jürchens with a highly developed sedentary culture. Their system of five capital enabled them and their later Khitan conquerors to more firmly and flexibly control lands under their rule with different ethnic, economic, geographic and social conditions. A Chinese style centralized rule from a single capital could estrange peoples living far from the capital under different circumstances. Also, Balhae aristocracy and literati provided the Khitans with the personnel needed for setting up a government in their new state. But in order to eliminate any moves towards independence which were felt in rebellions after the initial conquest of Balhae by the Khitans, the Khitans moved the Balhae aristocracy to the Liao capital Liaoyang. These people continued to play a major role in the governmental arena as well as cultural arena up to the Mongol times who also registered the Balhae people as a distinct ethnicity in their censi¹⁹⁸. Thus, the initial structure of the Khitan state was a mixture of nomadic Khitan and other tribes and later were added the city dwelling Balhae and village dwelling Jürchens. This initially did not create a problem for the Khitan rulers after they crushed the initial Balhae rebellions which could have given rise to a Balhae revival. The Balhae ruling class living in the cities had already been a minority in their kingdom in terms of population. And the Balhae aristocracy and literati already had experience in direct contacts and governing nomadic and semi-nomadic populations which made it easier to establish a Balhae based bureaucracy within the Khitan Empire.

After their conquest of the Balhae kingdom, the Khitans were more interested in consolidating their grip over their new territories and expanding their rule over the steppe peoples rather than intervening in the affairs of China to their south or

¹⁹⁸ Koichi Tamura, *동아시아의 도성과 발해* [*Dong Asiaeui Doseonggwa Balhae*], *Ostasiatische Stadtfestungen Und Balhae* (Seoul: Tongbuga Yeoksa Jaedan, 2008).

Korea to their east. Although China was disintegrated and the Khitans had the military power to seize some territory, the Khitan rulers did not have a great interest in ruling over China. In fact, even the Balhae kingdom was initially indirectly ruled due to the fear of rebellions and realization that the Khitans were inexperienced in governing sedentary areas. Dongdan kingdom was created and given under the rule of Yelü Bei who was the heir apparent of Abaoji. But after his death, his wife and empress Shulü Ping who commanded an army of 200,000 soldiers and either maintained peace within the empire when his husband was campaigning or even campaigned herself as an experienced general backed the claim of Yelü Deguang, the second son of Abaoji. Her choice was due to the very fact why Abaoji chose him as the heir apparent and ruler of Balhae territory. Bei was influenced not only by the Khitan tradition but was also adept at Chinese culture and was good at arts and understanding towards sedentary civilization while Deguang was seen as a more traditional Khitan. Sensing that Bei would not be able to maintain the allegiance of the Khitan nobility or the loyalty of the nomadic subjects who were the backbone of the army and the empire, Shulü Ping opted for supporting Deguang. Bei realized that his claim to the throne despite his father's will was infeasible, supported his younger brother and retired to the Balhae territory which later was put under direct Khitan control due to the fear of becoming a power base for Bei. Unlike traditional Chinese, the women always played prominent roles in the nomadic societies and could become adept commanders and politicians, and were more in favor of nomad traditions rather than Sinification. Bei sensing that his life was not secure, fled to the Later Tang in northern China where he was later killed under suspicious circumstances. The Khitans on the other hand, backed a rebellion in northern China against the Later Tang and were essential in the establishment of the Later Jin in 936. In return for their military aid, Shi Jing Tang who founded the dynasty gave the Khitans sixteen prefectures in the North-East.

The seizing of the sixteen prefectures which lay on the border were due to strategic reasons rather than economic ones but they became a thorn in the internal affairs and foreign affairs of the Khitans until the end of the dynasty. Abaoji, the founder of the dynasty established a dual system of Northern and southern administrations. The northern administration was responsible for the nomadic tribes including the Khitans while the southern administration was responsible for the administration for the administration of the sedentary population living in the cities mainly in the south of the empire. This system was created after the conquest of Balhae but was needed to be further developed after the seizure of the sixteen Chinese prefectures. These provinces were originally economically and culturally unimportant areas of China but once in the Khitan hands they became the most populous and economically important areas within the Liao empire. Yanzhou, modern day Beijing, became the southern capital of the Liao dynasty. But the Khitans did not and could not expand further into China. After the death of Shi Jing Tang his son Shi Chonggui had an anti-Khitan policy, he deported the Khitan envoys and seized the goods belonging to the Khitan merchants which resulted in a war and the invasion of Kaifeng, the Later Jin capital in 946. This could have resulted in a permanent occupation the Northern China plain as was to happen with the Jurchens. But the Khitans began looting and extracting heavy taxes which resulted in rebellions and forced the Khitans to retreat. On the way back, Deguang died and another succession crisis which resulted in the enthronement of Yelü Ruan who was the son of Yelü Bei but was raised by Yelü Deguang after his escape. In China, the Later Han dynasty was established by the Shatuo Turks. In fact, later Jin and the preceding later Tang were also established by the Shatuo Turks who used to be border commanders during the late Tang period. Thus, other than the first and the last of the five dynasties, all were founded by Shatuo Turks and Later Han continued its

existence as a kingdom¹⁹⁹ and a Khitan ally until it was invaded and annexed by the Song. Ruan felt that he had to refine the governmental institutions of the south and made the structure of the southern administration closer to the Tang system²⁰⁰.

The Khitans continued to grow their empire mainly towards the steppe and were content at consolidating their rule in Manchuria. At this point the Khitans came to contact with the Mongols as well as the Tatars who were in a feud with each other. In many cases the Khitans clashed with the Tatars and the Mongols became their allies. Although a unified China could pose a great threat to the Khitan state, they knew well that a unified steppe was a greater danger if turned against them. Therefore, they tried to rule the steppe directly whenever possible and indirectly if the tribes were beyond the reach of a centralized northern administration commissioned with the governance of the tribes. The Northern administration was actually responsive for the Khitan areas, but the Khitans also applied the Tang system of Jimi (loose reigns) for controlling the steppe. As their power expanded further west, they came to conflict with the Tangut Western Xia state who also laid claim in the tribal steppe and desert areas to the west. In fact, this reunion of the steppe in Mongolia under the Khitans was what gave them their military successes against Song China and the Tangut Western Xia states. But before facing another nomadic power, the Khitans wanted to make sure that their rear to the east and south were secure. As the Tang dynasty collapsed in China, so did the Silla kingdom collapse into three kingdoms, and eventually Korea was

¹⁹⁹ The only kingdom of the ten kingdoms to be in the north, while the other nine kingdoms were all in the south, see chapter I for further details.

²⁰⁰ Twitchett, Denis; Tietze, Klaus-Peter (1994). "The Liao". In Franke, Herbert; Twitchett, Denis. *The Cambridge History of China, Volume 6, Alien Regime and Border States, 907-1368*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p: 76-9

reunited by Wang Geon who was enthroned as king Taejo of the newly established Goryeo dynasty in 918. He claimed his kingdom to be the revival of the Goguryeo kingdom. And although this claim did not bring him into conflict with the Balhae kingdom who also claimed descent from the same kingdom, it later brought Goryeo into direct conflict, both military and diplomatic, with the Khitans. The Goryeo kingdom had newly been established when they came face to face with the Khitans. Though a small kingdom on the edge of the Asian continent, the Koreans had a long tradition of resisting much superior Empires. Both the Goguryeo kingdom from whom the Goryeo claimed descent and the Silla kingdom which Goryeo overthrew could repulse Tang invasions at the height of the Tang power. The Khitans were well aware of the military discipline and tradition of resistance in Korea. The initial friction between the two sides started when the Goryeo gave refuge to a Balhae general and his soldiers and gave him the Goryeo royal surname Wang. The tensions did not initially escalate into war, but as the Liao built fortresses along the Yalu river, Goryeo began an alliance with the Song against Khitan invasion. For the Khitans Goryeo posed two threats. It could kindle rebellions within the Balhae population with whom they shared cultural and ethnic similarities. Secondly their alliance with the Song could prove dangerous if they acted together hitting the Khitan forces from the rear. In 992, Khitans began an invasion, and the Goryeo asked for help from the Song. But as the Khitans began swiftly going southwards, their forces were held at Chongchon river where they began negotiating their terms. The Khitan side wanted complete surrender but the Koreans did not accept, and as a result the Korean king became a vassal to the Khitans and cut off its ties with the Song since Song did not send any help making an alliance with a remote and unresponsive country meaningless. Goryeo cut off its alliance and vassalage with the Song and began sending regular embassies and tribute to the Khitan. But in 1009, the Goryeo King Mukjong was murdered by his general Gang Jo who enthroned an infant boy, Hyeonjong and began ruling in his stead as a regent. The

Khitans could not ignore the murder of their vassal king, therefore, in order to avenge him they sent a large army but experienced one of the most crushing defeats at the hands of the Goryeo forces in 1018. as a result, they came to terms with the new king as both sides realized that calling to arms would only harm both sides in a protracted war. Hyeonjong was recognized as the King of Goryeo by the Liao and in return sent regular tribute and envoys to the Liao until their collapse.

Also by the late 10th century China was beginning to be reunified by the Song dynasty. In 960, Zhao Kuangyin established the Song dynasty and continued the work of the Zhou dynasty which preceded him and began a serious work of reunification of China. He only had to dethrone a six-year-old child with the consent of the other strong generals who saw the dangers of having an infant on the throne at such a crucial point. Therefore, both China and Korea had new dynasties with a renewed vigor to regain their claimed territories which posed a danger for the Khitans. By the year 978, Song dynasty had already invaded all the nine kingdoms to the south. The only independent state within China proper was the Northern Han who were allies with the Khitans. The rulers of the Northern Han were of Shatuo Turkic origin and had been Khitan allies for a long time though now pressed into the Shansi region. In fact, even the first Later Han Emperor took this title from the Khitan Emperor Shizong and from then on the Later Han despite its military culture was not able to defend itself against attack by a unified China and needed Khitan help. The Khitans on the other hand needed the Later Han as an ally for strategic reasons against the Song. Attacks from the Song directly against the Khitan territories could easily be circle from the back by the Later Han bases in Shansi, and also they made the border to a hostile Song with the Khitans narrower and easier to defend²⁰¹. In 976 and 977, the Song

²⁰¹ Twitchett and Tietze, "The Liao," 85.

attacked the Later Han but with Khitan help they were able to defend their territory. But in 979 the Song attacked again and prevented the Khitan troops from aiding the Later Han kingdom and invaded the whole kingdom after the surrender of the king in Taiyuan. China was finally reunited, but Emperor Song Taizong was not content with only reuniting China but also wanted the sixteen prefectures back from the Khitans. But he was severely defeated and humiliated after being wounded and forced to flee alone on a donkey cart²⁰². The Khitans who solved their internal problems and consolidated their power in their new territories were now faced with a strong and reunified China, much larger and richer than them as well as a strong Tangut presence to their west as a rival and Jürchens who were beginning to cause problems beginning from the late 9th century onward until they eventually brought about the end of the Empire. Also at this point, the relation between the Khitans and the Chinese also changed from Khitan supremacy against the short-lived five dynasties in Northern China to equality with a strong Song to the south, though beaten was also able to repulse the ensuing Khitan invasion.

But the Khitan state was undergoing some internal political change too which would enable it to become the supreme power in the East Asian politics until its demise in the 12th century. In 982, Emperor Jingzong who won a sounding victory against the Song died at a young age. His son later to be enthroned as Shenzong and to have the Liao Empire see the apex of its power was still an infant at this point. As a result, Shenzong and the state were under the care of Empress dowager. Chengtian was coming from the Xiao clan. The Khitan Yelü royal house took its brides from the Xiao clan as a custom. A similar custom was later adopted by the Chinggisid royal houses as well. This enabled the royal house with politically able and experienced brides who could in times of crises become able

²⁰² Ibid., 86.

regent empress dowagers and later good instructors for their sons. The Xiao clan itself was deeply involved in the state politics and administration and therefore all the daughters that were to become brides to the Yelü royalty were coming from politically able families. Chengtian's family background provided her with allies from the court circles who helped her greatly in administering the realm. Like other nomadic societies, women had a more prominent role in society and politics. As can also be attested in the secret history of the Mongols, even Temujin was respectful and fearful of her mother who could scold him even after he became the great Qaghan and he also paid attention to the advice of his first wife Börte as in the case of deciding to leave Jamukha which later led to friction between the two²⁰³. This social fact did not change with the Khitans, Jürchens or the Mongols after they established Chinese style dynasties. The role of women both within the society and within the court politics was felt even more strongly as these dynasties came to maturity in terms of their governmental maturity. In fact, the Empress dowagers, the mothers of the Emperors played a more crucial role in foreign policy decision making than any other man within the court. This same pattern was true even at the end of the Manchu Qing dynasty at the end of the 19th century. In dynasties established by the ethnic Han Chinese the court women and mothers played prominent roles too, in fact, Wu Zetian, the only Empress in Chinese history was of ethnic Han Chinese origin. But the influence of the Empress dowager would wane as her son grew to maturity and the influence of women on the emperor was shunned by the statesmen which would cause them to seek allies with the eunuchs, and the women were limited to their quarters physically which forced them to have allies outside in the typically patriarchal Chinese society. But the Khitan women could even field their own

²⁰³ Francis Woodman Cleaves, trans., *The Secret History of the Mongols*, vol. 1 (New York: Harvard University Press, 1982).

orda²⁰⁴ and did not need intermediaries for communicating with the outside world and the most prominent men working for the Khitan government during the reign of Shenzong were men selected by Chengtian. Chengtian did not need their help or protection for maintaining the palace under her control like Empress dowagers in the Song court to the North, the men needed her consent and protection for governing the country especially against the Yelü clan aristocracy²⁰⁵. Therefore, the prominent role of women in policy making should be taken into consideration when analyzing the policies of the nomadic Empires of the era. Mainly the women were influential in two opposing ways. One was that, the empress dowagers were mostly protectors of the traditional nomadic culture and society and way of thinking since they were not given a Chinese style education when they were being brought up. Therefore, they could communicate with the traditional segment of the Khitan society well. This was how Chengtian could have some of the most prominent commanders of the Yelü clan to work for a child emperor. On the other hand, the women coming from the Xiao consort clan were brought up with a political knowledge and knew when to compromise with or adopt Chinese political institutions or use Chinese personnel for the benefit of the royal house since they knew well that curbing the power of the Khitan

²⁰⁴ Also, spelled as ordo, and ordu and passed to the English language as horde, but means army in a nomadic sense.

²⁰⁵ Contrary to the classical historiography, the Khitans did not discriminate against the Chinese and the Han family who was of Chinese origin was one of the most influential families within the politics of the Shenzong era, yet they came from a Han Chinese background of Hebei origin. Many other Chinese with Hebei background played prominent roles in the Khitan state structure. In fact, while the Khitans from Yelü origin could conspire against the royal house with traditional claims to rulership, the Chinese and the Balhae were more dependent on the Yelü royal house for their power and protection and tended to be more royal. For More details on the Khitan inner politics see: Naomi Standen, *Unbounded Loyalty: Frontier Crossings in Liao China* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2007).

aristocracy was also vital for the longevity and the stability of a centralized state.

Abaoji was not only the founder of the dynasty as merely a good commander and a conqueror but at the same time as a good state builder. He laid the foundations for a state that could encompass both the nomadic and the sedentary segments and areas at the same time and could flexibly handle problems that arise from within and without due to relations with both the nomads and the sedentary neighbors. It was during his reign also that the Khitans for the first time not only dominate their nomadic neighbors rather than dominated by them, but also conquered and incorporated a large sedentary kingdom, Balhae, at the heart of Manchuria and also made the Chinese emperors in the North China plain diplomatically at least his inferiors. But the state he built up was still crude and lacking in many respects and needed more time to mature. The reign of Shenzong on the other hand was yet another turning point in Khitan history. It was during this time that a system of diplomacy based on long-lived and durable treaties came to dominate the east Asian foreign affairs. The treaty of Chanyuan signed in 1004 long before the Treaty of Westphalia in Europe, set an example for the states in East Asia relations based on mutual treaties, demarcation of geographical borders and respect towards the sovereignty of the neighboring states and other novelties in the arena of international diplomacy based more on resorting to arms previously. Although this treaty did not completely remove war and violence, this treaty and other treaties based on this one provided more stable relations and longer lasting peace for the signing parties. The events that led to the signing of the Treaty of Chanyuan are complex and have also to do with the internal political affairs of Song China and the Khitan Liao state.

As mentioned above, after Song Taizong reunited the southern nine kingdoms, he set his eyes on the Northern Han kingdom, the only independent state left in China. After winning a victory against the Northern Han troops of the Shatuo

Turks and their Khitan allies, he hurriedly rushed to the sixteen prefectures in the Hebei region which were held by the Khitans since the Later Jin Emperor gave them in exchange for military support. But the Song army was soundly defeated and Emperor Song Taizong had to flee the battlefield in humility. After Shenzong came to the Khitan throne as an infant, Song once again attacked the Khitans hoping to be successful this time against the Khitan without a clear leadership. But as mentioned above, Chengtian, the empress dowager herself was an experienced commander and also had the loyalty of the Khitan commanders who defeated the Song once more and forced them to retreat. The relations continued to sour as Zhenzong ascended to the Song throne in 997. Emperor Shengzong of the Khitans was by now a mature man and felt the need to prove himself to the Khitan nobility as an able commander and an emperor. In the Song court, however, a revanchist party was gaining power and those in favor of a more militant policy towards the Khitans were gaining the upper hand. Finally, in 1004, Shengzong acted first and passed into the Song territory and came close to the Song capital Kaifeng with more than 100,000 cavalry. Initially there was panic in the Song court as the Khitans advanced so swiftly easily defeating the Song defenses. But Emperor Zhenzong was persuaded to personally lead the troops against the Khitans instead of fleeing the capital, and this plan worked out as the morale rose sharply with the Emperor personally attending the camp. As neither the Song were able to repulse the Khitans, nor the Khitans were able to rout the Song army both parties came to an agreement. The Song side promised to give an annual tribute of 200,000 bolts of silk and 100,000 ounces of silver. In addition to this, the Song emperor would call the Khitan emperor as his elder which juxtaposed the two sides on an unequal standing in Chinese and nomadic worldviews with the nominal superiority of the Khitan side. Also, the two courts became a fictive family, every year exchanging envoys regularly on such events as the birthdays, funerals, new year celebrations and such. The Song side also accepted the Liao Emperor as a son of Heaven which was for the first time that a

Han Chinese regime in history accepted the superiority and the suzerainty of a foreign state and accepted the fact that there can be another son of heaven. There were hardliners within the Song court who opposed the treaty but until the arrival of the Mongols and the total destruction of the Song, every time the Song side attempted war, it ended with a military failure and the Song side had to increase the annual payment. But this payment, though a substantial source of income for the Liao court, was not as great a burden as some historians and the contemporaries view it. The burden of keeping a huge army surpassed multiple times the burden of the tribute paid to the Khitan side. And perhaps, without buying of peace at such a good price, the Song could have lost the northern China plain long before the Jürchens arrived against a Tangut Khitan alliance. While this treaty created inner tensions within the Song court between those of a revanchist party and those trying to culminate peace, the Song diplomacy's success in maintaining peace without having to resort to arms which in the Song case would be costlier has been ignored. The Song court, beginning with the Chanyuan treaty managed to hold on to as much territory as possible despite giving up the trappings of a superior imperial state. But the Song literati, though seem to be naive in their writings were well aware of the dangers they faced against a militarily much stronger rival who were not interested in “civilizing” themselves through peacefully and willingly submitting to the middle kingdom as the Confucians predicted. This treaty thus became a turning point for the following two centuries in China's foreign relations as well as the interstate relations of the other surrounding states.

Another long-lasting innovation was the result of the dual administration system of the Khitans. The Khitans created their own writing system and renovated the tribal administration system through the dual system. As they brought certain Khitan and nomadic institutions to the Chinese and Balhae sedentary areas they also brought Chinese and Balhae institutions and concepts to the nomads of the

Mongolian steppe as they advanced westward. The northern administration was responsible for the administration of the nomadic areas. Some nomads to the south and east of Mongolia became directly governed by this administration but their submission was not so peaceful. The Zulu tribes of Tatar origin fought ferociously to retain their independence. Some tribes were also on the border with the Tanguts giving them a choice to switch their allegiance which created tensions between the two states until the destruction of the Liao by the Jurchens. But the Khitan administration for the first time in history brought Chinese concepts and administrative institutions so deeply into the Mongolian steppe. The Mongols were not immune to these innovations. For instance, one of the most well-known Mongolian administrative institutions, the Darugachi system was originally a Khitan invention and was later also adopted by the Mongols. The Khitans, initially a nomadic people borrowed many institutions and concepts from the Balhae and the Chinese from very early times onwards. Even during the time of Abaoji, there were many of his comrades who were literate in Chinese to a certain extent. This process continued further. The Khitans were deliberately barred from taking the state exams, and yet many Khitans entered and passed the exams which shows their adaptation of a Chinese style education. But this fact also shows that the Khitans in order to retain their ethnic identity in a country where they were a minority, assigned certain roles to certain ethnicities through the dual administration system. The military affairs were dealt with by the Khitans while the Chinese and Balhae people dealt with bureaucracy, trade and agriculture. This same system of ethnic boundaries and assigning certain roles to certain ethnicities was first adopted by the Jurchens and later by their once vassal Mongols who especially during the reign of Qubilai Khan further elaborated this dual system created by the Khitans. It was not totally new, as mentioned above, the Türks who also extensively used the services of the Sogdians but never before was this system elaborated to this extent.

After the death of Emperor Shengzong, the Khitans were plagued with internal succession crises and coups which weakened the state politically and loosened its grip on the nomadic areas. The Jürchens to the north had been continuously rebelling for a long time. As they were united under a strong and charismatic leadership by Aguda. The Jürchens who remained outside of the direct Khitan control in the northern parts of eastern Manchuria were named untamed Jürchens and Aguda as their leader began a local rebellion which unexpectedly turned into the conquest of the Liao dynasty swiftly after the foundation of the Jin state in 1115. the Liao state ended in 1125 after the capture of their last emperor Tianzuo and gave way to the Jin dynasty who became even greater but also adopted the Liao statecraft to a full extent. Today the Liao large and small scripts have not been completely deciphered and there is much to be solved about their language, identity and administration since this once great nation has been totally vanished and assimilated. But their contribution to the civilization of east Asia is undisputable though overshadowed by the zeal shown towards the Song culture and institutions by historians of culture, intellectual history and social history.

4.4. The Tangut Xi Xia State (1038-1227)

The Tanguts were a mixed people mainly composed of the Qiang. The Qiang on the other hand were, like the Huns and the Türks, an ethnic melting pot of peoples. However, the linguistic data from the Tangut sources that survived shows a linguistic similarity between the Tangut and Tibeto-Burman languages. During the late Tang times the Tanguts who lived in the Amdo region of modern North eastern Tibet were conquered by the Tibetan Empire. The Tanguts that did not want to become Tibetan subjects sought refuge in Tang China which was

declining, and were settled in the Ordos region in the Northwestern border area under their leaders who claimed Tuoba descent²⁰⁶. This area could prove both dangerous and advantageous for the residents. It was a good area to raise horses for the cavalry and also for selling to the Chinese market. It was also a huge center of salt production which could be sold in the Chinese market as well as to the steppe peoples. But it was also open to attacks from both China and the steppe as well as Tibet. But the Tangut leaders proved to be resourceful and gradually established a state that played an important role in the political, economic and cultural spheres of East Asia beginning from the five dynasties era until the destruction of their state along with the rest of the states of East Asia by the Mongols during the 13th century. In fact, they were the first sedentary state to be invaded by the Mongols. Yet, their success has long been overshadowed by the Mongol conquest and the fact that they survived the collapse of the Tang, Song invasion attempts which swallowed the Shatuo Turks to further east despite Khitan aid, the Khitan assaults, the Jürchen invasions all of which had further devastating effects on the other states of the area.

The Tangut state has been called as Xi Xia, or Western Xia by the Chinese and most of the foreign historians. It was called Minyak by the Tibetans and the Tanguts themselves and Tangut by the Turks and Mongols and this name became

²⁰⁶ Tuoba as pronounced in Chinese and Tabgach as pronounced in old Turkic was the name for the royal house of the Wei dynasty who were of Turkic origin and it is probable that either the royal Tangut clan was of a Turkic origin, perhaps a branch of the Tuoba royal house who settled in the original homeland of the Tanguts and later assimilated into the Qian majority, or the Tuoba name which still possessed a prestige within the steppe people was deliberately assumed by the ruling house to legitimize their rule in their new home where Turkic, Mongolic and Chinese people resided and mixed with each other. Rather than trying to rule an new an alien area with difirent ethnicities and cultures as yet an another foreign element, using the Tuoba name could legitimize them in the eyes of all the ethnicities within the region. See: Okazaki Seito, タングート古代史研究 [*Tangu-to Kodaishi kenkyuu: Research on Ancient Tangut History*], vol. 27 (Kyoto: Toyoshi Kenkyukai, 1972).

more widespread also in English language usage as well as other languages such as Persian and Arabic through the central Asian merchants who also made the name *Khitai* a common name for China in the west until the 19th century. Like the *Khitans*, the *Tanguts* also have been assimilated by other peoples in the *ordos* region after their state fell. Today the *Tangut* language is accepted as an extinct language although there are some claims relating to the dialects spoken in western Sichuan that these could be a continuation of the *Tangut* language since there were families settled to this region later on. But since they are an extinct people today like the *Khitans*, it would be wrong to call them as of Tibetan origin, though they were linguistically and ethnically related, other ethnic influences and cultural traits also appear and *Tanguts* as understood from their own writings, seem to view themselves as a distinct group from the Tibetans. But in any case, they seem to be part of the *Qiang* groups as we understand from the Chinese and Tibetan sources beginning from the Han times onwards. But, they also seem to be related to the *Tuyuhun* tribes who were settled to the area by the *Türks* but originally came from the *Goguryeo* Kingdom in Manchuria and North Korea²⁰⁷. The *Tuyuhun* people were living like nomads but also were trading on the silk road and until their states fell to the Tibetans one by one, they played an important role as intermediaries between China, Tibet and Central Asia.

The *Tanguts*, though ethnically closer to the Tibetans, avoided Tibetan domination since the Tibetans were more prone to intervening to the internal affairs of their subject tribes through sending governors to the provinces called *horns* in the Tibetan system. Therefore, they first allied themselves with the Korean *Tuyuhun* tribes and then with Tang China and eventually became Chinese vassals under the *Tang Jimi* (loose reigns) system to avoid direct Tibetan

²⁰⁷ Lev Gumilëv, *Avrasyadan makaleler-1*, trans. Ahsen Batur, vol. 1 (Istanbul: Serenge, 2006).

domination by the 630s. The Tangut chieftains were assigned as governors to their own tribes. This coincided with the invasion of the Tuyuhun states by the Tibetan Empire. After the fall of the first Türk Qaghanate, the Eastern Türks were also settled in the ordos region and were governed again through the jimi system without interfering in their internal tribal affairs. The Tuoba chieftains were given the imperial surname Li (李). But the Tangut chieftains did not use the surname bestowed upon them as a favor and a prestige to rule the other tribes in the name of the Tang did not use this titular surname until the Five dynasties era after the collapse of the Tang. Tuyuhun and Türk migrations to the ordos region continued along with other Qiang tribes throughout the Tang era as the Tibetan advance towards North east increased. By the late 7th century, the Second Türk Qaghanate was established and immediately began attacks on the Northern borders of China. This was followed by a Turkic revolt in the Ordos region who refused to turn into farmers like the Chinese settlers. The Tang both managed to make peace with the Türk Qaghanate and to end the Turkic revolt. During both the raids and the revolt by the Türks from within and without China, the Tangut chieftains remained loyal to the Tang and in return were rewarded and became the most powerful group in the multi-ethnic Ordos region.

After the second Türk Qaghanate collapsed, it gave way to the Uighur Khanate who were more concerned with trade than war. While this brought relief to the Khitans in the east as explained above, the Uighurs emerged as rivals to the Tanguts in horse trade with China and the domination of the trade routes going west. The An Lushan rebellion and the Tibetan invasion of China became a turning point for the Tanguts. While the Uighurs sided with the Tang court against the rebels and later the Tibetans, the Tanguts were divided. The Tuoba groups mainly remained loyal while some other clans either switched their allegiances between the Tang and the Tibetans or remained Tibetan allies altogether. The 9th

century was a time of uncertainties and inner warfare and revolts for the Tanguts. As the Tang weakened, the Tanguts turned to each other as well as to the Chinese settlements. But in general, the Tanguts were becoming wealthier and possessing even more horse and livestock needed by the Chinese. By the mid-9th century the Uighur and Tibetan empires collapsed, the Tang though still alive was also about to collapse and could not hold its territories under control anymore. The Uighurs moved southward and with the help of the Tibetan tribes settled in modern day East Turkistan in their current homeland leaving the Mongolian steppe after their empire fell to the sudden attack by the Kyrgyz tribes. This power vacuum initially created havoc in the ordos region as the peoples dislocated in the surrounding areas began marauding the area. But this also brought political unity under the Tuoba clan. As the Tibetans and the Uighurs lost their power, the Tang support became more important in the Ordos region. With the prestige brought by the Tang titles and the economic advantages and bestowal of new prefectures in return for help during the collapsing years of the Tang dynasty, the Tuoba clan carefully consolidated its power in the Ordos region throughout the 9th and 10th centuries.

During the inner warfare that followed the An Lushan and Huang Chao rebellions, the Tanguts came into conflict with the Shatuo Turks in Shansi though both were on the same side with the Tang court loyalists. This feud continued into the five dynasties period. When the Shatuo Turks under the rule of Li Keyong allied with the Khitans, the Tanguts felt threatened and allied themselves with the Later Liang dynasty established by Zhu Wen. But enmities were also as volatile as the alliances during the five dynasties era. When the Later Liang dynasty was replaced by the later Tang Dynasty of the Shatuo Turks, the alliance between the Khitans and the Shatuo Turks turned into rivalry. The Tanguts recognized the new Shatuo regime as the sovereign of China including the Ordos region. At this point, the Tanguts still did not announce their independent state though in practice

they have become an independent entity. They also avoided interfering in the inner politics of China, though nominally a part of it. The Shatuo Turks tried to directly govern the Ordos region by assigning their own governor escorted by an army, but the Tanguts managed to repel them. The Shatuo Turks feared that there was a secret alliance between the Tanguts and the Liao dynasty. But the Tanguts actually viewed the Khitans as the greater evil since they were intent to conquer the whole steppe at this point which also included Tangut tribal areas. While the Tangut leadership was defending its territory against encroachments from the South East by the successive dynasties and North east against the ever-increasing power of the Khitans, they also had the task of unifying the Tangut tribes and consolidating their own central authority over the fiercely independent Tangut tribes. As the Song dynasty managed to reunite China, the only part of China left out of its control was the Ordos region. But the Song did not have to resort to arms for conquering this territory. Inner political struggles within the Tangut aristocracy forced the Tangut ruler Ji Peng to personally go to the Song court in Kaifeng and surrender his territories to the Song without a fight. Song Taizong sent his troops to Ordos region to bring the remaining Tangut aristocrats with the purpose of resettling them in other parts of China away from their tribal power bases. But Ji Qian, one of the Tuoba royal family members fled to north with his followers while the pro-Chinese Tanguts went to China willingly. Thus, the Tanguts were divided once more, this time as pro-Chinese and pro-independent lines. But the Tangut independence gradually came through a combination of successful guerilla warfare, marriage alliances with the other Tangut tribes and the Khitans, the war between the Khitans and the Song. But this war should not be viewed as an ethnic war between the Chinese and the Tanguts. While many Tangut chieftains saw it to their advantage to side with the Song and were only forcibly returned to the Tangut side, Li Ji Qian's one of the most able advisors was Zhang Pu a Chinese who also helped him to recruit many Chinese people to his army and government as he set up his state. In 1004, the Tanguts and the

Chinese came to an agreement and the Song side also formally returned the now reconquered territories to the Tangut side.

After this, the Tanguts turned their attention to west. The Hexi corridor on the trade routes to central Asia was vital in controlling the trade between China and the west. Therefore, the Tanguts turned towards the oases in the region. Liangzhou which was ruled by a coalition of Chinese and Tibetan tribes. These tribes were supported by the Song as allies against the Tangut. But the Tangut attacks resulted in the surrender of Liangzhou in 1003. however, on the way back, the Tanguts were attacked by the Tibetan tribes and defeated, Ji Qian was wounded and died soon after. But the Tanguts retaliated by assassinating their leader and soon afterwards the coalition began to scatter paving the way for the final Tangut conquest. But as the Tanguts expanded their territory, there was resistance from the Tibetans, the old masters of this area despite the collapse of their once strong empire. Some of the Tibetan tribes in the east of lake Kokonor grouped around a young boy descended from the ancient Yarlung royal house but soon there was discord between the boy who now grew and his patron, a Buddhist cleric who gave up his Buddhist clerical status took wives from different tribes to establish alliances and send envoys to Song China. This created a tension within the Tibetans since they were fighting against the Tangut encroachments to their lands, it seemed logical to ally with the Song but the Song border officials also exploited their lands and were no better than the Tanguts. Soon a war broke up and the Tibetans were defeated by the Song prefectural governor. This resulted in their retreat to further north in Qing Tang where they established a haven for the Tibetan and Uighur refugees fleeing the Tangut incursions and until its fall Qing Tang became an important and flourishing commercial and political center. Meanwhile, the Tanguts had a new leader, A Yi who was renamed Li De Ming with his reign title later on. After Ji Qian died, the Tanguts reinforced their push towards west. Before this they accepted to become a tributary state to the Khitan

Liao Empire to their North East. Li De Ming took his investiture from the Khitan leader, they also made peace with the Song and securing their east could easily concentrate their expansion westwards. The Uighurs in Ganzhou were their biggest target. But the Khitans were also intending to take this area for themselves. Also, the Zubu Tatars were harassing the Khitans and the Khitans were making regular campaigns to pacify this region to secure their flank from nomadic attacks. However, although they shared a common enemy, the Tanguts and the Khitans were not allies. To the contrary, they viewed each other as rivals.

The Tibeto-Uighur alliance was eventually conquered by the Tanguts. But the event of the first four decades of the 11th century had certain implications and effects on the region that would last until the Mongolian conquests. The multi-state system that began with the Tang, Türks and the Tibetan Empire was applied on an inter-imperial level and their dealings with their vassal states or tribes was not influenced to the extent of five dynasties and the continuing era. After they managed to repulse the initial attacks to their territory and proved their permanence in the region, both the Liao and the Song realized that the Tanguts were a force to be reckoned with in the East Asian politics. Both the Liao and the Song established official relations with the Tibetan kingdom in Qing Tang and the Uighur Khanate in Ganzhou and Shazhou²⁰⁸. Although not recognized as equals with the Song and Liao, they were on the protocol elevated to equal status with the Western Xia state of the Tanguts in an effort to curb their political power and influence in the region to their west. The He Xi corridor and the regions to the west were out of question for control for the Song and were remote lands, and even for the Liao, they were marginal border lands and were important only for

²⁰⁸ Shazhou Uighurs were probably annexed by Ganzhou Uighurs. The Shazhou Uighur leader was enfeoffed by the Liao and the Song but the information relating to them is hard to trace and it seems the Ganzhou group already swallowed them by the time the Ganzhou Uighurs themselves were annexed by the Tanguts in 1030s.

securing their western borders from raids into their pasture lands which was a vital source of income for their economy. But for the Western Xia, this area was crucial to uphold their state economically. Since neither the Liao nor the Song were willing to let a third party to enter the imperial equilibrium they tried to support the anti-Tangut regimes to the west just to control the Tangut expansion and growth. This on the other hand created a reaction from the Tanguts which had a wider effect towards the steppe. The Tanguts in return established relations with the Naimans, Karaits, Tatars and other nomadic tribes in the Mongolian steppe further expanding the multi-state system to the north. The pattern of interstate relations based on the superiority of two or three centers to the surrounding states and the equality in between these centers was applied this time to smaller scales after the fall of the Tibetan, Türk and Tang Empires and their successor states' failure to create empires at such large extents. The remaining Tibetan tribes in the North and east were becoming small political entities after Song or Liao support to stop the Tanguts who were striving to take the place of their old Empire, the Turco-Mongolian tribes likewise were falling under Khitan or Tangut influence and were trying to maintain their independence fiercely. But where the Khitans failed in subduing, the Tanguts managed to achieve their goals more resourcefully. Despite strong Uighur resistance Liangzhou, Shazhou and the other small states fell to the Tanguts by the 1040s, and the Tanguts blocked the way for the Tibetans in the Kokonor region sending envoys and tribute to the Liao as equals with the Tanguts in protocol. The Liao replied with sending a "hunting party" into the Western Xia which was defeated and resulted in the recognition of the Western Xia state as the Great Xia²⁰⁹. These events contradict the image in the Song documents of the nomads as hording together like a brotherhood to invade and end the "civilized world", that is China in the Song

²⁰⁹ McGrath and Wyatt, "Frustrated Empires: The Song-Tangut Xia War of 1038–1044."

intellectual mindset, especially the Neo-Confucian school. Neither the nomads of Mongolia were so willing to join the Khitans who shared a common culture, nor would the Tibetans be happy to join their Tangut cousins to form a greater polity. And in fact, there were many Chinese in the service of these states who fought side by side with them against the Song. This was most true for the Western Xia state. Its population was made up of Chinese, Tangut, Tibetan, Uighur, Turkic, Mongolian and other ethnicities such as the Sogdians. While the eastern half of their state was predominantly settled by a Chinese sedentary population, their newly acquired western lands were mixed with nomads and oasis cities of trade centers. To their north they had nomads of mixed origin who would later be united by the Mongols bringing about the fall of the Xi Xia state. Whether there was ethnic segregation within the society and state affairs is hard to determine for the Xi Xia State. But the Tanguts managed to integrate all the ethnic groups successfully to their state and throughout their reign there were no major ethnic clashes or uprisings.

On the other hand, both the Tanguts and the Khitans had to win victories to be recognized by their subjects as rulers with the mandate of heaven. The Khitans had to win major battles against the Song and the Tanguts had to win against the Khitans. But soon all sides understood that military action could not resolve their problems. This was especially true for the Liao-Xi Xia relations and Liao-Song relations. Song was wealthiest and most populous of the three kingdoms and it was very difficult to conquer and govern their area with such an overwhelming population as the Khitans bitterly experienced. On the other hand, the Song was unable to invade the Khitan territory and, as they would later learn, the Tangut territory. But while the Khitan and the Tangut could mount a formidable military power against Song China if united together, they never allied with each other and there was mistrust from the beginning between the Khitans and the Tanguts. The elimination of the once formidable Shatuo Turks who threatened the Tangut

existence even more than the Khitans was a warning for the Tanguts against Song attacks. But Song was also not able to attack to the Tangut with the bulk of its army since this would jeopardize their border to the east.

This equilibrium could have been broken to the disadvantage of the Xi Xia had it not been for the successes of its most prominent leader Yuanhao. Li Yuanhao, considered to be the greatest of the Tangut rulers who conquered the western pasture lands in He Xi including the Uighur areas was still a prince when he commanded armies to annex these areas²¹⁰. He was different from his father in many ways. While his father was in favor of a pro-Chinese policy and was ready to accept Chinese suzerainty, Yuanhao favored the nomadic lifestyle and was in favor of turning westwards for expansion and the strengthening of the steppe and nomadic base of the state. He had Han Chinese advisors who also gave him similar advice²¹¹. The very dilemma of having to choose between sedentary or nomadic lifestyle and state structure beginning with the Huns was once more being repeated in the Tangut case. Yuanhao however, was not an illiterate nomad despising the sedentary life. Like the Türk rulers Bilge Qaghan and his contemporary Khitan rulers to the east he was a learned man in Chinese and Tibetan classics and he was also well aware of the concepts of government and other ideas belonging to the Chinese world. The Tanguts in this respect were in fact more learned in general than the Khitans. They separated from their Tibetan

²¹⁰ Ruth W. Dunnell, "The Hsi Hsia," in *The Cambridge History of China: Alien Regimes and Border States, 907-1368*, ed. Denis C. Twitchett, Herbert Franke, and John King Fairbank, vol. 6, Cambridge Histories (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

²¹¹ Similar situation is seen in the case of the Türks when Bilgä Kaghan wanted to settle the Turkic population into cities in the Chinese fashion and to sinify the Empire just as the Tabgach did with the Wei dynasty before them in North China. His Chinese advisers and Tonyukuk who also might have Chinese descent or at least a Chinese cultural background opposed this idea.

cousins who also had a sedentary and written culture and continued to share Buddhist and other cultural assets with the Tibetans even after they immigrated to the Ordos region. And they became Tang subjects not through the Jimi²¹² system which governed the nomadic or semi-sedentary peoples outside their actual political and military reach, but they were settled within the Tang realm and although they retained their political autonomy, they were still Tang subjects and retained this point of view until the collapse of Tang, and until Yuanhao most Tangut rulers and chieftains were also ready to become Song subjects as long as they retained their status. Yuanhao is depicted as a righteous ruler who wanted to follow the traditions of his forefathers and favored the nomadic lifestyle and culture over the sedentary one in Chinese and Tangut sources. But as a boy he was raised in the sedentary Tibeto-Chinese fashion and by his time many Tanguts also became sedentary. Also, the Tangut kingdom was not made up of a homogeneous Tangut majority. There were Turkic and Mongolic nomadic tribes as well as Sogdian and Uighur sedentary or semi-sedentary people dealing mainly with commerce and to the south and east were a huge population of Han Chinese farmers dealing with agriculture. In fact, many members of Yuanhao's entourage were coming from this sedentary Han Chinese segment of the kingdom. In this respect, it would be naïve to think that Yuanhao was a romantic trying to promote a certain lifestyle and turning his back to the Chinese civilization. But he needed to be militarily and economically strong against two stronger neighbors. The Song and the Khitans both could mount larger armies and were also economically stronger. In fact, Tangut economy was depending on its sales of horse and salt and other goods to China since the Tang times and this dependence did not decrease with the independence. In fact, the areas to the west

²¹²Evgenii Ivanovich Kychanov, *Очерк истории тангутского государства [Oчерk Istorii Tangutskogo Gosudarstva: A Brief History of the Tangut State]* (Ripol Klassik, 2013).

and north where Yuanhao wanted to expand were settled by non-Tangut ethnicities. Thus, his aim cannot be a promotion of a Tangut ethnic core or nationalistic feelings in a modern sense. Yuanhao's policies should therefore be seen under a realistic political light.

His expansion towards the west had two purposes. One was to increase the military might of the kingdom through conquering more nomadic territories since the nomad horsemen were the base of the Tangut army. It is not surprising because the Khitans also began their conquests initially towards the Mongolian steppe as a pool to provide soldiers for their armies. Although the Ordos region was a strong base for providing horses and horsemen, the fact that the Song was commanding armies of grand scale totaling to a million by the time the Mongols arrived, the Tangut knew that they also needed larger armies if they did not wish to end up like the Later Han kingdom of the Shatuo Turks in Shanxi to their east. This expansion towards north and west to the steppe and the Uighur city states brought them in conflict with the Khitans who also encroached on the same areas. Some tribal groups were split between the two states and this created tensions between the two whenever these tribes crossed the borders. But the Tanguts continued their policy nonetheless.

The second reason for westward expansion was economic. Although the cities in the south and the east of the kingdom were the centers of agricultural and industrial production for the needed artifacts, they were minor cities on the margins of the old Tang Empire compared to the other cities within the Song. In this respect, even the sixteen prefectures and Yuzhou which is near modern day Beijing were borderlands with small economic importance for the Tang China. But the Tanguts were aware that expanding towards Song was not possible at this point. Therefore, the Uighur city states which became important centers of trade on the trade routes to central Asia would be important sources of income for the

Tangut state and would also provide more goods which could not be produced by the nomads. These city states resiliently defied attempts at taking them under control. They managed to keep their independence against Tibetan and later Khitan attacks. From 1008 until 1026 the Khitans made attempts at conquering the Uighur city states in the He Xi corridor. But despite some small victories the Khitan attempts proved to be futile. At around the same time, Tanguts also tried their luck and initially managed to take Liangzhou only to be driven out shortly afterwards. But eventually the Tanguts took Liangzhou, Guazhou and lastly Shazhou to further west. The Shazhou Uighurs are seen sending envoys and tribute to the Khitans in an effort to secure Khitan help for their survival²¹³. But although the Khitans themselves also tried to conquer the same area, this area was not as vital to the Khitans as it was to the Tanguts. This area was only a border area to their far west for the Khitans and was only important for controlling the Tatar and other tribes in the area. But a resourceful tactician like Yuanhao was more successful. But these conquests took place under the reign of Yuanhao's father Deming nevertheless. Although the later sources depict Deming as a pro-Chinese and more cautious ruler in favor of peace whereas his son Yuanhao as more of a hawk in favor of a pro-nomadic policy, it should be noted that Yuanhao could not possibly have undertaken these long and difficult campaigns without the consent and support of his father Deming, and if Deming did not approve of his son's policies, he could not have become the heir apparent during his lifetime despite being the eldest son.

Another such area was Kokonor. The Tanguts who originally came from near Kokonor began their attacks on the Tibetan tribes of the Kokonor region shortly after their conquest of He Xi Uighurs. Kokonor Region like the He Xi corridor

²¹³ Özkan İzgi, *Orta Asya Türk Tarihi Araştırmaları*, ed. Erkin Ekrem and Serhat Küçük (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 2014).

was an unimportant place during the Tang dynasty. Even for the Tibetan Empire, its sole importance came from its strategic location for mounting attacks on the Tang or the Turks to the north. Otherwise the Kokonor region was agriculturally unproductive and was no better a pasture land than the ones that the Tanguts already possessed. But its strategic location between Tibet, He Xi corridor and China as well as being on the trade routes linking China to central Asia made it an important trade center after the collapse of the Tang. The Tibetans in the Kokonor region allied themselves with the He Xi region Uighurs and also tried an alliance with the Khitans against the Tangut expansion. Their envoys however are recorded to have been intercepted by the Tanguts on the way to the Khitan Empire²¹⁴. The Tangut assaults to this region drew an attack from the Khitans against the Tanguts to prevent them from expanding further. Kokonor had no border with the Khitans neither had a vital importance for their interests. But they were potential allies in the west against both the Tanguts and the Song. Song also tried to assert its power in the Kokonor region but was ousted eventually by the Tibetans. But even though they faced resistance in the beginning, the Tanguts managed to conquer a large swathe of land on the Northeastern edge of the Tibetan plateau through a combination of diplomacy and skillful warfare.

These initial battles and the difficulties that they faced in the face of even weaker enemies such as the Tibetan tribes or the Uighur city states that lacked unity against the Tanguts taught one important lesson to the Tanguts: if they wanted to succeed or even survive against stronger neighbors to the east, they needed to use diplomacy skillfully. They managed to take the lands to their west and south only through eliminating Khitan and Song help or intervention and military success. But for the Tanguts, even after they conquered a large territory and managed to make an important source of income through these conquests, the struggle was

²¹⁴ Twitchett and Tietze, "The Liao," 92.

still not over. They had to reach a balance between the Song and the Khitans. Li Yuanhao announced himself the emperor of Great Xia State in 1038. This in return led to direct confrontation with the Song who considered the Tanguts as the successors of the regional governors of Ordos during the Tang times, not as an independent state. Therefore, in the long run they hoped that one day the Ordos region would return to their rule like the sixteen prefectures in the north east. Due to this point of view, declaration of a new Empire was unacceptable for the Song since this could set an example for the other ex-kingdoms as well as decreasing the prestige of the dynasty within China. A series of wars between the Song and the Xi Xia were fought while the Khitans were watching the consequences of the war. The Xi Xia imperial claim was no less dangerous to the Khitans since the Khitans were in favor of a North-South axis, but they also saw the opportunity to have an ally in the Tanguts that could divert the energies of the Song military, especially after the fall of the Later Han, the Khitans were directly face to face with the Song. The Tangut claim to descent from the Tabgach and an imperial title could and would later attract some tribes to the Tangut side. But in the steppe, the Khitans were always stronger than the Tanguts. While the Khitan and Song attempts to eliminate the Xi Xia failed, the Xi Xia on the other hand could not pose a sufficient threat to impose their imperial claim and equality to the Khitans and the Song. As a result of long lasting wars, the three sides came to a balance the Song and the Khitan Liao dynasties would be recognized as Empires and the Xi Xia state would internally become an empire with its own calendar and imperial regalia, but yet be a vassal to the Khitans and equals with the Song except the imperial title. The Song would in return pay the Xi Xia state annual “gifts” and more importantly let them trade along the border markets. The Khitans would become allies and the borders between the three states were demarcated, though the Khitan Tangut border and the tribes passing through these borders at will remained to be a problem. The Xi Xia state’s dealings with its neighbors on the diplomatic arena might seem to be an anomaly, but actually the

Xi Xia was a typical middle scale state. It could not be as imposing as its Khitan and Chinese neighbors to its east, but it could impose its will on its southern and western and sometimes northern neighbors as a superior or in the worst scenario as equals. Yuanhao gave up the family name Li bestowed on them by the Tang and began using Weiming which is a native title, and adopted the title Wuzi²¹⁵ which is translated by the Chinese as “the blue son of heaven”²¹⁶. Yuanhao continued with assuming new Chinese style calendar, although he could not manage to be equals with the Khitans and the Song on the diplomatic arena, the Tanguts asserted their independence through symbolic changes and militarily forcing the Song to open the border markets as well as not accepting the title zhen²¹⁷ meaning subject in his diplomatic correspondences with the Song. So, the Xi Xia state became de facto equals with the Song. For their inner consumption, both sides saved face. The Song did not recognize the Xi Xia as an Empire but the Xi Xia did not become its vassal either. Yuanhao continued with internal reforms molding the Xi Xia state, at least externally, like the Song example, but it was not an exact copy of the Song state²¹⁸. He introduced a new hair style for his subjects and decreed that if any man would not shave his hair in this new style, he could be killed by the people at will²¹⁹, similarly there were

²¹⁵ Li Dao, *续资治通鉴长编* [*Xu zi zhi tong jian chang bian: Addition to Mirror for Aiding Government, Long Edition*], 2nd ed. (Beijing: Zhonghua Publishing House, 1990), 185.

²¹⁶ Dunnell, “The Hsi Hsia,” 181.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 186.

²¹⁸ Okazaki Seito, *タングート古代史研究* [*Tangu-to Kodaishi kenkyuu: Research on Ancient Tangut History*], 27:123.

²¹⁹ Kychanov, *Очерк истории тангутского государства* [*Oчерк Istorii Tangutskogo Gosudarstva: A Brief History of the Tangut State*], 59.

some rules for the dressing²²⁰. Differentiating the hair style and dress were related to belonging to a certain political entity or a group in East Asia. Therefore, such reforms were aimed at creating a Xi Xia identity among the subject people different from Song and Liao. The equilibrium did not change even after the death of Yuanhao²²¹. The changes he made to the Tangut state by Yuanhao were long lasting. In this respect, he can be considered the most important ruler in its history due to securing its place in East Asia as well as founding the state on a strong base. After the death of Yuanhao, there was not a significant change in the borders of the Xi Xia State. The same was valid for a long time for the Liao and Song states until the arrival of the Jurchens to the scene.

The Xi Xia State had a system closer to that of the Liao rather than the Song, although it seemingly adopted and continued the Tang practices in government and administration. Yuanhao organized the military in the nomadic steppe fashions since the bulk of the army were cavalry from the steppe. As a result of this, the Xi Xia state began to form outwardly in a Chinese model while internally keeping the inner Asian character. In addition to the army, the Tanguts made one more novelty. They kept their native titles in their diplomatic dealings with the Song. As mentioned before, the Tanguts created their own script which comprised of approximately six thousand characters, and they began to use this script extensively in government, education and diplomacy. Like the Tibetans, their treaties with the Chinese were bilingual. Although many of the Tangut documents are lost to us today, the Song documents retain the Tangut titles with their Chinese

²²⁰ Dao, *续资治通鉴长编* [*Xu zi zhi tong jian chang bian: Addition to Mirror for Aiding Government, Long Edition*], 115.

²²¹ Yuanhao was assassinated by his own son in 1048.

transcriptions in the diplomatic documents²²². This was different from the Khitan and the later Jürchen cases, because the Khitans and the Jürchens claimed the mandate of heaven and therefore had a claim to rule the Middle kingdom. The Tanguts on the other hand were aware that they did not have sufficient military or political power for such a claim, and their only claim was equality with the Song. Therefore, they preferred to establish their own set of native institutions and titles to emphasize their independence from the Chinese world and to impose their own institutions and titles on the Song in their diplomatic affairs to have their distinct and independent character recognized. This made the Tangut Xi Xia state unique in East Asia. Although their contemporaries such as the Khitans and the Jürchens had their own native titles too, they all used Chinese style titles and symbols in their dealings with the Song dynasty. The reason for Tangut insistence on independence from Chinese norms did not lie in the superior power of the Tangut state. To the contrary, the Xi Xia elite was aware that they were a middle power between two great East Asian Powers, and as a result, they strove to maintain a separate identity from the Chinese polity. Unlike the Khitan Liao dynasty and the Jürchen Jin dynasty both of which claimed superiority to the Song dynasty and claimed the mandate of heaven to rule all of China, the Tanguts did not have any such claim, and accepting the Chinese norms would only mean accepting suzerainty from one polity or the other for them. There is no evidence that there was an ethnic or cultural segregation within the Xi Xia state along ethnic lines. In addition to the Tanguts, there were many Turkic, Tibetan and Chinese subjects, and despite the Tangut distance towards the Song, these Chinese subjects took on important roles in politics and economy. Many of the Chinese classics were translated into the Tangut language. Although there is not

²²² Luc Kwanten, "The Lexicography of the Hsi Hsia (Tangut) Language," *Cahiers de Linguistique-Asie Orientale* 11, no. 2 (1982): 55–67.

much evidence about the acculturation of the Tangut tribal elites to the Chinese culture during the Sui, Tang and Five Dynasties period until the founding of the Xi Xia state, it is safe to assume that they were like the Türks, Uighurs and Tibetans quite familiar with the Chinese norms at least on the elite level. This affinity also applied to the diplomatic affairs of the Xi Xia state. Despite their efforts to emphasize their independent character, they also adapted themselves East Asian norms of diplomacy that were changing rapidly.

As explained above, during the Tang dynasty, the Tang had to accept equality on a diplomatic level with the Türks and the Tibetans, but it retained its superior position in its dealings with smaller states such as Korea, Nanzhao, Vietnam. After the collapse of the Tang, a new form of diplomacy based on the equality of the states evolved in East Asia. Goryeo kingdom in Korea could claim equality with its Khitan Liao neighbor or the Chinese statelets in the South for a long time until first the Khitans and later the Song claimed their superior positions vis-à-vis other states. In a way, the situation resembled the Tang-Türk-Tibet trio in the political scene with the establishment of the Xi Xia. The difference was that; the Xi Xia state was not accepted by the other two states as an Empire. But the Xi Xia state still held an important position on the political scene until its destruction by the Mongols. The Xi Xia state did not only have relations with the Song and Liao and later the Jin. They retained close relations with the tribal confederations on the Mongolian plateau, with the states in central Asia and other tribal unions or states in the Tibetan plateau. Unlike the Song and the Liao, the productive base of the Xi Xia state was very small, and the state revenues relied more on trade than on livestock breeding, agriculture or industrial production such as silk or ceramics. While most historians emphasize the silk route on an East-West axis, the trade between North and South was also very voluminous and important, and the Xi Xia state was active in this trade. The Tatar tribes allied with the Xi Xia against Khitan expansion further west which would jeopardize the Xi Xia state,

but later the Khitans themselves allied with the Xi Xia when their state was invaded by the Jürchens. While the Xi Xia was helping the last remnants of the Khitan state to flee west, they also allied with their Jürchen enemies against the Song and managed to take some land without having to fight from former Song lands in the North. In fact, when the Mongols were rising, one of the first sizable states to contact them and establish relations was the Xi Xia. Perhaps, were it not for the inner political struggles that stained relations with the Mongols, they could have continued their integral state to the modern times like the Uighurs. While the Liao and the Jin states were establishing their relations with the tribes in the steppe and the Tibetan plateau based on the superiority of the Khitans and later the Jürchens, the Tanguts did not emphasize their superior position in their dealings with these tribal groups. Since both the Khitans and the Jürchens used to be vassal tribes to the Türks, Uighurs and later to each other, this approach created resistance among the other tribes who viewed themselves on an equal footing with them in an aristocratic society where genealogy mattered. While the Tangut leaders claimed descent from the Tuoba/Tabgach rulers of the Wei dynasty, the Khitan and Jürchen rulers came from humbler backgrounds. But the Tangut leaders did not turn this superiority into practical use unlike the Khitans and the Jürchens who demanded tribute from these tribes. The tributary system on the steppe was different from that of the Sino-centric system where tribute was symbolic, and the gifts given back by the Chinese emperor had greater economic value than the given tribute. In fact, the Jürchen rebellion which ended with the destruction of the Liao and the founding of the Jin was due to excessive Khitan demands as tribute. Xi Xia rulers were aware that they were not strong enough to claim such tributary demands from the tribes to their north and west, so despite retaining their superior titular position, they did not demand tribute from their neighbors. This realistic and compromising policy towards the steppe tribes and the central Asian states such as the Qara Khitai provided approximately a century of peace until the Mongols arrived which wholly changed the scene of

politics in all of Eurasia.

4.5. The Jürchen Jin Dynasty (1115-1243)

As mentioned above, the Khitan Liao Empire was ended by the Jürchens who rebelled under the leadership of Aguda and in the end forced the last remnants of the Khitan forces to flee to Central Asia where they founded the Qara Khitai state. The Jin dynasty founded by Aguda was not merely a foreign state with some land taken from China proper. They were in many ways different from the Khitans before them although they took many of the institutions of the Khitans. The main difference that the Jürchens found themselves in was that, the Jürchens in the founding years of their state not only took over the whole Khitan Empire, but also took the very heart of the Chinese civilization, the Northern China plain. This brought a set of problems and new mechanisms to the state structure of this new empire. While the Khitans also had a double administrative structure in government, the sedentary area to be governed by the Khitans was relatively smaller and easier to govern. When the Jin Empire took over Northern China, the Han population was far over the other ethnic groups within the empire. Another problem was that, although Aguda and his group was not totally ignorant of the Chinese and Khitan ways of government and politics, they were still new comers to the scene of politics, since the Tungusic Jürchens had long been at the very edge of the Asian political arena. As a result, they had to delegate many major roles to the remnants of their erstwhile enemies, the Khitans, as well as Han Chinese officials who remained either in the previous Khitan held areas or Song areas rather than immigrating south. Another problem that they faced was the loyalty of the tribes on the steppe. While the Khitans had a long history of being

among the vassals of wither the Tang or the Türks and the Uighurs, the Jürchens were only among the minor vassals of the Korean states of Goguryeo, Balhae or Goryeo and lastly the Khitans on the peripheries of even the nomadic world. They were not nomadic horse breeders with a complex aristocratic social structure like the Türks or later the Khitans. In fact, they were not a nomadic people. Like most of the other Tungusic peoples in Manchuria and Siberia, they were living in small villages and engaging in limited agriculture and hunting for a living. In this respect, they were seen as a primitive people not only by the sedentary peoples such as the Koreans and Han Chinese, but also by nomads such as the Khitans, Turkic and Mongolic tribes on the steppe of Mongolia and Manchuria. This created a problem in terms of legitimacy which made military action in combination with diplomacy more necessary at the first stages of the founding of the empire. As a result, the Jin Empire brought many novelties both to China and to the steppe in terms of government and diplomacy as will be discussed in this chapter.

The Jürchens are thought to have been the descendants of the Malgal tribes who were vassals of the Balhae kingdom during the Tang times. But after the invasion of the Balhae kingdom by the Khitans, the Jürchen tribes had a freer hand in their inner affairs and relations with the Goryeo kingdom in Korea and Song China. The Khitans did not prefer to and perhaps did not have the ability to rule the tribal peoples around them. Therefore, the area they directly ruled were the Khitan tribal areas, the cities of the old kingdom of Balhae and the sixteen prefectures around Yingzhou (Modern Beijing). But the Khitans also tried to prevent the Jürchen tribes from direct contacts with Song China which brought about its destruction in the end as they feared. The loose reign of the Khitans over the Jürchens can be seen in the Khitan defeat against the Goryeo in 1010 in which the Jürchen tribes sided with the Koreans and for a long time took part in the Goryeo envoys to the Song capital. But the Jürchens were far from being a united

political entity. They rather maintained their independent tribal structure where not only the tribes remained equal and independent of each other, but also individuals remained more or less equal. Thus, the appearance of a Jürchen aristocracy was relatively late. It was in fact, the growing Khitan pressure that forced the Jürchens to unite around a leader. The Jürchen tribes were classified as the civilized Jürchens who lived south in Manchuria near the Liao river, raised horses and cattle, engaged in agriculture, and the uncivilized Jürchens who lived further North around the Amur river and retained their life style in the forests. These uncivilized Jürchens began to unite around Wugunai of the Wanyen clan. He was given some titles by the Liao court, but this did not actually provide him with any significant political power in uniting the Jürchens. To the contrary, the Jürchens agreed to unite around him to retain their independence from the growing Khitan pressure who demanded even more tribute and allegiance from them. Beginning from Wugunai, the Jürchens both consolidated their power and prepared for independence from the Liao. Their encounters with the Liao court and envoys were influential in showing them a new perspective. If the Jürchens wanted to retain their independence and avoid ill treatment by their Khitan overlords, or even better to get rid of any overlord for good, they had to organize themselves like their Khitan overlords. As a result, beginning from Wugunai, the Wanyen clan began to consolidate its power as well as training a professional army and accumulating weapons. By the time his grandson Aguda came to power in 1113, the so-called uncivilized Jürchen tribes were tightly knit around the Wanyen clan. Aguda was given a title by the Liao in recognition of his leadership of the Jürchens outside of the Khitan control. In a way, the Khitans were emulating the Tang Jimi system in their dealings with the peripheral tribes, and extending this system to the tribes such as the Jürchens who were outside this system during the Tang times. These tribes would bring their tribute to the border posts, and would rarely see the emperor himself. By the time of Aguda however, the Jürchens were independent and confident enough to start a war with the

Khitanans to assert their independence. It is very likely that Aguda started his rebellion in order to establish an independent state that did not stretch beyond the borders of Jürchen areas. He started by demanding the return of a Jürchen chieftain who escaped to the Khitans rather than allying with the Wanyen clan. As expected, the Liao did not give him back and the Jürchens rebelled. Within two years, the Jürchens invaded all of Manchuria. As he earned more victories, more chieftains joined his initial power. In 1115 Aguda was enthroned as the Emperor/huangdi of the Jin²²³ dynasty. A Chinese style era name²²⁴ was adopted and Aguda took a Chinese name meaning merciful, compassionate²²⁵. Behind these moves was the Balhae origin advisor Yang Po who had a solid Chinese style education. He also suggested that the Jin state demand Liao state to establish diplomatic relations in the same manner with the Song. The Liao and Jin would exchange envoys on special occasions such as the new year or the birthdays of the rulers, and the states would establish a fictive family relationship of elder and younger brothers which also became a norm in East Asia beginning from the Five Dynasties period as explained before. These demands could have been accepted by the Liao, but they also demanded annual payments equaling the Song payment to the Liao as well as cessation of important areas such as Liaodong which would in the long run devastate the economic basis and the existence of the Khitan state. The demands grew as the Jürchens continued their victories and saw that they

²²³ 金 (pinyin: Jin) meant gold. The name is derived from the river Anchuhu river meaning golden in the Jürchen language. The Liao dynasty's name of Liao in the same manner was taken from the Liao river in the homeland of the Khitans, therefore the Jürchens copied their Khitan overlords.

²²⁴ 受國 (pinyin: shouguo) meant receiving state alluding to the establishment of a new state, or acquiring statehood. Variations of a similar title interestingly also appear among the Turks such as ilig, il tutmysh etc.

²²⁵ 憫 (pinyin: min)

could annihilate the Liao state altogether. After 1117, the Song also joined the scene by allying with the Jin. Another state on the scene was the Xi Xia in the west. The Jin conquerors had to at least not make enemies of the Tanguts if they did not wish to turn all the states against themselves all at the same time. Although Xi Xia initially allied with Liao and later let the fleeing Khitans to pass through their territory to central Asia as well as making treaties with the Qara Khitai state established by them, the Jürchens did not fight against the Tanguts, and even ignored Tangut invasion of some Song lands by taking advantage of the Song weakness as the Jürchens were invading northern China. In return, the Xi Xia state recognized the Jin Empire as its suzerain and helped the new state in its self-legitimization. In this respect, it would be wrong to assume that the Jürchens succeeded in founding their empire solely by superior military power. In 1117 negotiations between the Song and the Jin began as explained in the earlier chapters. But as the Jürchens continued their military action, they saw that the Song military help was unnecessary, and in fact, the Song itself was struggling with rebellions and was not in a strong condition. Nevertheless, after five years of negotiations with the Song, they agreed on a mutual attack on the Liao. The Song would pay the annual tribute that it paid to the Jin and the Song would in return take the sixteen prefectures and recognize the Jin as an Empire. This was especially important for the Jin side, since as Yang Po, the Balhae advisor of Aguda urged, there were two ways that a Chinese style dynasty was founded. Either the Liao ruler would give up the throne voluntarily, which seemed to be a distant possibility, or a decree would be given which again was demanded from the Liao but was refused, so the Song emperor could recognize the Jin emperor as a fictive relative and an emperor. But, this did not also work as seen in the Song chapter due to Song military's inability to realize its part of the bargain and the Song politicians' unrealistic demands. Therefore, when the Song and Jin sides made their first treaty in 1123, the military and political situation was much in favor of the Jin than the Song. Jin forces invaded most of the Liao territory

without the help of the Song army and continued south to invade Yan²²⁶ (the southern capital of Liao and the most important city in the sixteen prefectures) which the Song forces failed to take from a much-weakened Liao army. But Aguda still accepted the Song terms and gave Yan and six other provinces to the Song in return for an increased annual payment from the Song. This was not due to a military threat from the Song but due to the need of the young Jin state to be recognized as an empire. According to the treaty of 1123, the Jin empire would cede Yan and six provinces surrounding it in return for 200000 taels of silver and 300000bolts of silk. The Jin empire would be recognized as the inheritor of the Liao and as an equal of the Song emperor. This treaty seemed to benefit both sides. The Jin took the recognition of its status that it so desperately wanted and the Song took back at least the most important part of the sixteen prefectures which was a thorn in the Song politics since the failure of the first Song emperors to take them back after humiliating defeats at the hands of the Khitans. Taking back at least some of these provinces without having to fight despite lacking the military power necessary to take them by force seemed to be a good agreement for the Song side in this respect.

But the treaty did not live long. Aguda died soon after the treaty was signed. His younger brother Wuqimai succeeded him. Despite the treaty of 1123, both sides were tense as they were aware that the Song and the Jin would be the main adversaries in east Asia for the domination of the political scene. Since the implementation of the treaty was not also clearly defined in issues such as the

²²⁶ 燕 (pinyin: yan) was the area around modern Beijing. The city of Beijing was called with various names throughout history, but Yan was the oldest dating back to the Zhou dynasty's colonization process towards the east after the conquest of Shang. The name Beijing came to be applied only after the Ming dynasty overthrew the Mongol Yuan dynasty. For most of its history, this was a border area where there was a predominant foreign presence and according to recent studies, the population of the city was not only culturally but also ethnically of non-Han majority for most of its history.

taking over the prefectures by the Song, a war was close at hand. In 1125, the Jin armies attacked the Song in response to a governor, Zhang Jue who first declared himself a Jin vassal during the invasion and changed side from Liao to Jin, and after the treaty declared himself a Song vassal foreseeing a Song domination of the sixteen prefectures. The Jin side however, declared himself a rebel and demanded his return to the Jin by the Song. Although the Song side returned him, the Jin side still took the Song side's giving him a title as a *casus belli* and in 1125 dispatched an army under the command of Aguda's son Wolibu. The Jin army laid siege to the Song capital Kaifeng unopposed and after some negotiations they came to terms. The Song would pay a huge war indemnity as well as increasing the annual payment and giving a Song prince as a hostage. But the peace did not last long and the Jin armies came back next year and took the capital taking most of the Song royal family with the back to north as well as demoting the emperor and his son to commoner status and some Song princesses were married of the Wanyen clan members. This ill treatment of the Song house was not due to the perceived savagery and barbarism of the Jürchens, to the contrary, they knew well that they had to end the legitimacy of the royal Song clan in the eyes of their subjects. Zhang Bangchang who accompanied the hostage prince earlier in 1125 was made a puppet ruler of the short-lived Chu state²²⁷. But soon

²²⁷ Jennifer W. Jay, "Memoirs and Official Accounts: The Historiography of the Song Loyalists," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 50, no. 2 (December 1, 1990): 187, doi:10.2307/2719208.

楚 (pinyin: chu) was an ancient state contemporary with the Zhou state in the Yangzi river area, and Zhou defeat against the Chu state was important in the downfall of the Western Zhou. The choice of the name by the Jürchens shows a deliberate decision since Chu was seen as an enemy of the Zhou and therefore the Chinese civilization, and was of a non-Han ethnic group. In this respect, by giving the name of an ancient barbarian kingdom to the new state and moving its capital to Jiankang (modern Nanjing) in the south, there was a conscious Jin attempt at demoting the status of the Song in the eyes of not only Chinese subjects, but also on the political arena.

Zhang was killed by the Song and the Chu state came to an end. The war dragged on between the remainders of the Song forces and local militias in the north and the Jin army. Meanwhile Wolibu, Wolu and Zhemu, three important commanders as well as royal clan members in the Jin army died. The Jürchens were more like the Türks, Khitans and Mongols in their state organization by being an aristocratic society unlike the Song and previous Chinese dynasties of Han origin where royal clan members were rather distanced from positions of power, and there were bureaucrats who were not relatives beginning from the middle Zhou period onward²²⁸. So, the death of Aguda's son, cousin and brother at around the same time created a problem in the Jin decision making mechanisms. Northern part of China was in a chaotic situation with Song local governors, militia groups and the Jin army all fighting with each other on a local scale. Another Jin attempt at founding a puppet state as a buffer zone against the Song and a tool to rule northern China under the name of Qi state also failed. The Qi state was founded in 1129 under the rule of Liu Yu who was a defector Song officer since 1127. despite his attempts to revive the economy and administer Northern China, the Song offensive ended his credibility and the Jin abolished the state in 1137. by 1142, both sides agreed to have peace, and while the Jin rulers saw that they could not annihilate the Song altogether as they did with the Liao, the Song side had to agree on a humiliating treaty. The details of the treaty have been discussed in the previous chapter, therefore, it is not necessary to repeat them here in detail again. The loss of northern China, the center of the Chinese civilization and the homeland of the Han peoples along with accepting a vassal status and officially accepting to be a Jin vassal and lastly receiving a decree of appointment as the king of Song from the Jin emperor changed the political scene in East Asia

²²⁸ Jing-Shen Tao, "Political Recruitment in the Chin Dynasty," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 94, no. 1 (January 1, 1974): 24–34, doi:10.2307/599727.

altogether. Goryeo kingdom and Xi Xia kingdom had prudently accepted vassal status before, the tribal confederations in Mongolia had also pledged allegiance, now with the addition of Song, the Jin Empire had become the undisputed central power of East Asia until the Mongols arrived.

The results of this new situation have been argued in the preceding chapters. But the results of this treaty were also very important for the Jin state as well. The center of power in East Asia shifted back to Northern China. As has been discussed, during the Liao, the center of power was further north in Manchuria. Despite emulating many of the Chinese institutions, the Khitans did not settle in the Chinese regions heavily. Their central capital was in Manchuria in their original homeland. With the Jin dynasty, this situation changed. Jürchens and other tribes settled in Northern China in great numbers. The physical move also brought a cultural and political move towards China. Although the Jürchens themselves were not very acquainted with Chinese ways, from the very early times of their war with the Khitans, many people of Balhae, Khitan and Han origin with a *jinshi*²²⁹ degree joined their ranks as advisors, governors or state officials. But this was not a complete sinification process as had happened with the Tabgach of the Wei dynasty, who also invaded Northern China and established an alien dynasty before. While the Tuoba or Tabgach clan of the Wei dynasty forced its followers into sinification, the Jürchens continued their and other ethnic groups ethnic differentiation and lifestyle. They also did not abandon Manchuria and did not loosen their control on the Mongolian steppe. By this time, the Mongols also began entering the scene. We see in some of the Song sources traces of relations between the Mongols and the Jürchens. The Jürchens also tried to make the Qara Khitai their vassals but failed in their attempt, but the Uighurs became a vassal state though not like the Xi Xia, Song and Goryeo who

²²⁹ 進士

sent regular tribute missions. Except for Japan, which consciously stayed out of the Sino-centric politics since the Tang times onwards as will be discussed, the Jin became the undisputed center of politics in East Asia. Also, during the fourth ruler of the Jin dynasty Hailing who has been one of the most controversial characters not only of the Jin dynasty but also of Chinese history, the capital moved to Yanjing (Modern day Beijing), and there was a process of adopting Chinese rituals and administrative institutions. Although Hailing has been depicted as a despot who killed his cousin to dethrone him and also executed many aristocratic competitors, he was an admirer of Chinese ways and most of his executions which seemed to be random acts of an unstable dictator to the Confucian moralists were in fact aimed at Jürchen aristocrats who were against reforms and held a more traditional approach. The main reason why Confucian moralists of the later ages saw him as an example of an evil ruler rather than a barbarian who received the virtues of Chinese civilization and tried to civilize his people as well as his campaign against the Song. Hailing was not content with the status quo and wished to become the ruler of all of China. He began his preparations in 1157 and the in 1161 he ordered the execution of Yelü and Zhao royal members under his custody which caused a Khitan rebellion in Manchuria. The war began in September 1161 and dragged on until Hailing was assassinated by his own men in December 12 after news of a coup back in Manchuria reached the camp²³⁰.

The new ruler was Shizong who was one of the most capable rulers of the Jin dynasty. When he was enthroned, he was facing discontent within the empire from the Khitan, Balhae and Han elements as well as a full-scale war with the Song. A peace treaty was signed with the Song which improved the status of the Song state. The relation between the Jin and Song would be that of a fictive

²³⁰ Franke, "The Chin Dynasty," 242–243.

family relation between uncle and nephew rather than a lord and vassal. The payments to be made were also renamed as annual payments rather than tribute. This new treaty was signed in 1165 due to Song side's attempts with hopes of a victory over the politically disunited Jin. As the Khitans and the Turkic Xi tribes revolted on the northwestern parts of Manchuria, a possible alliance of these groups with the Mongols threatened the border. These Khitan leaders also contacted the Song and offered alliance, and after their defeat escaped to the Song. It is quite possible that the alliance between the Jin and the Tatar tribes who were not on friendly terms with the Khitans since the Liao times as mentioned in the previous chapters began to form at around this time against a Khitan-Mongol alliance. In this respect, the Jürchens like the Mongols did not depend only on the Jürchen elements. Within the empire the Khitan Yelü clan, the old royal house of the Liao as well as people of Balhae origin, Turkic Onggirad tribes were incorporated into the Jin aristocracy. Outside the Empire, Tatars, Uighurs and Tanguts and other tribes were accepted as allies as well as vassals to control the step. The murder of Temujin's grandfather and father at the hands of the Tatars thus might not be a mere coincidence or bad luck as mentioned in the Secret History of the Mongols. The enmity between certain tribes on the steppe gave the Jin a free hand in its dealings with the Song, and as will be discussed. The latter rulers' relaxed approach finally would bring the end of the dynasty at the hands of the Mongols. But the reforms of the Shizong era and his policies made it possible for the state to withstand the Mongols for a long time at the hands of less capable rulers.

But the decline and the fall of the Jin dynasty had more to do with natural and economic calamities than with incapable administration or lack of diplomatic skills. In 1194 the Yellow river flooded large areas in Hebei and Shandong which were important agricultural centers and changed its course twice causing great discontent among the Han farmers. These events greatly hindered the Jürchen

attempts at controlling the steppe through military campaigns into Mongolia, but they still fortified the border towns nevertheless. But it was the Song attack that hindered the Jin precautions against the rising Mongol power in the north. The Song politicians who regularly visited the Jin central government in Yanjing were aware of the economic destruction brought by the floods. A group led by Han Tuo Zhou came to the fore in politics and the Song declared war on Jin in 1206. the declaration was announced to the public and to the gods in the ancestral temple. The declaration claimed that the Jin through lack of virtue and evil conduct had lost the mandate of heaven and it also called the Chinese subjects of the Jin to join the Song. This declaration was diplomatic attack backed by a military one on the side of Song. The clique headed by Han Tuo Zhou hoped that the dissatisfied Han farmers and merchants as well as governors would join the Song side as the champion of the Chinese civilization and virtue. However, the Song army was defeated in a short while and contrary to the Song expectation, the governor of Shu (modern Sichuan) changed his side and joined the Jin which could have been a great military blow to the Song had Wu Xi, the hereditary governor of Shu was not assassinated by his officers loyal to the Song. After these defeats, Han Tuo Zhou was dismissed and murdered and the two sides made peace again in 1208. on the Jin side, the political attack in the declaration of war from the Song could have caused greater pressure if it could succeed, but the Jin state seems to be politically more stable than the Song politicians anticipated. In fact, when the Chinese subjects of Jin rebelled during the Mongol invasions, they mostly sided with the Mongols rather than the Song.

The reasons for this political unity lay with the reign of Zhangzong who succeeded Shizong. During his reign, he ordered a new law code²³¹ that united the separate laws for different ethnic groups in 1202. the Jin state also chose the

²³¹ 太和律 (pinyin: tai he lü)

element of earth as its symbol in the Chinese manner. The Song had the element of fire as its element. In this way, the Jin gave the message that it also was a state in the Chinese fashion and had the right to rule China. This message was not only for the inner consumption of its Han subjects, but was also a clear diplomatic message to the states in East Asia along with the Song. The Jin state put itself among the legitimate Chinese dynasties preceding it. This move came in 1202 along with the new Chinese style new law code which aimed at nullifying Song claims that it was the only legitimate Chinese state. Unfortunately for the Jin, Zhangzong died shortly after the signing of the peace treaty with the Song.

Zhangzong was succeeded by Weishao. However, Weishao was an unfortunate choice for the Jin side since he had mistreated some of the chieftains in his youth including Temujin. It is said in the Secret History of the Mongols that Temujin was very furious to hear that Weishao became the Emperor of Jin and rather than kowtowing to him as his new overlord, he decided to break his vassalage with the Jin and attack his former suzerain. However, although this has been suggested as one of the main reasons by the Mongols both in *The Secret History of the Mongols*²³² and *Jinshi*²³³ as one the main reasons for the Mongol attacks on the Jin, this seems to be a legitimization on the Mongolian side for their attacks on their formal suzerain. Although *The Secret History Of The Mongols* and is full of epic descriptions about how Temujin rose to power through campaigns aimed at personal vendettas, the truth might be difficult as will be discussed in the following chapters about the Mongols. In this respect, the failure of the Jin dynasty to prevent war or rather the casus belli of the war with the Mongols cannot be attributed to the personal failures of a monarch. The Jin state was at

²³² Igor de Rachewiltz, "The Secret History of the Mongols," *The Mongolia Society Bulletin*, 1970, 55–69; Cleaves, *The Secret History of the Mongols*.

²³³ Tuotuo [Toqto'a], *金史 [Jinshi: History of Jin]*, 1827.

the height of its power some decades ago and it had a large network in the steppe stretching as far as western parts of Turkistan where they expected a possible return of their erstwhile Khitan enemies who founded the state of Qara Khitai there after defeating the Seljuks and the Qara Khanids. The Mongols were also included within this nomadic network of alliances and diplomatic maneuvers. The relations between the Mongols and the Jin dated back to the times of the foundation of the dynasty and the turmoil caused by the Khitan flight and the vacuum that was created. And while the Mongols did not play a major role in the diplomatic and political arena until their unification under Temujin, they were always included in the scene nonetheless. The Tatar tribes²³⁴ who were called as Zubu tribes by the Khitans were initially allied with the Jürchens. They had always been fiercely independent during the Liao and caused much problem to the Khitans in Mongolia. It can also be said that their resistance slowed down and eventually stopped the Khitan expansion to west which allowed the Tangut Xi Xia state to expand further in the Gansu corridor and the steppe. But after a while, it seems that the Jürchens were not content with the strength of their Tatar allies who maintained their independence and became stronger. In order to curb their power, the Jürchens allied with the Mongols which began the Mongol inclusion in the Jin and led to the events that culminated in the murder of a Mongol Qaghan from whom Temujin claimed descent and the poisoning of Temujin's father by the Tatars which is related in *The Secret History of the Mongols*. But to sum up the events, the Jürchens were playing an old trick. They were maintaining their power over the step through playing one tribe against the other, just as the Tang had done before them. The Khitan Liao dynasty had also

²³⁴ The name Tatar is perhaps one of the oldest tribal names and it was adopted by different ethnicities throughout history. While today the Qipchak Turkic groups in Tatarstan and Crimea adopt this name as their ethnonym, the tatar tribes described here are thought to be linguistically and ethnically affiliated with the Jürchens in the Chinese sources (see: Jinshi, Qidan Guozhi, Liaoshi)

been engaged in such relations with the tribes on the steppe to their north and west, but the Jürchen case widened the system which had its roots in the Jimi system of the Tang dynasty as described in the previous chapters. Turning back to Weishao, although he has been judged as an incapable ruler by both the Chinese and Mongol sources due to his moral flaws, actually he was a ruler faced against greater odds at a time that the Jürchen state was facing great internal problems. There had been long droughts on the Northern China plain which had been the economic backbone of the Jin state. Another problem was the succession crisis surrounding Weishao. Weishao has not been titled by his contemporaries as an emperor after his death. He was born of a Balhae origin Korean concubine and his original name was Wanyen Yunzhi. Although he belonged to the Wanyen clan, his right to succession after Zhangzong's death was contested. In some way, his situation was like that of Qubilai who was also initially not recognized as a great khan by many of the other Chinggisid lineage members, but had to fight his opponents including his own brother Ariq Böke. As a result, when the Mongols attacked (most probably aware of both the famine and the political crisis within the Jin state), the Jin state had been in a weak position. Also, although Weishao has been reported to treat Temujin poorly, he was not the first Jin emperor to do so. Before his reign, Temujin had participated in a joint campaign with the Qarais and the Jin state as a vassal against the Tatars, and he was given a lower title than the Qarai leader Toghrul, who was also his patron father²³⁵. At this stage Temujin could not afford to make an enemy of the Jin over being mistreated, but once he was stronger and the Jin was weaker, he did not want to, and for his prestige could not bear to endure any slights. But Weishao was assassinated by one of his generals who feared punishment after losing strategic areas to the Mongols in

²³⁵ Toghrul is depicted as Temujin's father's close friend in *The Secret History of the Mongols* and when his father died, Temujin went over to Toghrul for assistance, and called him "father" until they became open enemies.

1213. Wudubu, who was enthroned as Xuanzong came to the throne backed by the same general Hushahu who assassinated Weishao. But things did not get better. Although Jin managed to have peace after marrying off a princess to Chinggis Khan²³⁶. But after they carried the capital to Kaifeng in the south, the Mongols interpreted this as a precaution for war, and the war resumed. In addition to the war with the Mongols, the relations with the Xi Xia, who could also have been an ally against the Mongols were also going sour. After a while, the Song also joined the Mongols first by sending aid to the rebels within the Jin then by participating in an alliance and attacking the Jin directly. The Jin state was finally destroyed in 1234 after putting up over two decades of fight. Their last diplomatic maneuvers such as ending the tribute relation with the Song and recognizing the Tangut Xi Xia state as a younger brother, thus lifting their status to independent state from vassal were all aimed at winning them over as allies. But all diplomacy failed at this stage at the face of unceasing Mongolian attacks. This however did not mean that the Mongols only resorted to violence and ignored diplomacy as will be discussed in the next chapter.

In conclusion, the Jürchens who also arrived the political scene as “barbarians” by definition of the Sino centric world view held by the Chinese, Koreans and the Japanese proved to be masterful at statecraft and diplomacy in addition to their military skills. Later on, the Mongols also adopted many of their institutions as well as recruiting them in their new Yuan state as soldiers, diplomats and statesmen. The collapse of the Jin came as a result of famines and internal political disorder that had been plaguing the Jin for a while and the strong Mongolian military pressure which would overrun all of Eurasia. The

²³⁶ The name Temujin has been used in this study for the time period during which Temujin, later known as Chinggis Khan was stil not the Khan of all the Mongols and was not entitled so in the Qurultai.

contributions of the Jin state to the political arena was that, they infused Chinese sedentary norms and the steppe nomadic norms into a new model in a more advanced and organized way than the Khitans. The racial discrimination of the classes for instance was not a Mongol invention, but a Jürchen practice which was abolished only at the end of the dynasty to unite the Chinese, Khitan and Balhae subjects against the Mongols. The fictive family relationship which the Jürchens learnt from the Khitans was also developed further and was more commonly used in the sedentary world, especially in China and Korea as a result of the Jin insistence and political power. Although this system had long been known both by the Chinese and the nomads of the steppe, the Jin elaborated it to such an extent that it became a norm in diplomatic practice in the East Asian interstate relations as well as relations with the tribes of the steppe. Also, the Jin state extended the influence of many Chinese institutions and practices to the steppe through their wide network on the Mongolian steppe and the silk road.

CHAPTER V

THE MONGOLS

The Mongols before their unification by Chinggis Khan and their subsequent conquests in Eurasia were not a significant power in Asian history. Although there had been many tribal federations led by Mongolian speaking groups²³⁷ before them, the group that gave their name to the whole Mongolian speaking ethnic group, that is the Taijiut tribe of Temujin was not much of a significant power until the late Jin period. The name of the Mongols first begin to appear in the Tang sources as Mengwu²³⁸. Later on, the characters used to describe them changed to Menggu and has been in use as such in Sinitic languages as well as Japanese and Korean although the pronunciation of the two constituent characters might change from language to language as usual with all the other Chinese characters. This group seems to be located at around the area of modern eastern Mongolia north of the Gobi Desert. Like many of the other tribes there, they seem to be in a constant struggle with some of the neighboring tribes. The Mongols are also divided into two in accordance with their way of living. While the Taijiuts were animal breeder pastoral nomads, it is thought that they adopted this lifestyle after their interaction with the Turkic speaking tribes already living there. The group of Mongolian tribes called the water Mongols seem to retain their semi-

²³⁷ Just as in the case of the Turks, Türks and the Turkic speaking groups, ethnonyms and linguistic and political or ethnic associations might not always be necessarily coherent. The same is also valid for the Tatars who are depicted as cousins of the Tungusic Jürchens in the Chinese annals but later on appear as Mongolic or Turkic in terms of language and sometimes ethnicity.

²³⁸ 蒙兀

sedentary hunting and agricultural way of life further north. There is one fact that we must take into consideration when we are talking about the name Mongol. Until the conquests of Chinggis Khan, the name Mongol was applied to a certain group of Mongolic speaking peoples. The general name for the Mongolic speaking peoples in the Chinese sources was Xianbei²³⁹ deriving from the Xianbei Qaghanate that formed during the 3rd century CE. The Tabgach Wei dynasty were founded by a mixture of Turkic and Xianbei tribes from among whom the Ashina clan of the Türks later separated and founded the Türk state. But later on, the Xianbei name was replaced with the Mongol as a result of the conquests by the house of Chinggis and the prestige that was attached to this name. a similar case can be seen among the Qipchaq Turks who adopted the name of the Tatars, an originally Tungusic people related to the Jürchens²⁴⁰. Although our information about the Mongols before the conquests of Temujin are sparse, it does not mean that the Mongols were an insignificant tribe living on the peripheral northern parts of the steppe cut off from the rest of the world. To the contrary, as Professor İzgi suggests, they were well aware of the surrounding countries, peoples and their customs as a part of the steppe cultural complex²⁴¹. Although the Mongols have been depicted as a naïve belligerent and purely

²³⁹鮮卑/Xianbei was actually more of a confederation than an ethnic group. But the Chinese seem to group the Mongolic language groups under this category while putting the Turkic language groups under the Tujue category despite the fact that Turkic speaking groups were also under the Xianbei and Mongolic speaking groups alongside other ethnic and linguistic groups fell under Türk control at one time or another.

²⁴⁰ Although the Tatars in the earliest Chinese and Turkic sources divided into two groups as Aq Tatar (White Tatar) who spoke a Turkic language and Qara Tatar (Black Tatar) who spoke a Tungusic language, the Tatars that Chinggis feuded with and later on used as a vanguard in his campaigns are thought to be the Qara Tatars of the Orkhon inscriptions.

²⁴¹ Özkan İzgi, "Moğolların Batı İstilasası ve Türk Tarihi Bakımından Önemi," in *Orta Asya Türk Tarihi Araştırmaları* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2014).

nomadic people unaware of the "evils" of the sedentary cultures who were victims of conspiracies by their Jürchen and other neighbors, this was just a justification for the conquests of the surrounding peoples who lost the mandate of heaven as a result of their contact and assimilation to the Chinese culture. This idea was not new on the steppe as has been witnessed in the Orkhon inscriptions which warns the Türk tribes against the evils of the Chinese culture and losing the pure and naïve pastoral nomadic culture as a result of acculturation and assimilation into the Chinese culture²⁴². In addition to the Chinese culture, the nomads of East Asia were also acquainted with Persian and western culture. The Qarais to the southwest of the Mongols of Temujin were long Nestorian Christians and their Khans are thought to be the source for the legend of Prester John. They had cultural contacts with the west through the Nestorian clerics coming to their cities and camps to spread the religion as well as their own clerics sent to Baghdad and other Nestorian centers in the west for education. as a result of these extensive contacts with the west, even Qubilai Khan picked a Merkid Nestorian as an ambassador to send to Rome. There were also other tribes believing in Manicheism or Buddhism. Religion in this respect was a way of acculturation to the peripheral civilizations scattered around the Eurasian steppe²⁴³. The political situation was also not stable at around the time that Temujin began his conquests. One feature that we see both in the actions of Temujin and his rivals is that there is a mutually accepted form of diplomacy, alliance and waging war. Despite the Chinese accounts showing the tribes to the north as pure barbarians waging wars without justification or any motive other than pillaging, the chaotic picture drawn by the Chinese can be deceptive. Just as

²⁴² Türkmen, "Kök-Türk Âbidelerinde Millî Kimlik Hassasiyeti."

²⁴³ Christopher I. Beckwith, *Empires of the Silk Road: A History of Central Eurasia from the Bronze Age to the Present* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2009).

the European accounts show a misunderstanding of Turkish warfare and diplomacy rules, the Chinese also opted to ignore these details. In fact, the general image that nomads were in constant move without any direction in a chaotic manner is also a misconception. Although land was vast and largely inhabited on the steppe, the locations of each tribe's summer and winter camps as well as the sequence of moving into these loci were carefully planned and wars between the tribes mostly occurred when one or more of the tribes did not stick to the systematic immigration. Another reason for war was the denial of the suzerainty by one of the formal vassals or shift in alliances from one suzerain to another by these tribes. Just like the Sinitic world order, there was a carefully arranged and very complex political order. The military titles on the steppe also bore political meanings and there was also a fictive family system within every tribal confederacy. The difference between the sedentary parts of east Asia and the nomadic and semi-nomadic parts was that, the nomadic system was much more complex and fluid due to the physical and geographic differences between these two spheres. While a villager who was bound to the soil could move from his land to another only at the price of losing all his possessions, that is his land, and thus was more prone to staying in his native village unless the situation was very critical or there was a better opportunity in his new destination, the nomad was mobile since his main possessions were livestock and horses which could travel long distances with him. As a result of this mobility, there was more political fluidity among the nomadic tribal confederations. It is a herculean task to track the political and physical movements and histories of the individual tribes, to a great extent we can only track tribes through the confederations that they were affiliated with. And especially at times that a huge tribal confederation on the steppe or an Empire in China collapsed, the new state making process through war and diplomacy accelerated. Thus, it is no wonder that the Mongols along with other tribal confederations such as the Tatars, the Qiang tribes, the Uighurs and such others whenever they saw the opportunity to establish a greater

confederation or if possible, a long-lasting state such as the Tangut state of Xi Xia on the Ordos region and Ningxia. Before Temujin, his grandfather Khabul Khan also managed to unite the Mongols and fought against the Tatars in a coalition with the Jin dynasty in North China. In fact, the enmity between the Tatars and the Mongols went back to the days of the wars between the Jürchens and the Khitans. As the Liao dynasty fell, the tribes associated with it had to make choices as to surrender to the Jürchens or to keep their alliance with the Khitans. We can see the long-lasting memories of such relations in the conversation between Chinggis Khan and Yelü Chucai, the prominent Khitan scholar. While Chinggis was referring to the old Khitan-Mongol alliance by claiming that the Mongols took revenge of the fallen Khitan dynasty by conquering Manchuria and North China, it seems he was not willing to remember such alliance when it came to attacking the Qara Khitai, the Khitan state established in central Asia after the fall of the Liao dynasty. But it is worth remembering that the Mongols helped the remainders of the Khitan forces who were led by Yelü Dashi in their flight to central Asia through Mongolia. At around this time Temujin's grandfather Khabul had united the Mongol tribes called as the Khamag Mongols around the end of the 11th century just as the Jürchens were conquering the Khitan Liao dynasty in Manchuria and Mongolia. The Jürchens attacked the Mongols with their Tatar allies, but Khabul Khan managed to repel the invaders though he could not help his Khitan ally and overlords to defeat the invaders. Afterwards, the Mongols also helped the fleeing Khitan forces to pass through their territory into Turkistan where they established the Qara Khitai Khanate. However, Khabul Khan died before he could establish a long lasting political system. The Khamag Mongols were like all the other tribal nomadic confederations of the steppe region, were constituted by different tribes, the largest tribes were the Taijiut, Jalair, Khiyad and Jirukhen. However, Khabul Khan was from the Borjigin clan. This shows that the effective leaders were welcome to lead the confederation regardless of their clan association. After the death of Khabul Khan, Ambaghai

of the Taijiut clan was elected as the Khan of the Mongols. Although he managed to defeat the Tatars in battles, he was captured by the Tatars while he was on a journey to give his daughter in marriage to another tribal chieftain's son. He was executed in the Jin capital by being hacked to death. This event caused the series of battles between the Tatars and the Mongols that ended only with the Chinggis Khans conquest and execution of the Tatar aristocracy.²⁴⁴ Although the way he was executed seems to be a small detail, the writers of the Jinshi were aware of the message this method carried with it. On the steppe culture, spilling the blood of an aristocrat was not deemed to be a good omen to Tengri, the sky god, lest he would see the blood of the person whom he gave kut/qut (mandate to rule). By hacking him with axes, the Jin did not intend to just torture the Mongol ruler, they also sent the message that they did not recognize the Mongol Khan as a legitimate ruler with the mandate to rule or even as an aristocrat. After Ambaghai, Khabul's son Hotula was elected as the new Khan of the Mongols. He focused on fighting with the Tatars to avenge his predecessor Ambaghai. This feud had more to do with the political reasons than the taking the revenge of a blood relative since Hotula and Ambaghai were from different tribes and did not have any real blood relation. This type of casus belli was prevalent on the steppe for a long time since the Hun times and would later on be seen in the battles of Timur and other Turco-Mongol rulers who claimed to avenge their fictive relatives. But after the death of Hotula, the Khamag Mongols were not able to elect a Han in the Qurultai with a consensus. In the meanwhile, Temujin's father Yesügei who was the head of the Khiyad tribe and was trying to unite not only the Khamag Mongols but also the whole Mongolian plateau. For this aim he helped Toghrul

²⁴⁴ Although the secret history relates that the Tatars were killed altogether after they were defeated, we not only see the Tatar name later on, but also Tatar generals on the later battles within the Mongol army. Therefore, it is probable that by killing a whole tribe, the writers meant the extinction of the aristocracy within a tribe. This fact is later on also reported by western visitors such as Carpini and Rubruck.

(Mongolian Tooril) Khan of the Qarais to retake his throne. He also betrothed his son Temujin to Börte of the Onggirad tribe located just to the east of the Tatars. All these moves suggest his intentions to be more than merely uniting the Khamag confederation but to build a confederation larger than the Khamag area. However, he was poisoned by the Tatars before he could realize his plans. The Chinese sources do not yield us a healthy picture or details about the period between Khabul Khan and Temujin. Therefore, it is hard to give a detailed order of political events of the 12th and 13th centuries before Temujin. But what is obvious is that there was a conscious effort by the khans coming from different tribes to unite the Mongolian as well as other tribes of the region against the expanding Jin dynasty to their south. It is hard to tell if one of these Khans could have acquired the same success as Temujin had he managed to unite all the tribes of Mongolia. But obviously sudden rise of Temujin cannot only be explained by his personal charisma and cunning alone. He not only inherited blood ties but also the carefully structured alliance network of his father Yesügei and the memory of his great grandfather Khabul, still remembered by the Mongol clans. This pattern also resembles the empire building processes of the Khitans and the Jürchens as well. They too were subject peoples to a previous dynasty and could not unite around a single leader for a long time. They demonstrated a loose political unity around tribal chieftains where every individual would be free and would have a say in the decision-making processes of the tribal federation in the tribal assembly called Qurultai. Later on, as these tribal peoples interacted with more developed political entities such as the Türk Qaghanate or the Chinese as a result of their vassalage to these political entities, they would have to establish a diplomatic tie with these entities and enter the diplomatic and political system within a larger region. This relationship with a more developed political entity would also enable them to learn from and emulate the political structure of the suzerain. As a result, a series of leaders tried to build a unity among their own people and eventually one of them succeeded in building a new empire if the

conditions were suitable²⁴⁵. When looked at in this light, the success and campaigns of Temujin are more historical facts than miracles.

It would be irrelevant to reiterate the personal life of Temujin here in detail. But small details from his personal life reflect the diplomatic maneuvers that helped him to first retake power among the Mongols and then to establish his empire. As mentioned before, his father began the first attempts at reunifying the Mongols through alliances. Temujin's engagement to Börte was no romantic affair. Both were still children at the time of their engagement. And Temujin did not lose time in reminding his step-father of the political and military aid he wanted from him as a result of their marriage alliance. His friendships with boys of his age who belonged to other clans and tribes also were to prove crucial in his later attempts to reunite the tribes in Mongolia. One of his first personal bondages was with Jamuqa, his anda²⁴⁶ and later on his enemy was a crucial one at the beginning of his career as a political leader. Although the story line of *The Secret History of the Mongols* follows the line of a personal epic that tells the story of a boy who was a pure nomad with poor resources and an untouched nomadic cultural background, it also emphasizes the noble background of his family. In this respect, we should approach *The Secret History of the Mongols* with a critical eye although it is an invaluable source from the Mongolian point of view. The personal bonds and relationships between the characters give us some clues about the relations of the nomads with each other as far as the political

²⁴⁵ Beckwith, *Empires of the Silk Road: A History of Central Eurasia from the Bronze Age to the Present*.

²⁴⁶ Anda is a sworn brother among the Mongols, Turks and other Altaic and nomadic steppe peoples. It is known under other names in different languages as well. Two or more men swear an oath to remain as brothers and allies by cutting their hands and mixing their bloods. An anda is sometimes seen as equal or even more important than a relative. Although it is not possible to choose one's blood relatives, an anda is chosen as a result of a personal relationship and is therefore esteemed as an important ally.

entities are concerned. At this stage the Mongols were a tribal confederation rather than a state. What are depicted as personal friendships and vendettas of Temujin are at a deeper level however, seem to be a form of diplomacy and inter-clan relations in the steppe. Marriages, blood brotherhoods and friendships were all norms of building alliances within the nomadic policies since early times. The nomadic policy and the personal relations of the nomadic leader went hand in hand. Slighting Temujin in this respect also meant slighting the Mongol policy and personal insults to a leader could not be ignored since it diminished not only the power of the leader within his own domain, but also it also diminished the tribe or the confederation's standing within the steppe. This was actually the logic behind the Türk Khan's complaints to the Wei emperor that although the other rulers on the steppe were given Chinese brides, he was not given a Chinese princess despite asking many times. As a result, this not only made him humiliated among his own banner men, but also diminished the political prestige of the Türks among the other tribes.²⁴⁷ Thus, it was not mere a personal bondage that Temujin wanted when he married of his daughter to the Uighur Idiqt and also adopted him as a son. These were actually signs of a political bondage between the two political entities and the Uighur state's entry into the Mongolian political orbit and going out of the Qara Khitai vassalage.²⁴⁸ There was a similarity between the Mongols and other nomads and the Chinese world in this respect. Both of them saw the relationship between the ruler and the ruled as well as the hegemon state and the vassals as an extension of family. The state was seen as a larger family and the relations between the states was also seen as an extension of the family relations, for the Chinese the emperor was the universal

²⁴⁷ Liu Xu, *舊唐書 [Jiu Tangshu: The Old Book of Tang]*, 1453; Ouyang Xiu, *新唐書 [Xin Tangshu: The New Book of Tang]*, 1327.

²⁴⁸ The Uighur Idiqt State was a vassal of the Qara Khitai Empire to the West. The Qara Khitai as mentioned before were the descendants of the Khitan Liao Dynasty.

ruler and father of the family and the civilized people were his subjects and children. Any state that came into the civilized Chinese sphere had to accept the Chinese emperor like a father and had to present tribute. The same was also valid for the nomads. Once we have a look at the Orkhon inscriptions, The Türk Qaghan boasts of looking well after his subjects like a father figure²⁴⁹. For the Chinese, however, there could only be one son of heaven, and that was the Chinese Emperor. Just as the emperor was the son of heaven, all under heaven²⁵⁰ were his subjects and children. A second son of heaven was unacceptable. For the nomads, however, this does not seem to create a problem. The Türk Qaghan did not see any problem in calling both himself and the Tang rulers as sons of heaven, and the other nomadic polities followed their examples. The first political friction over being the sole son of heaven occurred between the Han Dynasty and the Huns. The Huns being militarily powerful did not cause as big a military threat as a political one. They not only refused to enter the tributary Chinese system, but they also demanded tribute from China and took it by force when the Han emperors refused. They also stick to their claim of being the true son of heaven and assumed a superior position in their relations with the Chinese until their Khanate was destroyed. But after the Huns whose reign continued for about six centuries, no other nomadic Empire could rival their longevity and political superiority on the eastern steppe until first the Mongols and later the Manchus. For the Chinese *tianxia*, or all under heaven meant the sedentary world in East

²⁴⁹ Nobuhiro Uno, “モンゴル研究のパラダイム: チンギス・カン家の通婚関係に見られる対称的婚姻縁組 [Mongoru Kenkyûno paradaimu-Chingisu kankeno tsûkon kankeini mirareru taishôteki kekkon engumi: Paradigms of the Mongol Study: Symmetric Marriage alliance in the Marriage relationships of Chinggis Khan’s Family],” 国立民族学博物館 [Kokuritsu Minzokugaku Hakubutsukan: National Museum of Ethnology], 1999.

²⁵⁰ Chinese 天下 (pinyin: tian xia)

Asia influenced by the Chinese civilization. Thus, it was China, Korea, Japan and some South East Asian countries that adopted Chinese norms. For the nomads, all under heaven was the nomadic world who more or less share a common way of life and values. In this respect, until the Mongols, no nomadic group tried to conquer all of China. For them, their “family” was the nomads. Thus, Temujin’s initial goal was to unite the people of the felt tent. And it should also be noted that his initial relations with the Jürchen Jin Dynasty in Northern China was also a relation between a nomadic leader and his suzerain. The Jürchens, like their previous Khitan overlords, did hold close relations with the nomads on the Mongolian steppe. In fact, it was the Jürchens who managed to prevent the nomadic tribes from uniting for a relatively long time through their policies. But the relationship between the Mongols and their Jürchen overlords was that of a nomadic nature. In this regard, it differed from the relationship of the Song Dynasty with Korea or Vietnam as their overlord on paper. While the Chinese tributary system as well as other forms of diplomacy was more fictive in nature as a result of Confucian influence, the nomads mostly used the wording and symbolism a more concrete sense. Marriages, adoptions as sons, becoming brothers through physically mixing blood were all done on a personal level by the leaders and were taken seriously in politics. Of course, this should not trick us to assume that the Mongols or other nomads were untouched honest and naïve peoples who were always true to their words as *The Secret History of the Mongols* wants us to believe. But especially the tributary system and the idea of qut or mandate of heaven was different as well as fictive family ties constructed around the nomadic leader from those of the sedentary world.

The fictive family constructed around the leader who held the mandate of heaven was quite different on the steppe and the Middle Kingdom. It was not because the nomads were so naïve to not understand abstract concepts and took them on a literary meaning as they are. The difference lay in the very foundations of their

state structures, economies and environments as has been explained before. China as an agricultural economy could support a vast bureaucracy as well as a literati group who provided a constant pool of men who could administer the land on a local basis. The local literati supported by a landed clan on their home regions were taken to the capital through the imperial exams and they also created networks throughout the empire by coming to the capital and sharing common values and a common education. As a result, the Emperor could send governors to the provinces from the capital who had no personal power in the province he was sent to. Thus, by sending governors to provinces that they were not born in or did not have clan members, the emperor made sure that the governors could only depend on the central government for support and did not have a base for becoming feudal lords. For the nomads, however, the tribal structure did not allow such strong central control. The tribes had their own chieftains and they did not accept chieftains who were appointed by the Khan. As a result, the Khan had to set up more personal relations with the tribal chieftains to ensure their loyalty. Although military power could also provide their loyalty, it was costly and resulted in weakening of the both sides. As a result, the Khan either personally married the daughters of the tribal chieftains or married his sons in order to create a stronger bondage. Another way of using the marriages as a tool to strengthen the relations was to marry off a daughter and to install the son born from this daughter as the head of that tribe or state. This was especially institutionalized in the case of the Goryeo kingdom in Korea beginning from the reign of Qubilai Khan. Also, the Khitans had the Uighur Xiao clan as their consort clan and always married the daughters of the Xiao clan which resulted in a strong loyalty by the Xiao clan to the Yelü Royal house until they were overthrown by the Jürchens. While marriages were conducted between a superior and an inferior party, another form of merging alliances was adaptation as a son. This was especially widespread among the Shatuo Turks during the Five dynasties era. In

fact, in many cases the adopted sons would come to the throne as emperors²⁵¹. But this kind of adoption was a political choice rather than a diplomatic move. Turks like the other tribes had a tradition of selecting their leader in the Qurultai, but once they established a Chinese style dynasty in China, they made an accommodation with the Chinese norms. In the Chinese hereditary system, the Emperor had to be one of the sons of the Emperor, and unless he was sick, it would be the oldest son from his primary consort. But knowing that his Turkic and other nomadic subjects would not follow a weak leader, the Shatuo leaders would adopt the ablest and most popular general as a son and install him as the heir. But the Khitans made a different approach. They became fictive uncles of the Song Emperors as can be seen in the previous chapters. Becoming a fictive father or an uncle to an adult man was in this context a diplomatic gesture of molding an alliance with and claiming suzerainty over another leader. Unlike the marriage alliance or the adoption of a son in the Shatuo case, this relationship was more fictive and political in character. In the case of adopting sons among the Shatuo Turks, or even before, by the Huns after the fall of the Han dynasty during the Three Kingdoms era²⁵², the adopted son physically lived in the household of the father and he was treated as a real son. In this respect, the approach to adopted sons on the steppe and in China among the nomads should be taken under a different light. After his father's death, Temujin was abandoned by his tribesmen and as a result he sought refuge from the friends or fictive "brothers" of his father. This was not only a personal matter but also his first political attempt. If he only sought livelihood, he could well have stayed with his

²⁵¹ Xiu, *Historical Records of the Five Dynasties*; Xiu, *新五代史 [Xin Wudaishi: The New History of the Five Dynasties]*.

²⁵² Constantine Tung and Kimberly Ann Besio, *Three Kingdoms and Chinese Culture*, SUNY Series in Chinese Philosophy and Culture (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007), 87.

wife's family which was a common practice especially if the girl's family did not have any sons. He could also simply be employed by his father's anda Toghrul at a relatively high position but instead he asked for military help. In this respect, his relations with his "fathers" were more of a political nature. He built his first alliance with his father's friend Toghrul after his wife was kidnapped by the Merkids. Despite the personal nature of the event, we learn from *The Secret History of the Mongols* that there was also a political vendetta behind the kidnapping. Since his father kidnapped Temujin's mother from a Merkid a generation ago, they saw the chance to vendetta for clearing their name.²⁵³ for Temujin, the case was the same, besides the personal shame of running away from the enemy and losing his wife to the enemy, his political career as a leader of the Mongols or at least his tribe was at risk. Toghrul's motives were also not merely out of personal love for the son of a friend whom he has not seen before. Toghrul was the head of the Turkic Qarai tribe²⁵⁴, and he was ready to go against another Turkic tribe, the Merkids²⁵⁵ for Temujin due not only to his personal feelings as described in *The Secret History of the Mongols* but in order to gain an ally who was weaker and indebted to him in his bid for power. In fact, he denied

²⁵³ Cleaves, *The Secret History of the Mongols*.

²⁵⁴ In Mongolian Kerayit. The -it, -ut suffix is the plural suffix in Mongolian, so Kerayit or as in the Turkic pronunciation Qarays were a Turkic tribe. Their relations to the Karaim of the Qipchak people is unknown. According to the legend told in *Jami-al Tavarikh* by Rashid-ud Din, their names derive from eight brothers with a darker skin than is usual. They converted to Nestorian Christianity and are thought to be the source to the legends that there was a Christian king in the east with the name of Prester John who would save the Christianity at its hour of need. After their defeat by Temujin, they became an integral part of the Mongolian Empire losing their place as the leaders of the Zubu confederation that resisted the Khitan Liao expansion into Mongolia.

²⁵⁵ The Merkids are also thought to be a Turkic tribe related to the Naimans and Qarays (Weatherford, *Chinggis Khan and the Making of the Modern World*, n.d., 12.). They were situated in the southern part of the Mongolian steppe between the Naimans and the Qarays.

Temujin his daughter's hand claiming that Temujin was not noble enough. Regardless of whether this was an excuse or his true feelings, it is apparent that the Mongols were not seen as the equals of the Merkids or the Qarais of the steppe. Later on, the Naimans would also claim superiority over the Mongols in terms of their genealogical background and standing within the steppe tribes. This was also apparent in the Mongol claim of descent. While the Merkids, Qarais and Naimans claimed to belong to the Toquz Oghuz of the Oghuz tribe and thus to the legendary Oghuz Qaghan, the Mongol legitimate descent was later on limited to the descendants of Chinggis and Temujin himself and his contemporaries did not make any claim to descending from a glorious historical or legendary figure either based on genealogy or fiction.²⁵⁶ The pre-Chinggisid Mongols in this regard seem to be politically an insignificant group on the eastern steppe. The Qarakhanids for instance could claim from the legendary figure Afrasyab/ Alp Er Tunga of the Shahname who was probably a Scythian leader. But after they were powerful enough to claim political superiority on the western steppe, the Qarakhanids claimed descent from a fictive character totally unrelated to them other than being a nomad thanks to their political significance. A similar claim to descent from another legendary figure, Oghuz Qaghan was also done by the Ottomans later on to legitimize and glorify their ancestry.²⁵⁷ The Qarais being a

²⁵⁶ Temujin's grand genitor is depicted as Bodonchar born from Alan Goa three years after his husband's death both in *The Secret History of the Mongols* and *Yuanshi*. According to the legend a blonde man entered her Yurt/Ger through the tünük/ and came into her bed and caressed her belly resulting in her pregnancy. This kind of claims to descent from a god or a deity was widespread among the steppe peoples as well as old Indo-European myths as can be seen in Zeus in Greek mythology and Odin in Norse Mythology. So, this can either be an excuse for the birth of children from extramarital relation or a claim to sanctify an otherwise insignificant ancestor later on as a character with noble blood.

²⁵⁷ Soykut, *Italian Perceptions of the Ottomans: Conflict and Politics Through Pontifical and Venetian Sources.*; Halil Inalcık, *Kuruluş: Osmanlı Tarihini Yeniden Yazmak*, 4th ed., Hayykitap Bize Söylenmeyenler 12 (Istanbul: Hayykitap, 2010).

Turkic people and Oghuz tribe could claim superiority due to the recent Türk and Uighur legacies and this could be one of the reasons why they opposed the Khitans was that they saw the Khitans who were first a Türk vassal and later an Uighur vassal as their equals or even inferiors. In the same way Temujin was seen as an inferior vassal by the Qarais as well as others as can be detected from the sources. In this regard, Toghrul's help can be seen as a policy to support the weaker contender against the stronger one lest they become powerful enough to threaten their own policy. So, Toghrul by supporting Temujin actually supported the Borjigins against the Taijiuts who were stronger and could cause a bigger menace to Toghrul Khan. In this regard his adopting Temujin as a son was a sign of political superiority in diplomacy. As a result, Temujin also tried to change this situation as soon as he felt politically and militarily on an equal standing with Toghrul Khan. But Toghrul might have helped Temujin rescue his wife and beat the Merkids in order to win an ally as well as finding a casus belli for waging war on his western neighbors. After al Merkids were a rich tribal confederation and were contenders for power on the eastern steppe. Thus, their sharing a common language, ethnicity and religion (Merkids were also predominantly Nestorian Christians like the Qarais) did not necessarily create an amiable situation between the Qarais and Merkids. To the opposite, for Toghrul Khan, Merkids were a greater threat for his supremacy than the Mongols, because they provided a legitimate alternative to his rule for his subjects. As the anecdote of Horlartai-Mergan²⁵⁸ who immigrated with a whole tribe to another area under a different lord after he was not content with his ruler, the nomads did not hesitate to give their allegiance to a new ruler as long as he provided a better or a more legitimate alternative. The Khitan Liao dynasty and the Jürchen Jin dynasty had been playing one tribal confederation against the other in order to create chaos and

²⁵⁸ Cleaves, *The Secret History of the Mongols*, 1:9.

disunity on the eastern steppe lest a united steppe under a nomadic power pose a threat to them, and Toghrul who was also acquainted with the policies of North China states seems to be familiar with this strategy as can be seen in his political and military maneuvers. In fact, his title Ong Khan was an amalgam of Wang meaning king in Chinese and khan, a title equal in political standing to wang in the Altaic languages. This title was given to him by the Jin dynasty, and he must have been in contact with the Jin state for a long time since he could build an alliance with them against the Tatars who were previously allied to the Jin dynasty. In fact, bestowal of Chinese titles to nomadic leaders was a common practice since the Han times, but bestowal of the title Han alongside with a Chinese title was a later invention especially the Tang rulers used this to enhance the prestige of their allies on the steppe and also to show off their power to bestow titles not only to their subjects but also rulers of other polities. After Temujin rescued his wife with the help of Toghrul Han, he turned his attention to his Taijiut cousins who not only left him and his family and took the people of his father's clan which was by right his under his claim to rule, but also imprisoned him for a while lest he should try to claim rule again which he did. On the side of the Toghrul, it was again politically more convenient to support a weaker Temujin of the Borjigin clan against a stronger Taijiut clan. Even if he would win, the Qarais would take bounty as well as people as a share from the spoils of war and the Qarais would get stronger nonetheless. In this regard, becoming an adopted son carried a different meaning on the steppe than in China although it was applied by the same Turks or Mongols or other nomadic groups. In the Chinese context adoption of an adult man as a son meant inclusion of an able young man into the family for the benefit of the family and the individual male who was adopted. In the steppe context, however, adoption meant establishment of an alliance between a superior party who became the father, or the uncle of the adopted party which was politically and militarily at a weaker position and needed help. Unlike the marriages in which either stronger or weaker party could

give or get the hand of a daughter as a diplomatic maneuver, in the case of adopting a son or a nephew, the adopted party always accepted an inferior position.

The third kind of personal relation that was widely established between the individuals but was again actually as political in character as personal was the relationship between the blood brothers or *anda* as is called in Mongolian. Boghorchu is the first *anda* of Temujin that we encounter in *The Secret History of the Mongols*. They meet when Temujin was in distress that the eight nine of the nine horses his house owns were stolen and he was after the horses. He encounters Boghorchu who seems to be the son of a rich and influential man. At this stage his *anda* relationship is personal in character and does not involve politics. But his famous *anda* whom we know from many extant sources was Jamuqa. Their relationship seems to be political in character. We hear of Jamuqa for the first time in *The Secret History of the Mongols*²⁵⁹ when Temujin and his brothers go over to Toghrul Khan for help against the Merkids who kidnapped Temujin's wife Börte Chine. Toghrul as mentioned above swears that he will help him, but also tells Temujin to recruit Jamuqa as well. The way Toghrul calls Jamuqa is a little brother, whereas Jamuqa calls Toghrul as an elder brother. Here again we see that Jamuqa also accepts an inferior political standing within the fictive political family tree. But there is a slight difference that Jamuqa and Toghrul have a brother relationship whereas Temujin has an uncle-nephew relationship with him which suggests that at the time Temujin was at a weaker position than Jamuqa, but he was treated as a brother with Jamuqa both by Toghrul and Jamuqa, which hints at their semi-equal standing. Jamuqa's standing is further revealed when Jamuqa protests Toghrul and Temujin due to being late

²⁵⁹ Urunge Onon, trans., *The Secret History of the Mongols* (London: Routledge Curzon, 2001), 86.

three days for the campaign against the Merkid, and Ogham Toghrul responds in a humble way calling him little brother rather than son or nephew as he calls Temujin. Therefore, we understand that the fictive relationships were built not in accordance with the ages of the parties but in accordance with their political and military standing. As has been discussed in the previous chapters, the Khitans and later the Jürchens established a similar relationship with the Song emperors. In this respect his establishing an elder-younger brother, uncle-nephew, or father-son (especially the Jürchens established this kind of relationship at the apex of their power) relationship was also different from those of the Shatuo Turks of the five dynasties although they both had just been separated from the late Türk and Uighur Khanates and the Tang dynasty. In this respect, there seems to be a new form in diplomacy among the steppe peoples which seems to be penetrating into China as well after the collapse of Tang. Until the Song dynasty, no dynast seems to have entered into such a relationship either with Chinese or non-Chinese individuals. This seems to be a novelty brought by the nomads to the diplomacy norms in East Asia after the collapse of the Tang and the Uighur Khanates.

After the defeat of the Merkids by the coalition of Qarai and Mongol forces, some of Jamuqa's men went over to Temujin's side and thereafter Temujin was declared as the Qaghan of the Mongols and renamed Chinggis in a Qurultai which was held by his men without Jamuqa or the other Mongol tribal leaders²⁶⁰. This move however began the competition between Chinggis and his Anda Jamuqa who also competed for the leadership of the Mongol tribes. To strengthen his position, Chinggis sent envoys to Toghrul as his first act announcing that he was selected as the khan of the Mongols²⁶¹. This envoy was not sent with the intention

²⁶⁰ Ibid., 107.

²⁶¹ Ibid., 108

of declaring that Chinggis became equals with Toghrul and others. This act was probably aimed at securing Toghrul's support by taking his blessing through sending envoys to announce the selection of a khan. A similar practice was always conducted by the vassals in East Asia. The Korean kings would send envoys to China to declare their enthronement whereas Chinese emperors did not bother to announce their ascension to the throne. The same was also valid for the nomads. At the apex of their power, Türks did not bother to announce the new Qaghans to the Chinese, the Chinese learnt the events after they sent emissaries to the Türks. But at the beginning of their rise to power, they sent envoys to the Wei dynasty and later after they fell from power to the Tang to announce their new Qaghans. In the same way, Chinggis wanted to ensure the alliance or at least the neutrality of Toghrul khan by sending envoys signaling that his position as a vassal did not change.

After a while Chinggis and Jamuqa became rivals for becoming the ruler of the Mongols. Although Jamuqa was initially at a stronger position, many of the leaders seem to abandon Jamuqa to join Chinggis Qaghan's ranks. This was in fact a good example of how important the signs of legitimacy, diplomacy and family background were on the steppe. While a mere farmer's son could become a bandit and later an emperor in China, or even a foreigner like a Turk or a Mongol who was initially hired as a mercenary, on the steppe legitimacy and certain symbols carried an importance. The Mongol tribes left Jamuqa even after he defeated Chinggis in battle and forced him to hide in the forest. While his cruel treatment of the men he captured might be a reason²⁶² for desertion among his

²⁶² Jamuqa attacked Chinggis after his younger brother was killed by one of Chinggis Khan's men for stealing his livestock. After he defeated Chinggis Khan and forced him to flee, Jamuqa killed many of his followers instead of taking them as his own men as Chinggis would do later on. The way he killed them was also quite cruel even for the steppe of the time. He boiled some of the men alive in cauldrons, he tied the head of a man to his horse's tail. For the Mongols as well as other steppe tribes, the men who surrendered were to be treated in a more honorable way and this way of an insulting

men. For the steppe peoples the most valuable source of wealth was in fact the humans. As has been discussed in detail by Vladimirtsov²⁶³, for the steppe nomads, although land also had an importance, a piece of land was used in rotation by different tribes throughout the year and due to scarce population and large lands available, it was not as valuable as people as a commodity for the nomads. Therefore, desertion by the subject people could bring about the downfall of a leader. Since pastoral nomads were highly mobile, they could desert their master without notice within a short time unlike the farmers of China who were tied to the land and did not have the means of transportation that made it easier for huge masses of people to immigrate to long distances. Therefore, Chinggis bestowed *ulus* on his followers and sons rather than lands at the initial stages of his empire building process. The very word *ulus* is today used in the meaning of “nation” in modern Mongolian as well as other Turkic languages such as Turkish, but it originated from the Turkic word “*ülüş*” which meant share. But it was expected of a ruler to treat his *ulus* justly, generously and benevolently as well as providing them with good plunder at war and good pasture. Although Jamuqa provided his *ulus* with material gains, his treatment of Chinggis Khan’s men was deemed inappropriate for a ruler.

death would mean that the dead would continue to suffer this insult even after his death. In fact, the very name of Temüjin was bestowed on him by his father in memory of an enemy he has recently killed in battle. The Turks and Mongols had the habit of raising the children of the vanquished enemies and giving the names of the vanquished enemies to their own children in order to honor them. In this respect, jamuqa’s treatment to his hostages might be the reason for the desertion of his men. On the other hand, in *The Secret History of the Mongols* the men who join him explain their desertion as a result of a dream that heralded Chinggis Khan’s ascent as the new ruler, but the passage about this dream comes abruptly after Jamuqa’s treatment of his hostages.

²⁶³ B. Y. Vladimirtsov, *Moğolların İçtimaî Teşkilâtı; Moğol Göçebe Feodalizmi*, trans. Abdülkadir İnan translator, 42 (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1944).

After he reinforced his ranks with the newly recruited men of Jamuqa, Chinggis Khan joined Toghrul in his alliance with the Jin dynasty against the Tatars²⁶⁴. The Tatars are depicted as taking the great Mongol Khan Khabul as captive and giving him to the Jin to be slain in the capital in *The Secret History of the Mongols* as well as the Chinese sources²⁶⁵. Later on, Chinggis Khan's father Yesügei is also thought to be poisoned by the Tatars and he wants the Mongols to take his revenge at his dead bed according to *The Secret History of the Mongols*. Therefore, there should already have been a feud between the Mongols and Tatars, but although Yesügei fought against the Tatars to avenge Khabul Khan, Yesügei's revenge was so far not sought after by his son until the Jürchens attacked them and put them to flight towards north. This should have seemed as a good opportunity for Chinggis Khan to take personal revenge as well as solidifying his political backing among the Mongols both through revenge and plunder. After Chinggis Khan and Toghrul Khan defeated the Tatars, Toghrul was given the title of Ong Khan whereas Chinggis Khan was given the lesser title of Ja'ut Quri²⁶⁶ which he seems to have protested since Wangyan Chengxian, the Jürchen general announces that he will ask for a higher rank to be given to him upon his return to the Jin palace. Although Chinggis would later also attack the Jin with the pretext of the murder of Khabul Khan and avenging him, it seems that a title bestowed by the Jin dynasty upon him carried an important meaning within the steppe at this point. The fact that Wangyan Chengxian, the Jürchen general,

²⁶⁴ Onon, *The Secret History of the Mongols*, 111–114.

²⁶⁵ Tuotuo [Toqto'a], *金史 [Jinshi: History of Jin]*, 1278; Song, *元史 [Yuanshi: History of Yuan]*, 327.

²⁶⁶ Onon, *The Secret History of the Mongols*, 113.

seems to bestow these titles on site out of personal rejoice at Tatar defeat²⁶⁷ seems to be unlikely. The titles to be given to Toghrul and Chinggis were probably predetermined and were not left to the personal decisions of Wangyan Chengxian. Therefore, he announced that he will ask for a higher title for Chinggis Khan upon his return to the Jin capital, otherwise he could have bestowed a higher title on Chinggis Khan right at the spot as he seemed to do earlier. The titles which were bestowed are also interesting. For Toghrul, the title of Ong khan was bestowed as explained before. Ong was the Mongolian pronunciation of Chinese wang meaning king. This title was given by the Chinese to the foreign rulers of mostly sedentary countries such as Korea or Dali who entered the Chinese tributary system. Khan was a steppe title roughly equal to wang. During the Tang dynasty, the Chinese gave Chinese titles such wang to their neighbor rulers who got into the tributary system as a sign of their diplomatic alliance and the superiority of the party who gave titles. After the collapse of the Türk Qaghanate, the Chinese also began giving the steppe nomads Turkic titles as well as Chinese titles of military rank rather than political titles such as wang. The Jürchen bestowal of titles upon the two steppe leaders was obviously a continuation of the Tang policy and was nothing new. While the Türk leaders would rather give all the key commands along with the titles to their kinsmen from the Ashina clan, the Chinese were more liberal after the collapse of the Türk Empire. The Tang dynasty began to give Chinese bureaucratic titles to the rulers and other administrators of the sedentary states while bestowing military titles to the rulers of the nomadic tribes or tribal confederations in accordance with their military and political power on the steppe. Thus, a fiction that the China was the middle kingdom and its neighbors were autonomous regions of the empire was created on paper. In return for accepting such titles which showed them like Tang subjects,

²⁶⁷ Ibid.,113

the rulers of these policies gained economic advantages. Also, along with a Tang military or bureaucratic title, their title as the ruler of their country or policy was also recognized by the Tang which enhanced their status vis-à-vis their competitors, both internal and external. After the collapse of the Tang, Song, Liao and Jin dynasties also continued the practice of bestowing titles on foreign rulers as if they were their own subjects along with titles recognizing their sovereignty. The title Ja'ut Quri which was given to Chinggis Khan meant the commander of the Ja province. The other title that Wangyan Chengxian offered to give Chinggis Khan after consultation with his superiors in the capital was *Jeutau*²⁶⁸ meaning commissioner of pacification. This too was yet another military title but was higher. And yet, the title wang still put Toghrul at a higher position. From this, we can deduce that the Jürchens were well aware of the situation and status quo on the steppe and they did not give titles or rewards randomly. Nasiri also mentions although in a chronologically wrong order that the Jürchens were well aware of the developments on the steppe, and intervened whenever a threat to their hegemony rose²⁶⁹. But by the time they attacked the Tatars with the help of Toghrul and Chinggis, Chinggis was still no more than a local Mongol leader. Although he took the title of Chinggis Khan in the Qurultai, another Qurultai was gathered by his opponents including the Merkids, Naimans, Jamuqa and other Mongol tribes who claimed descent from Qabul Khan, and they elected Jamuqa as *gürqan*²⁷⁰ in the year of the cock in 1201²⁷¹. A similar title

²⁶⁸ Ibid., 115.

²⁶⁹ Uyar, *Minhâc-ı Sirâc El-Cûzcânî, Tabakât-ı Nâsırî: Moğol İstilasına Dair Kayıtlar*, 115–119.

²⁷⁰ *gür* in Turkic means strong. *Qa* is the shorter version of *aqa* which is a title and also prefix added to create superiority as in the case of *khan-qakhan*.

²⁷¹ Fazlullah, *Jami'u't-Tawarikh: Compendium of Chronicles*.

of *gürqa*n was also adopted by the Qara Khitai ruler at around the same time²⁷². Another development that changed the status quo was the overthrowing of Toghrul Khan by his younger brothers²⁷³. He had to ask for help from Chinggis Khan and with the help of Chinggis he could be restored to the throne. But the secret history mentions a raid by Toghrul against the Merkids the spoils of which he did not share with Chinggis. Such a mention of a raid undertaken by Toghrul without the help of Chinggis is interesting because normally his actions are not noted. In addition, it is especially noted that he did not share the spoils of his raid with Chinggis which he would normally not do. As a result, there seems to be a change in the status of Chinggis and Toghrul, and they seem to become at least equal partners if not shifting the roles altogether. Later on, Toghrul also wants to make Chinggis his adopted son and heir apparent and Chinggis wants to marry one of his daughters. But Toghrul's son Senggüm²⁷⁴ opposed this marriage and

²⁷² 'Alā' al-Dīn 'Aṭā Malek Joveynī, *Tarih-i Cihan Güşa*, trans. Mürsel Öztürk (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 2013).

²⁷³ "Tarikh-I-Rashidi : A History of the Khans of Moghulistan (books 1 and 2) / by Mirza Haydar Dughlat -- Habibu's-Siyar : T," n.d.

²⁷⁴ Senggüm is the Turkic version of the Chinese military title shangjun/將軍 which was also used in Japan with the pronunciation of shogun. Although this title carries a great significance within the Japanese context and is known as such in historiography, within the Chinese context and on the steppe it did not carry the same significance that it had in Japan. A Shangjun or a senggüm was not the supreme general commanding the whole military on the steppe or in China. But the fact that Toghrul had the title of Ong Khan bestowed to him by the Jin dynasty and his son was called by his Chinese style title rather than his real name demonstrates the importance of relations with the Jin dynasty among the steppe tribes. Naming and personal names carried a great significance for the nomadic peoples. Unlike the Chinese culture where an individual could change his name multiple times throughout his personal life and career, a nomad could have only one name and he would switch this name to a title only if the title carried a more significant meaning for the nomads than the name given to him at his birth. In *The Secret History of the Mongols*, Toghrul Khan's name changes from Toghrul/Tooril to Ong Khan, and Temüjin's name changes to Chinggis Khan only after they were given to them as the greatest titles in their careers. Jamuqa on the other hand remains to be called as Jamuqa even after he was given the title of gürqa. Chinggis also does not adopt the title

fearing that he would lose all that he had to Chinggis by being disinherited, took a hostile stance towards Chinggis and the Mongols.

After a series of wars and diplomatic exchanges, as it happened with the Song reunification of China, the determining factor was the combination of military might and building alliance built around the belief that Chinggis had the *qut/mandate of heaven* and that he could provide the best opportunities as a just leader to his followers as their leader. As a result of the wars between the faction of Chinggis Khan and his opponents, Chinggis became the supreme leader of the Eastern steppe. Until this unification, Chinggis was treated as a tribal leader rather than a ruler of an independent policy by the neighboring tribes. But after he managed to unite the whole Eastern steppe, he was recognized as an independent ruler by the neighboring sedentary and nomadic polities. It can be claimed that the Mongols were taken as an important political group for the first time in their history after Chinggis defeated Toghrul, Jamuqa, Naimans, Merkids and the Tatars and united the whole eastern steppe. Before that, even Qabul Khan was taken no more than a tribal chieftain. His only importance came from Chinggis Khan's claim of descent from him.

It is also important that Chinggis Khan laid the foundations of the *yasaq/yasa* only after he united the steppe. Until he united the Mongols and other tribes of the Eastern steppe, he followed the precedents of the Türks and other nomads.

Ja'ut Quri instead of his personal name (only in one instance he calls himself Ja'ut Quri as an irony when he sends a message to two tribal leaders that deserted him for Ong Qan/Toghrul: Onon, 158), and Toghrul and Jamuqa also seem to call him Temüjin for a while until he was named as Chinggis meaning strong in Mongolian. In this respect, the titles given by the Chinese or given by the Qurultai could carry significant meaning. The title of Chinggis was given to him after he defeated the Merkids and the Qurultain containing the men of Jamuqa as well as some other Taijiuts and other Mongols decreed that he was given the mandate of heaven, whereas the Qurultai that elected Jamuqa as their Khan only had his own men and other insignificant allies and did not decree that Jamuqa had the mandate of heaven.

But after he united the steppe, he made alterations to his borrowings and the precedents that would enable him to establish a more enduring state structure for his empire. Once he won the war against the Qarai tribes and the coalition with them, he did not keep these tribes intact. Instead he divided these people among his followers as a spoil of war. Although whole tribes or households could be given as a reward on the steppe from the very early times. But the tribes were mostly kept intact and were given as a whole to the followers or relatives of a Khan. The difference of the approach of Chinggisid era and the Türk era can be seen in their approach to the ordinary nomadic subjects. While the Türk Qaghan boasts of providing food, clothes and other material wealth to the “people”, Chinggis and his followers make a clear distinction between the steppe aristocracy and the ordinary people. Of course, the bone system (aq/qara: white/noble-black: commoner) was not invented by the Mongols and it existed on the steppe from the early times onwards and the Türks were not exactly an egalitarian dynasty and state, the Türk Qaghans turned to the common people for support and legitimacy while Chinggis always turned to the nobility. In *The Secret History of the Mongols*, in many cases he boasts of providing wealth to his noble followers. His followers are also mostly depicted with their family trees. In many cases the importance of the relationship between the master and the vassal or the need for the commoners to follow the orders of their rulers is emphasized and the only instances where Chinggis rewards commoners with oblique backgrounds is the time that they show loyalty to their masters. Thus, by diffusing the ordinary people under the command of their men regardless of their ethnic, linguistic or tribal affiliation, he managed to create a system where ulus and the master of an ulus or an orda played a more important role than tribe or ethnic affiliations. He also created a personal army of nökers (dogs in Mongolian) who were selected according to their skills and physical built rather than their clan and ethnic affiliation. In this way Chinggis hoped to overcome the tribal and ethnic division of the steppe which prevented it from reuniting for a long time.

The *nökers* were actually more than simple servants and guards. Their function can be compared to the privy council of the medieval European kings. Although they carried titles such as cooks, quiver bearer and such, they were in fact the closest people to the Khan and they were influential in the process of policy decisions. Just like the other nomadic leaders who preceded him, Chinggis Khan also had the habit of asking counsel to the people around him, and listening to their advice. In this respect, he did not pick the people who would serve his person randomly from the very beginning. Also by choosing his *nökers* from the sons of various tribes, he was building a bureaucracy who owed their rise to power and position to Chinggis Khan rather than to their clan affiliation or family background. Thus, a group of military and bureaucratic servants began to appear around the person of the Khan who owed their allegiance to the Khan and the royal family. These young *nökers* also acted like a cement that bound the tribal and ethnic groups to the royal house of Chinggis. Since every family or tribe gave a son to the *nökers* to serve in the service of the Khan, the royal household servants and the royal army was not seen as strangers who exploited the steppe tribes for the maintenance of the royal house. Every clan leader had a son who was serving the Khan, and the royal army was a mixture which was both alien and also familiar. Thus, Chinggis managed to create a core elite army that was homogenous out of a heterogeneous society. And from this point onwards the way Chinggis Khan treats the tribal leaders and the rulers of the state begin to change. He does not accept the Jin Dynasty as a suzerain, but as an equal. The same is valid for the Tangut Xi Xia, in fact, after defeating the Tanguts, he begins to treat them as a vassal and Chinggis died during a second punitive campaign against the Tanguts. However, once Chinggis Khan codified the *törü* or *yasaq* as it was called in Turkic and Mongolic languages, the norms for conducting diplomacy remained essentially the same. Therefore, it is important to understand the system that was created after the second *qurultai* which was gathered at the aftermath of the victory against the Qarais and their allies. From the very

beginning the Mongols had the habit of not touching the tribes who submitted to them without fighting.²⁷⁵ The Qarluq Arslan Khan from whose territory the Naiman Khan Qüchlüq and the Merkid Khan Toqto'a Beki passed was attacked as a punitive expedition by Qubilai Noyan.²⁷⁶ But he submitted to Qubilai without a fight and the Qarluqs were let to continue as Mongol vassals unmolested. In the same manner, the Uighur Idiqt Barchu Arttegin also sent an emissary and tribute as a sign of his submission. Both Arslan Khan of the Qarluq and Idiqt Barchu of the Uighurs were actually subjects of the Qara Khitan, which made a war between the Qara Khitan and the Mongols more imminent. Also, the rulers who submitted to Chinggis Khan without fighting were all given a Mongol wife from the royal family. This had been an old steppe tradition and it seems to continue throughout the Mongol era. While the Chinese emperors gave their daughters in marriage to the so-called "barbarians only if they had to, the nomadic leaders on the other hand were more than willing to give their daughters in marriage to distant allies. In the steppe case, by giving your daughter in marriage to a tribal leader, you would not only become his steppe father, you would also become the grandfather of the next leader by forcing your daughter as the primary consort of the leader who married her. It should be noted that when a suzerain refused to give a daughter in marriage to a vassal, it was taken as an insult among the steppe people. The Türks rebelled against the Avars as a result of the Avar Qaghan's insulting refusal of the Türk leader's offer of marriage with his daughter. The same problem lay at the basis of the enmity between Chinggis Khan and Toghrul Khan as Toghrul's son refused the idea of giving his sister to

²⁷⁵ The Önggüt tribe to whom Chinggis Khan's primary wife Börte also belonged submitted to Chinggis Khan without a fight and he promised never to plunder or attack them which he kept.

²⁷⁶ Qubilai Noyan was one of the most important generals of Chinggis Khan, not to be confused with the later Qubilai Khan who was his grandson.

Chinggis claiming his inferior descent as an excuse. In a different context, Qubilai Khan and his descendants forced the Korean kings to marry Mongol princesses as primary consorts and supported the sons born from these marriages in ascending the throne thus ending the resistance against the Mongols in the Goryeo kingdom. As a result of this policy every Goryeo king had a Mongol mother and a Mongol wife. Therefore, during the Chinggisid era and afterwards, marriage remained to be an important component of diplomatic relations among the steppe peoples and in China under the Mongol rule. The main difference between the approach of the Chinese and sinocentric countries' and the steppe peoples stemmed from Confucianism. According to the Confucian tradition, marriage could be conducted between the people of equal standing. It was also inappropriate to send daughters to the "barbarians". Yet from the very early times onwards, political marriages took place between the "civilized" and the "barbarian".²⁷⁷ In fact, the Chinese emperors or kings took "barbarian" wives as their primary consorts in some cases²⁷⁸. Therefore, there was actually many precedents that made such a claim a universal practice within the Chinese world order. But the difference that the Mongols brought to Chinese political scene was the institutionalization of such political marriages between the rulers of policies. They have also adopted the previous Khitan policy of taking their primary consorts from a single clan. While the Uighur Xiao clan gave their daughters to the Khitan Yelü royal clan as their primary consorts, the Mongols established such a policy with the Onggirad tribe. In the case of the Khitan Yelü clan's relation with the Uighur Xiao clan, the Khitans who were militarily stronger needed the administrative skills of the Uighurs and marriage between the clans not only provided the Khitans with a solid alliance with the Uighurs who did not

²⁷⁷ Di Cosmo, *Ancient China and Its Enemies*.

²⁷⁸ Shaughnessy, "Western Zhou History."

leave their territory on the Eastern steppe after the collapse of the Uighur Khanate, but it also provided the Yelü royal house with the skilled brother in laws to whom they could trust the administration of their newly emerging empire. The Onggirads who are thought to be the descendants of the Wugu tribes of the Tang times seem to have relations with the dynasties and the states in Northern China after the collapse of the Tang dynasty, and they established friendly relations with the Mongols from the very early times onwards through giving their daughters in marriage to the Mongol rulers. Like the Xiao consort clan, the Onggirads played an important role within the Mongol politics and they were influential especially in the inter-Mongol political affairs²⁷⁹. In many ways, the Mongol approach to marriage was a continuation of the Türk, Khitan and Jürchen practices. But they brought this practice of institutionalized political marriage custom to the Chinese world. Before, the Türks and other steppe peoples married Chinese princesses, but marrying of nomadic princesses to Chinese emperors or other kings of sedentary countries belonging to the Chinese order was the exception rather than the rule. In fact, a marriage proposal was also the first solution that came to mind when the Jürchens were overcome by the Mongols in 1211-1212. After the Mongols attacked the Jürchen Jin dynasty without an apparent reason.²⁸⁰ General Wangyan Chengxian who had previously commanded the Jürchen forces against

²⁷⁹ Cho Won, “논문(論文): 쿠빌라이시기 강남지역 색목인의 任官과 활약 - 강절행정(江浙行省)지방관부 색목인(色目人)관원의 사례를 중심으로 [The Semu Officials and Their Active Role in the Southern China under the Reign of Khubilai Khan],” *중앙아시아연구 [Chungang Asia Yeongu: Central Asia Research]* 19, no. 2 (2014): 107.

²⁸⁰ No reason has been given in the sources for the attack on the Jin state other than the revenge for Qabul Khan. And yet this reason seems a little bit out of order since previously the Mongols saw no harm in allying with the Jürchens for joining the attack on the Tatars. This first attack in 1211 could have been actually intended as a raid which proved to be more successful than anticipated.

the Tatars alongside Toghrul Khan and Chinggis Khan was this time sent as an emissary to the Mongols probably due to his being more acquainted with the Mongols and their leader. As Wangyan suggested, the Jin Emperor gave a princess in marriage to Chinggis Khan along with gold, silver, silk and other material gifts and the Mongols returned to the steppe²⁸¹. The Tanguts followed the Jürchens by marrying off a princess and offering silk and other material support to the Mongols. Unlike the Jürchens however, the Tanguts initially did not put up a fight against the Mongols and their ruler submitted in an offer of alliance, marriage and yearly payments²⁸².

However, these were temporary tactics of buying peace. In 1214 when Chinggis Khan's emissaries sent to the Song Emperor Ningzong were obstructed by the Jin, the Mongols attacked again. In this respect, for the Jürchens and the Tanguts, who settled within Chinese territories, marriage alliance or political marriages did not carry the same meaning as they did for the steppe people. Also, Chinggis seems to take their submission for granted since he sent envoys to the Song to declare his supremacy. But in actuality, both the Jin and Xi Xia armies were still intact, and they simply wanted to avoid trouble with the Mongols while they were struggling with their own inner problems and rebellions²⁸³. So, both the Jürchens and the Tanguts did not keep their promises of submission. The Jürchens prevented the Mongol envoys to the Song who wanted to pass through their

²⁸¹ Thomas T. Allsen, "The Rise of the Mongolian Empire and Mongolian Rule in North China," in *The Cambridge History of China: Alien Regimes and Border States, 907-1368*, ed. Denis C. Twitchett, Herbert Franke, and John King Fairbank, vol. 6, Cambridge Histories (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 187

²⁸² Onon, *The Secret History of the Mongols*, 236–238.

²⁸³ There were rebellions within the Jin territory as well as a long drought and Khitan uprisings. The Tangut Xi Xia state was on the other hand struggling with the struggles within the court and the royal house was barely controlling the country.

territory. As a result, the Mongols came back and this time instead of simply raiding and going back with the bounty, they decided to enlarge their territory by taking the submissions of the Khitan and Jürchen tribes in Manchuria. They also took the city of Zhongdu.²⁸⁴ But eventually, the Mongols returned to the steppe after a while.

After this event, however, Chinggis Khan had to divert his attention to the west. A mission sent to the Kharazmian Empire was attacked and sacked in the city of Utrar by the Kharazmian governor. Actually, before this embassy was seized and killed, the Kharazmian ruler Muhammed Shah had sent an envoy to Chinggis Khan upon his victory against the Qara Khitai who were also his neighbors and rivals²⁸⁵. In response to this envoy, Chinggis Khan had sent back an envoy and wanted to trade with the Kharazmians. But the Utrar governors attack, which was carried out with the knowledge of Muhammed Shah was an excuse for both parties to start a war. Although Chinggis Khan sent another envoy demanding punishment and compensation, this envoy too was killed, this time by Muhammed Shah. Seizing the ambassadors was a common practice in East Asia, but killing them meant waging war on the steppe as well as on the sedentary world. And at a time that Chinggis Khan had just united the Eastern half of the steppe and claimed to be the universal ruler of the nomads, a rival claimant, who had recently united the western steppe and claimed suzerainty over the Islamic world challenged him by killing his envoys. Unlike modern diplomacy, the premodern diplomacy in East Asia went hand in hand with trade. Especially in the Chinese tributary system, sending envoys and tribute to China brought commercial opportunities, and most of the rulers would attach merchants and

²⁸⁴ Eastern Jin Capital at the site of the Modern-day Beijing.

²⁸⁵ Uyar, *Minhâc-ı Sirâc El-Cûzcânî, Tabakât-ı Nâsirî: Moğol İstilasına Dair Kayıtlar*, 335–336.

commercial goods to the diplomatic missions. But at this point, Chinggis Khan would probably not send tribute to the Kharazmians in return for material benefits, since he had recently subdued the Jürchen Jin dynasty and the Tangut Xi Xia state. Probably, as Özkan İzgi suggests²⁸⁶, the Mongols and the Kharazmians were aware of the situation in the opposite sides of the Eurasian steppe. The Naiman prince Qüchlüq had recently fled to the west, to the Qara Khitai from the Mongols. Chinggis Khan's envoys on the other hand also included Muslim merchants from Central Asia. In this respect, it is obvious that both leaders were aware of the situation in the other leader's area of influence. It is also suggested by İzgi that the Kharazmian leader intended to conquer China just like Chinggis Khan and he saw Chinggis Khan as a rival. On the side of the Mongols, they needed goods coming from the west as well, therefore other than the insult of having their envoys killed, Chinggis Khan could not afford a trade blockade. As a result, Chinggis did not even want to bother with the Tanguts when they did not keep their promise of providing troops and material support to the Mongols in times of war, and kept going on to the campaign against the Kharazmians. However, given the fact that a campaign to central Asia could not have been decided in a rush manner since it needed to be planned in advance, it is possible that the Mongols had been gathering information about the west for a while and that Chinggis anticipated a war. For Chinggis Khan the difference did not lie in the ethnicity or religion, but in the life styles, and for him conquering the world meant uniting the people of the felt tent, not conquering cities of agricultural areas. We see this approach in the first Mongol conquests by the destruction of very important cities and agricultural centers. Unlike the eastern steppe, the western steppe was a belt of pasture lands surrounded by agricultural areas and cities. The Kharazmian Empire, like the Jürchen Jin Empire or the Tangut Xi Xia

²⁸⁶ İzgi, *Orta Asya Türk Tarihi Araştırmaları*.98

state had cities to govern and the majority of the population was agricultural farmers rather than pastoral nomads. But for the Mongols, cities were obstacles like the mountains or rivers. In the Mongolian system, the taxation was different from the sedentary world. The economy was based on livestock and the Mongols were not situated at the crossroads of the trade routes. They either had to invite merchants to their territory or they had to go south and west for trade and conquering areas standing along the silk route. Therefore, the campaign towards the Kharazmians was vital for the Mongols. It also seems that the Mongols were not ignorant of the world around them as it is thought. In one passage, Chinggis Khan's quiver bearers ask him to attack the Abbasid Caliph in Baghdad. They seem to know that the city was rich and at a vulnerable position after the collapse of the Kharazmian Empire²⁸⁷. Thus, the Mongols also made their infamous attack on the Qipchaq steppe and the Russian cities.²⁸⁸ But there does not seem to be any diplomatic or other reason for the attack on the Abbasid Caliphate whereas the Qangli tribes and the Qipchaq tribes gave shelter to the fleeing Merkids, Qarais and Naimans²⁸⁹. While the Secret History of the Mongols and *Yuanshi* do not give details of the relations with the Qipchaq confederacy and the Russian states, the Russian Chronicles suggest that there were diplomatic relations going on between the Mongols, Qipchaqs and the Russians²⁹⁰. There seems to be a

²⁸⁷ Onon, *The Secret History of the Mongols*, 252.

²⁸⁸ Donald Ostrowski, "The Mongol Origins of Muscovite Political Institutions," *Slavic Review* 49, no. 4 (1990): 17, doi:10.2307/2500544.

²⁸⁹ Yaroslav Philipchuk, "Кыпчаки в Китае [Курчакі в Китає: Kipchaks in China]," *Китаєзнавчі дослідження*. К., 2014, 195–202.

²⁹⁰ Marianna Shreve Simpson, "Manuscripts and Mongols: Some Documented and Speculative Moments in East-West/Muslim-Christian Relations," *French Historical Studies* 30, no. 3 (July 1, 2007): 351–94.

pattern in the diplomatic affairs of the Mongols towards their nomadic and sedentary neighbors in regards to their military power. They sent emissaries to the Jin, Kharazmians, and the Qipchaqs who could militarily oppose them, but in the case of the Abbasid Caliphate or smaller tribes, they could simply ask for submission or attack without a warning. The Mongols also seem to use diplomacy as a military tool for their campaigns in tandem with their campaigns. The last of Chinggis Khan's campaigns was to the Tangut Xi Xia state as a punitive campaign for their failing to give the support they promised. But when Chinggis Khan fell from his horse and could not continue the campaign, he sent envoys to the Tanguts to buy his time. The Tangut reply was actually open to interpreting. The reason for this kind of diplomatic maneuver was the inner political instability in the Tangut court as has been discussed in the previous chapters. While the Tangut ruler Burkhan was inclined to buy peace at a moment when his reign was not secure, his prime minister Asha Gambu was underestimating the Mongols and challenged them to fight. It also seems that Asha Gambu had his own military power since he fought against the Mongols while Burkhan's reply to the Mongols was that he could give silk and gold if it was what the Mongols wanted, and it was Asha Gambu who had previously insulted them when they asked for support in the campaign against the Kharazmians. But he also added that if the Mongols wished to fight regardless of the silk and gold that he offered, he was ready to fight. This demonstrates that the Tanguts were also actually buying peace and not really submitting unlike the Uighurs who kept their promise of levying soldiers and giving support to the Mongols²⁹¹. The reason for such a misunderstanding between the parties could be that the difference between their understandings of

²⁹¹ Evgenii Ivanovich Kychanov, "Монголо-Тангутские Войны и Гибель Государство Си Сиа [Mongolo-Tangutskie Voiny I Gibel' Gasudarstvo Si Sia: Mongolo-Tangut Wars and the Tangut State]," in *Татаро-Монголы в Азии и Европе [Tataro-Mongoly v Azii I Evrope: Tataro-Mongols in Asia and Europe* (Moscow: Nauka, 1977), 46–61.

the mandate of heaven. The Mongols took the *qut* or mandate of heaven as absolute and belonging only to Chinggis Khan and his descendants. As a result, they expected their surrounding policies to submit in a different way than the Khitans, Jürchens or the Tanguts expected from their vassals. The Khitans, Jürchens and Tanguts were used to having another son of heaven to the south of their border, and even if they could beat him in battle, for centuries they were used to calling the Chinese emperor as the son of heaven, and they accepted him as an equal in terms of diplomatic protocol.

Also, what they expected from their vassals as a tribute was nominal like the Chinese tributary system. Even the Song payments to the Khitan Liao and later the Jürchen Jin dynasties was not a huge burden on the Song economy. The reason for the Jürchen rebellion of Aguda against his Khitan overlords is cited as the Khitan requests for too much tribute which was falcons and horses actually, and not great sums as the Mongols would ask of their vassals afterwards. The Mongol demand for tribute was more literal than figurative. While the *darugachi*²⁹² institution which is thought to be a Khitan institution in origin was already in use, the Mongol application of the *darugachi* to the states areas which were not under direct Mongol control was new form in itself²⁹³. After the conquest of central Asia, the *darugachi* were used for the first time by Chinggis Khan. But it is known that officials of Khitan and Jürchen or Chinese origin were

²⁹² Darugachi was a Mongol official who was sent to a city or a state to oversee the collection of taxes and the administration as well as to make sure that no opposition was shown against the Mongol rule. The *darugachi* were called as *basqaq* in the Turkic languages. The roots of both words, *daru-* and *bas-* meant to press. This probably was derived from the verb of putting a seal: *tamga bas-/tamga daru-* in both languages. István Vasary, "The Golden Horde Term Daruga and Its Survival in Russia," *Acta Orientalia Hungarica*, no. 30 (1976): 112.

²⁹³ The first instance of a *darugachi* under this name appears in *Yuanshi* as a Mongol who was appointed to Yan (Beijing). Song, *元史 [Yuanshi: History of Yuan]*, 2961.

already present at the campaign alongside Chinggis Khan. Yelü Chucai was one such example, and he was probably not brought by the Mongols all the way to Central Asia only for fortune-telling as the sources suggest. He was a very good administration and he seems to be respected by Chinggis Khan and other Mongols. Later on, his reform suggestions were widely applied in China under Mongol rule by Ögödei and other Mongol rulers. It is highly probable that Jin officials of Khitan or Jürchen origin were instrumental in the establishment of the darugachi in the central Asian cities. In the same manner, the Yalavach family²⁹⁴ who were administrators in the Kharazmian empire were brought to China to administer the sedentary population. Until the end of Qubilai Khan's reign, the Mongols preferred administrators of Turkic, Khitan or Jürchen origin over the Chinese or Persian. The reason for such preference could be the cultural and linguistic affinities. Chinggis felt more at home with Yelü Chucai whom he called *urtuq saqa*²⁹⁵ than with Chinese or Middle Eastern administrators and advisors whose concepts of state, worldview and way of life seemed more alien to him. Thus, during the lifetime of Chinggis, the darugachi were only used in the cities of Central Asia, Russia and the Qipchaq steppe as Mongolian administrators alongside the local administrators. There are no reports of darugachi who are sent to the Uighur territory or other tribal areas. But after Chinggis Khan, the darugachi became a common actor in the Mongol diplomacy with the states and tribes who submitted to them. They were especially well known in the Russian principalities, Korea, Chinese prefectures, Central Asia and

²⁹⁴ Igor de Rachewiltz, ed., *In the Service of the Khan: Eminent Personalities of the Early Mongol-Yüan Period (1200-1300)*, Asiatische Forschungen (Otto Harrassowitz Verlag, 1993). 122-134

²⁹⁵ Urtuq Saqa means long beard in Mongolian. Chinggis gave this name to him for his long beard. It is reported that he was also impressed by the frankness and honesty of this Khitan originated Jin official who actually belonged to the royal Yelü clan of the previous Liao dynasty. *Ibid.*, 134–147.

Anatolia. The institution became widespread especially during the reign of Ögödei who as his father Chinggis wished was elected as the qaghan in the qurultai that followed Chinggis Khan's death²⁹⁶.

During the reign of Ögödei, the Mongols continued their expansion. The Mongol General Muqali whom Chinggis Khan left behind with the left army continued to campaign in the Jin territory. After subduing the resistance in Manchuria, he pressed South into Northern China. Many Khitan and Chinese, as well as Jürchen generals joined the Mongols after Muqali's successes. As a result of this, the Jin side sent an envoy to Chinggis Khan asking for the terms of peace²⁹⁷ while he was still campaigning in Central Asia against the Kharazmians. Chinggis demanded that the Jin Emperor give up his title and become a king²⁹⁸ and accept Mongol suzerainty in addition to leaving Shanxi to the Mongols. The Jin side refused these demands and war dragged on into the reign of Ögödei. Meanwhile, the Song dynasty also sent envoys to the Mongols and Zhao Hong, the Song envoy to the Mongols kept a detailed account of his journey and his observations²⁹⁹. While the Mongol General Muqali seems to act in accordance with the Chinese norms in clothing, diplomatic protocol and court procedures, Zhao also reports that the Mongols still stick to their customs under the surface.³⁰⁰

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²⁹⁷ Tuotuo [Toqto'a], *金史* [*Jinshi: History of Jin*]; Fazlullah, *Jami'u't-Tawarikh: Compendium of Chronicles*.

²⁹⁸ 王/wang

²⁹⁹ Cao, *蒙鞑備錄*[*xiaozhuMengda Beilu Xiaozhu: A Refined Report on the Mongols and Tatars to the North*].

³⁰⁰ Ibid.

At this point, Muqali, who was given the title of Guo wang³⁰¹ by Chinggis could receive the Song envoys like a ruler, but both parties were aware that Muqali was not a ruler. The situation of Muqali seems to be an isolated exception in terms of Mongol diplomacy. After Chinggis Khan, any envoy to the Mongols would be received by the Khan only. Receiving envoys became the monopoly of the Khan due to the prestige that it carried. Later on, the western envoys to the Mongols such as Rubruck³⁰² and Carpini³⁰³ report that the Mongol diplomatic procedures were quite complicated compared to the western one. The Mongol postal system made it possible for the foreign envoys to travel all the way to Mongolia safely and in a relatively short time. Although both Rubruck and Carpini also report that they were received by Mongol governors on their way, these Mongol governors or even the Khan of the Golden Horde did not receive them and forwarded their letters. After interrogating the envoys, all the Mongol administrators and even autonomous Khans of different Ulus seem to forward these envoys to the Great Khan in Mongolia. The foreign envoys who arrived at the qaghan's court had a similar meaning for the Mongols with the Chinese in terms of legitimizing their reign. Envoys arriving from faraway lands bringing exotic "tributes" to the newly elected qaghan were an opportunity for the qaghan to legitimize his rule in the

³⁰¹ 國王 meant king in Chinese, but in this context it was used as a title by the Mongolians to show his high ranking. Otherwise Muqali was not deemed as an independent ruler or a vassal. He was still seen as a Mongol Noyan. This can be deduced also from the fact that, when he died the title of guowang did not pass onto his brother Dayisun or his children. And yet during his lifetime, he was one of the most trusted and skillful generals of Chinggis Khan. After Muqali, this title was not given to any non-Chinggisid person.

³⁰² Jana Valtrová, "Beyond the Horizons of Legends: Traditional Imagery and Direct Experience in Medieval Accounts of Asia," *Numen* 57, no. 2 (January 1, 2010): 154–85.

³⁰³ Carpini, *Relation des Mongols ou Tartares*; Johannes (de Plano Carpini.), *The Journey of Friar John of Pian de Carpini to the Court of Kuyuk Khan, 1245-1247 as Narrated by Himself*, n.d.

eyes of his own Mongol subjects. The same was valid for the Chinese emperors who received envoys upon his ascend to throne. However, the difference between the Chinese case and the Mongol case was that, the Mongols expected a more literal kind of tribute which bore a material value and did not give back presents to the envoys whose value exceeded the tribute. For the Mongols, a tribute was a material benefit, not a symbolic gesture of submission. Aside from the envoys who brought letters of submission and gifts, the darugachi were at the center of collecting tribute. But in the case of the foreign envoys who represented states which were not conquered by the Mongols and has not submitted to them, the case was different. These envoys were treated cordially by the qaghan. Although both Carpini and Rubruck complain from the behavior of the Mongols on the way to the Mongol capital, they also both seem to agree that the Qaghans were cordial to them. Both such envoys were also severely trained by the Mongols for the protocol to be followed in accordance with the Mongol customs, and the letters that they bore were read beforehand in order to avoid any public challenge or humiliation lest the letters which the envoys bore had unwanted expressions or messages. In fact, in the case of Rubruck, who was a Franciscan monk and was not actually an official envoy, the Mongols insisted on treating him like the official envoy of the French King, not because they did not understand his intention which he clearly declared in every opportunity as propagating the word of Christ, but because it was to their advantage politically to receive him and present him as an envoy of the king of the Franks. Thus, the Mongol qaghan could make a public image of a ruler who was respected and feared by even the strongest kings of faraway Catholic Europe. This was especially true for Qubilai who was elected as Qaghan under suspicious conditions and was not recognized as such by all the members of the Chinggisid lineage. To prove his legitimacy as a qaghan, Qubilai had no choice but to either conquer or to force to submit some countries that were still not under Mongol control which explains his campaigns in South East Asia and Japan. In addition, receiving envoys from Europe and

South East Asia was a great opportunity for Qubilai Khan to boast his image among his subjects, both Mongol and Chinese.

Qubilai's uncle Ögödei on the other hand, was elected unanimously upon the will of his father Chinggis whom no one within the Mongol realm could defy even after his death. And yet he also followed the same policy of making conquests and proving himself as capable a leader as his late father. This was actually the case for the first four qaghans who not only tried to prove themselves capable, but also tried to keep the empire together after the death of Chinggis Khan and the sharing of the empire among his sons and brother. During the reign of Ögödei, the Jin conquest was completed in an alliance with the Song as mentioned before in the previous chapters in detail. In addition to this, Korean kingdom of Goryeo was also subdued after the first Koreans repeatedly rebelled following their first submission to the Mongols without a fight in 1218.³⁰⁴ But just as Ögödei managed to conquer the Jin, ending the Jürchen dynasty, subdue the Goryeo kingdom and the campaign to the Dasht-i Qipchaq and Russia began, Ögödei died as a result of which most of the military campaigns were halted. At the qurultai Güyüg was elected as the great qaghan despite opposition as a result of Ögödei's wife Töregene's support. Carpini also reports that Odjigin, the younger brother of Chinggis Khan was also executed for declaring himself a Khan without a qurultai with the aim of taking advantage of the situation³⁰⁵. At such a chaotic situation Güyüg had to secure his place firmly. While Ögödei was chosen by his father as the heir apparent, Güyüg was not the heir apparent. Ögödei chose his grandson as the Shiremün as the heir apparent in anticipation of opposition to Güyüg's candidacy. Güyüg's relations with the other Chinggisid lineages were

³⁰⁴Choi, 高麗史 [*Goryeosa: Annals of Goryeo*], Volume 23: 19b,20b

³⁰⁵ Carpini.), *The Journey of Friar John of Pian de Carpini to the Court of Kuyuk Khan, 1245-1247 as Narrated by Himself*, 86.

not so warm. He was especially at odds with Batu Khan, the leader of the Golden Horde and the Jochi lineage. This might also be the reason why Ögödei chose his grandson over his son. Ögödei himself was chosen by Chinggis Khan over his elder sons due to the fighting between them and in order to prevent a civil war between his sons, Chinggis chose Ögödei who was accepted by all his sons. Ögödei probably intended the same but since his will was not followed by his wife Törenege, Güyüg became a qaghan. As a result, Güyüg made a huge payment to the Mongol aristocracy as well as other commanders and administrators in order to secure his place³⁰⁶. Also, Güyüg seems to share the power with the other houses by appointing representatives of the other houses or even by auditing the imperial matters jointly with their representatives.³⁰⁷ But despite these efforts to keep the unity of the empire, Güyüg did not do much to expand the empire unlike his father Ögödei. His only grand campaign was also to be the last, and it was against his cousin Batu, and it did not involve any diplomacy. After gathering his troops in Jungaria under the disguise of a royal hunting tour, Güyüg wanted to march on Batu, but he died unexpectedly in 1248. After the death of Güyüg, the Empire which was at the brink of break down came closer to division. After a series of struggles, the qaghan title passed from the Ögödei branch to the Tolui branch by the election of Möngke as the qaghan. The election of Möngke was a meticulously arranged affair by Soghaghtani Beki. The Toluids slowly built their alliances with the other branch houses while also

³⁰⁶Juvaini, *The Tarikh-I-Jahan-Gusha of Alaud-Din Ata Malik-I-Juwayni: Containing the History of Chingiz Khan and His Successors*, 201; Joveynī, *Tarih-I Cihan Güşa*, 307.

³⁰⁷ According to Yuanshi, after a possible corruption case was discovered in the management of the royal estates in Hebei, Burji and Xili Jianbu (an official of Tangut origin) representing Tolui and Güyüg worked on the case jointly, and the records regarding the case were kept by Tolui's agent Burji instead of Güyüg's agent. Song, 元史 [*Yuanshi: History of Yuan*], 3012

dutifully serving Ögödei and Güyüg. And yet it was Soghaghtani Beki who informed Batu Khan of the Güyüg's surprise attack, so that he can prepare for war. This way she would not only prevent the Ögödeids from dominating the whole empire, but also gained the alliance of the Jochi branch as well as the neutrality of the Chaghatai branch through acting neutrally and giving the image of impartiality in the fights between the cousins. While Güyüg bought the allegiances of the Mongol rulers by emptying the treasury, Toluid side used diplomacy to come to power within the Mongol realm. They did not only unite with the Jochi house, they also managed to take some of the Ögödeids to their side and even the Chaghataids who were not particularly in good terms with their primary allies Jochids due to the land disputes in central Asia. After the election of Möngke in two separate qurultais, one in the Golden Horde area of Ala Qamaq in 1250, and another one year later in the Onon Kerülen area where Chinggis was also proclaimed khan, Möngke's side duly undertook the necessary procedures. After he was elected by a majority including representatives from all four lineages, there was not much left to do for the Ögödeids. They would either comply with the qurultai or they would start a civil war. Shiremün, the heir apparent chosen by Ögödei in his life time but was not installed by his wife Törenege had in the last moment entered the bid for becoming qaghan but his claim was despised by Batu and Möngke due to the fact that even his own family did not follow Ögödei's will and this will was nullified by the Ögödei's wife and Güyüg's wife Oghul Qaimish was also late to unite her sons behind Shiremün. As a result, Shiremün decided to attack and kill Möngke. Knowing that he did not stand a chance in open warfare, he decided to attend the ceremonies to celebrate Möngke with a small group of elite soldiers and assassinate them during the celebrations with a surprise attack. And yet their plans were discovered and a purge began wiping the Ögödei's lineage from power. During the purge, the rulers of the vassal states were invited to Qara Qorum and were either permitted to continue their rule if they were neutral or pro-Toluid, but were executed if they

sided with the Ögödeids. The Uighur Idiqut Salındı was thus executed by his younger brother Ögrünch and succeeded him as a loyal ruler. In this respect the Mongol approach to their vassals was quite different from the Chinese and the previous nomadic empires. Especially the reign of Möngke qaghan saw the imperial power's further centralization. The Ögödei lineage was reduced to insignificance, and the Chaghatai khan Yesü Möngke was executed and replaced by his brother Qara Hülegü. Even the Jochi lineage did not have independent power. Although the Jochi lineage was the only lineage who could keep their holdings intact in the western part of the Empire in the Qipchaq steppe and Russia to the southern tip of Dnieper, they were still not allowed to act independently and any envoy sent to the Mongols were sent to Qara Qorum, to Möngke Khan as we see in the cases of the Franciscan envoys such as Carpini and Rubruck were received by the Khan, but were then directed to the Qaghan after being interrogated about their missions. In addition to this, Batu was held responsible to send troops for the conquests in China and the Middle East like the other regional khans and vassal rulers. Möngke further strengthened his authority by appointing his brother Qubilai to China and another brother Hülegü to Iran. Thus, the army and Mongol homeland was under the control of Möngke Qaghan himself while the richest and most important areas of the empire fell under the control of his younger brothers thus eliminating any threat to his rule. Furthermore, by placing his younger brother Hülegü to Iran, Möngke was putting a restraint on Batu and the Chaghataids in Caucasia and central Asia. The use of darugachi in the vassal states became further institutionalized and darugachi were sent to Korea, Russia, Tibet and other vassal states on a more regular basis. Although this system was also existent during the reigns of Ögödei and Güyüg as well, the tax collection was a random event especially during the early reign of Ögödei. The vassal states were asked to send tribute whenever the need arose. But by the time of Möngke, as in the cases of the executions of the leaders of

vassal states.³⁰⁸ In this respect, the Mongol diplomacy differed quite fundamentally. The vassal states were simply treated the same as the other provinces under direct Mongol control. The only difference of the vassal states was that they had their own rulers who were responsible for the administration of their own realms with their own bureaucracy. However, they were not entirely independent even in their domestic affairs. Darugachi who were appointed to their realms oversaw the collection of the taxes alongside their own officials. Also, they were responsible for providing for the *yam*³⁰⁹ stations on their area.

On the other hand, relations with the states outside the Mongol control were conducted in a different manner. From the beginning of Temujin's elevation as Chinggis Khan of the Mongols until the reign of Qubilai Khan, Mongols used diplomacy in order to buy time for an attack, to divide the enemy and prevent them from uniting against the Mongols as a common enemy³¹⁰. Another use of diplomacy was to demand the submission of the other party which would either bring the submission of the other party without war or would give the excuse for attack. This approach to diplomacy as a tool was in many ways quite new. Other

³⁰⁸ Other than the Uighur idikut, a Russian prince was also executed unrelated to the purges. Rubruck relates this incident with detail. Such a behavior was not common among the nomad states towards their vassals and allies since they feared losing them to their rivals on the steppe, or start an uprising. But Mongols having united the whole steppe tribes for the first time since the short-lived first Türk Qaghanate did feel more comfortable than the previous nomads.

³⁰⁹ Yam was the postal system of the Mongol Empire. The Yam stations provided food, fresh horses and other necessities for the messengers and envoys coming to and from the Imperial capital as well as the other provinces. In order to be able to use the postal stations as well as to be recognized as a formal envoy, one had to carry a paizi which could be made of wood, silver or gold in accordance with the standing of the carrier and the importance of the message that he carried.

³¹⁰ E. Blochet, "Deux Residents Mongols En Chine et En Asie Centrale, de Tchinkkiz Khaghan a Khoubilai," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies, University of London* 4, no. 2 (January 1, 1926): 78.

nomadic states had also used diplomacy in the same way in many instances before, but in the Mongol case, the ordinary use of diplomacy was the exception while the use of diplomacy as an extension of the military campaigns was the exception for the other nomads as well as sedentary states. The Mongol use of the diplomatic terms were also mostly far from the figurative meanings assigned to them. One example was “submission” and vassalage as defined by the term “subject” were as mentioned above, were taken at their face value unlike the previous Chinese and nomadic applications of these terms. This was not because the Mongols were not aware of the intrinsic meanings of the interstate diplomacy terminology and were so naïve to take these words literally. To the opposite, the Mongols like the other nomadic policies before them, were well aware of their environment as well as their own power. The steppe was in a very divided situation since the collapse of the Türk Qaghanate. Although the Uighurs united it for a short time, it only took the eastern half of the steppe under its control. And after the collapse of the Uighur Khanate, even the eastern steppe became gradually more and more divided. Without a political entity to unite them, the nomads began to break down into their smallest units (oba/obogh). At their best, they would unite to build short lived confederacies based on clan affiliations such as the Merkid, Qarai or Naiman confederations which were quite small compared to the previous khanates³¹¹. The Khitan Liao and Jürchen Jin dynasties, both of which originated in Manchuria were more interested in their holdings in Manchuria and Northern China and they tried to keep the steppe tribes as divided as possible like the Tabgach Wei dynasty which also originated in Manchuria like them³¹². But because the Mongols knew that they had the military power to apply

³¹¹ David Sneath and Christopher Kaplonski, eds., *The History of Mongolia*, vol. 1 (Folkestone: Global Oriental, 2010), 118.

³¹² Barfield, *The Perilous Frontier*, 75.

these terms in their literal meanings. Except for the Huns³¹³ who had a very central government and state, all the other nomadic states until the Mongols did not possess such a centralization of power until the reign of Chinggis Khan. And this centralized nomadic state continued until the reign of Qubilai Khan, during which the dynastic civil war came to the point of open warfare in Asia between the Mongol states which became completely independent of the qaghan in Mongolia³¹⁴. But during Möngke's reign, the dynasty was still united in military as well as political matters. After purging the Ögödeid and Chaghataid princes, Möngke established his brother Hülegü firmly in Iran and he sent armies to Korea as well as to China. While Korea's submission meant political prestige, and was insignificant compared to the conquests of Iran, Russia and most importantly China, the conquest of the Song was a pressing problem. Still, the Korean campaign dragged on for over five years between 1252-1258. The Korean Peninsula was important for many reasons. First of all, it was one of the most well –established Confucian kingdoms in East Asia after China. Therefore, the vassalage of Korea was always a legitimizing factor for the nomadic Empires for their claim to have taken the mandate of heaven to rule the middle kingdom. The Khitans and the Jürchens had also strived to guarantee the vassalage of the Goryeo kingdom before embarking on a grander strategy. Secondly, Korea was situated between Japan, China and Manchuria. The policies in the Korean Peninsula maintained relations with the powers situated in these countries since the earliest times. The Goryeo Kingdom in Korea continued its relations with the

³¹³ Chin-Fu Hung, "China and The Nomads: Misconceptions in Western Historiography on Inner Asia," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 41, no. 2 (December 1, 1981): 597–628, doi:10.2307/2719056.

³¹⁴ Actually, Qubilai also moved his seat of power to Northern China from Mongolia, and during his war with his brother Ariq Böke, he actually attacked Qara Qorum and cut the supply lines to the original Mongol capital.

kingdoms of South China during the Five dynasties era, and it also continued to send tribute missions to the dynasties of the north. After the establishment of the Song dynasty, the Goryeo kingdom voluntarily became its vassals and send tribute missions to the Song regularly until the rise of the Khitan Liao and Jürchen Jin dynasties. But the Koreans sent envoys to the Song even during its vassalage to the Liao and Jin dynasties. Although the Koreans were seen as the spies of these Manchurian dynasties by the Song, the Koreans still sought to continue trade and diplomatic relations with the southern dynasty. For the Mongols Korea, could become a strategically dangerous enemy if it allied with the Song as well as the Japanese against the Mongols. This was a possibility for a long time since the Koreans although seemingly peaceful, kept sending envoys to Japan and China for a long time. In fact, even after their submission, the Korean sent letters to the Japanese warning them about the Mongol preparations to invade Japan.³¹⁵ The Japanese were also welcoming the Song loyalists, and were sympathetic to the Song resistance against the Mongols. Although the Japanese had refused to enter tributary relations with China and refused to become a Chinese vassal even in name, they had kept good relations with China since very early times, and they did not cut their close contacts until the Tang invasion of their ally Baekje and their Korean colony of Gaya.³¹⁶ But even after hostilities with the Tang, the Japanese continued to see China as a model and kept sending students and envoys. Beyond cultural and economic ties, the Japanese as well as the Koreans were most probably well aware of the danger that the Mongols posed to them.

³¹⁵ James P. Delgado, *Khubilai Khan's Lost Fleet: In Search of a Legendary Armada* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008).

³¹⁶ Byeongro Lee, “발해와 일본의 관계사 연구 [A Study on Relations between Balhae and Japan],” *동북아시아문화학회 국제학술대회 발표자료집 東北亞細亞文化學會 第 16 回 國際學術大會 4* (2008).

Although the Liao and the Jin dynasties were more limited in their territorial ambitions and even gave land to the Koreans in return for becoming their vassal state,³¹⁷ the Mongols were more ambitious and as explained above, their demands for submission and expectations from a vassal state were not only nominal. Therefore, it was strategically vital for the Mongols to eliminate the Goryeo kingdom as an enemy and make it a vassal state. Later on, during the reign of Qubilai, the Korean Peninsula was also used as a base for the planned invasion of Japan. Thirdly, Korea, although a small kingdom, could provide the Mongols with some of the luxuries and necessities which had always been on demand in China. As the Mongols began settling in their new territories, they began to develop a taste for sedentary way of life. But more importantly, Korea by becoming a vassal would also help Möngke further legitimize the rule of the Toluids. By conquering Korea and China, he would achieve what the previous Mongol rulers could not achieve. Chinggis had died while campaigning against the Tanguts in Northern China, Ögödei also died shortly after he began his campaign against the Song. But by achieving what they could not achieve, Möngke could prove himself as a great ruler. Thus, he did not hesitate to campaign in Korea for six years. Although the Goryeo kingdom was a small kingdom and was no match against adversaries such as the Jin or Mongols on its own, a Song-Goryeo alliance could prove to be dangerous for the Mongols. In fact, the Mongols started their relations with the Koreans in a calm manner. The Mongol troops entered into the Korean Peninsula for the first time during the 1218 in pursuit of the Khitan troops in Manchuria who did not submit to the Mongols and also caused chaos in the Northern part of Korea.³¹⁸ The Goryeo side

³¹⁷ Noriko Hiraishi, *日本通史 [nihon Tsûshi: History of Japan]* (Tokyo: 谷月社, 2015), 47.

³¹⁸ Choi, *高麗史 [Goryeosa: Annals of Goryeo]*.23: 19b-20b

seems to have initially agreed to a nominal vassalage to the Mongols when in 1218 Chinggis was campaigning in Manchuria against the Jin. But then it seems they killed the Mongol envoys and hostilities began.³¹⁹ The Goryeo court was dominated by a military regency at the time that the Mongols were engaged with a war with the Jin and there was a political turmoil as a result of series of assassinations and coups. A similar case was later on valid for Japan. The Kamakura Shogunate which acted like a regency for the imperial house was in turn dominated by the Hôjô regency and there was a political rivalry between different groups just at a time that Mongols under Qubilai Khan were demanding their vassalage and the beginning of diplomatic and commercial relations. In the case of Korea however, Möngke could not accept an unsubmissive Goryeo to its rear just as he was beginning his campaign against the Song which proved to be the longest standing enemy against the Mongols. Actually, the conquest of Song took a little longer than forty years. Therefore, Qubilai sent armies against Goryeo to “pacify” this kingdom with a large army after negotiations failed. On the Song front, the relations initially started again as an alliance in a warm manner. The Song side allied with the Mongols against the Jürchens. Their diplomatic affairs went back to the early years of Chinggis Khan’s reign.³²⁰ The Song side repeated its policy of allying with the enemies of its enemies in the North with the Mongols just as they had done with the Jürchens against the Khitans. For the Song side this was simply taking the previous Han and Tang models of using the

³¹⁹ Yuan Gaoli Jishi reports the beginning of the relations and their interruption as such: "In the thirteenth year (1218) of Taizu (Chinggis, 1155 -1227), the troops of heaven (Mongol) reached Goryeo. Their monarch submitted and [agreed to] the interchange of envoys and annual tribute. In the nineteenth year (1224) bandits killed our envoy and thereafter [envoys] did not come at all". William Henthorn, *Korea: The Mongol Invasions* (Leiden: Brill, 1963), 4. Bogwang Kim, *元高麗紀事 [Won Goryeo Gishi: Records of Yuan Goryeo Relations]* (Taipei: Tangwen Shuju, 1972), 47.

³²⁰ Robinson, *Empire’s Twilight*.98

barbarians against the barbarians.³²¹ This strategy actually worked when the Han and Tang dynasties also had strong armies. The Jin state also used the same strategy until the Mongols united the whole steppe. The problem with such a strategy on the Song side was that, the Song did not possess the military capabilities of the previous Han and Tang dynasties that the neo-Confucian politicians had mistakenly adopted³²². Without the military strength to back up such a strategy, the Song was simply left at the goodwill of its “barbarian” allies on the steppe. Secondly, the aim of this strategy was to divide the steppe or to maintain it as divided as possible. But by allying with the Jürchens and the Mongols as newly arising powers with the capacity to unite the steppe, the Song actually did the opposite. The Tang for instance did not hesitate to ally with its Türk enemies whenever a new tribal confederation such as the Tardush emerged³²³, therefore such a strategy necessitated a more flexible and knowledgeable approach to the steppe. Lastly, the Song politicians took the Han and Tang ideologies uncritically. While both the Han and Tang dynasties claimed a moral superiority in their dealings with the foreign states, they could apply this moral superiority, that is make it accepted by the other parties in their diplomatic affairs only when they were militarily and economically at an advantageous position. While the Song was still richer than the Jin dynasty, the Mongols with their vast Empire did not need to accept an inferior position in their diplomacy with the Song in return for commercial benefits. In fact, without the military power to back the claim of moral superiority none of the post-Tang nomadic states would accept an inferior position since they could provide their needs from

³²¹ Tung and Besio, *Three Kingdoms and Chinese Culture*, 187.

³²² Jay, “Memoirs and Official Accounts,” 48.

³²³ Barfield, *The Perilous Frontier*, 58.

the Song as a result of the peace treaties they obtained through military victory. Therefore, the Song belief in the neo-Confucian manner that the barbarians would willingly come to China and accept Chinese superiority when they realize the superiority of the Chinese civilization was an empty premise without the military and economic superiority to back it up. The only countries to do so were the states in Korea and Vietnam, and even they would accept the “barbarians” over the “civilized” Chinese when they were militarily and economically stronger than China. When the Tang dynasty collapsed, the Goryeo kings did not hesitate to accept the Shatuo Turk regimes in Northern China in order to continue their trade relations.³²⁴ The Mongols on the other hand, also had their set of ideological premises that put them at the center of the human universe. Initially it was the people of the felt tent, that is, the nomads over whom they claimed to have received the *qut*/mandate of heaven. But as they began to conquer sedentary lands, this ideology began to evolve into a more universal one. The claim to leadership of all the nomadic peoples of the Eurasian steppe stretching from Manchuria to the Pannonia plain in Hungary was not a new one. The Huns and the Türks at the apex of their power also had similar claims, but claim to receive the mandate of heaven for the conquest and dominion of all of the world including the sedentary world was a new idea for the nomads. However, this idea gradually emerged as Chinggis and his descendants began conquering lands in China, central Asia and Iran and saw that they could rule sedentary populations as well. Although the Khitans and the Jürchens also had a dual system for their nomadic and sedentary subjects, and the Mongols were not the first to rule over large sedentary areas alongside nomads, the use of this claim over the whole world in their diplomacy regardless of who the opposite side was a new phenomenon. By the time of

³²⁴ Chun, 高麗史史籍概要 [*Goryeosa Sajeok Gaeyo: Supplementary Historical Materials to Goryeo History*].

Möngke, we see that the Mongol claim for world dominion was well established from the reports of the western missions to Mongolia.³²⁵ The Mongol approach to legitimacy and diplomacy was on the other hand more based on fact than fiction. While the Song could underestimate the Mongol power even if they send envoys to the Mongols at a time that Chinggis was conquering central Asia and campaigning in Russia, the Chinese assumed that these were exotic and insignificant faraway places and were easy to conquer, the Mongols were aware of the situation in West Asia, the Abbasid Caliphate, were sending exploration raid parties to Russia and the Caucasus. Chinggis was aware of the Kharazmian power and he initially wanted to establish diplomatic relations with the Kharazmians on an equal basis. The Mongols were not illusioned by the discourses of Mongol superiority and the steppe traditions. While the Türk qaghans could claim that there could only be one hegemon on the steppe, before conquering the Kharazmians, Chinggis Khan was the ruler of only half of the steppe. And even after he conquered central Asia, the Qipchaqs further west could still put up a fight against the Mongols. As for their diplomacy with the Song, the Song dynasty was treated as an ally until it turned against the Mongols and tried to take the Jin cities that the Mongols conquered with little Mongol help. In the case of the Jin dynasty, the Mongols were the ones who initiated the attack on the Jin. But in the Kharazmian and the Song cases, the violators of the alliances and peace were the other parties. In fact, the Mongols sent envoys to the Kharazmians and the Song to reestablish the relations and bring back peace. But the rulers of both sides refused the Mongol diplomatic offers to reestablish relations based on

³²⁵ Valtrová, "Beyond the Horizons of Legends."

equality.³²⁶ While the Mongols like the other nomadic confederations and states before them, have been depicted as belligerent people with whom diplomacy and other norms of “civilized” relations could not be established, the Mongols actually tried to avoid bloodshed as long as diplomacy or the show of force gave them what they wanted. It was only after diplomacy failed that the Mongols attacked the Song in earnest. After defeating the initial Song attempts to retake Northern China, the Mongol side demanded the Song to become a Mongol vassal and accept Mongol superiority in diplomacy. This was not based on pure fictional superiority of the Mongols. As described in the changing relations of Chinggis with his “father” Toghrul Khan and anda Jamuqa, every military victory made the position of the Mongols better than before. Therefore, the Mongol alliance with the Song based on the equality of the sides was now to be established on the superiority of the Mongol side since the Song was beaten and the Mongols proved that they were militarily at a much better position to back their claim of superiority. Therefore, it is safe to assume that Mongol demand for the submission of the Song was perhaps not aimed at provoking the Song to war to end it altogether, but was in fact only the extension of the Mongolian pattern of diplomacy. For instance, when the Mongols were beaten by the Mamluks in Syria, they were ready to negotiate with the Egyptians. But the Song politicians refused all the Mongol attempts, and Möngke as the newly elected qaghan of the Mongols could not afford to ignore such a political challenge to his supremacy not to mention the military threat that the Song could pose if it also managed to create an alliance with the other states in East Asia relying on the common Neo-Confucian ideology that became prevalent in China, Korea and Japan. But despite the common view that Mongols would annihilate the Song in any case,

³²⁶ Thomas T. Allsen, “Guard and Government in the Reign of The Grand Qan Möngke, 1251-59,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 46, no. 2 (1986): 108, doi:10.2307/2719141.

the Mongols tried to establish a regular diplomatic relation with the Song in every turn. This continued during the reign of Qubilai as well until the Song eventually collapsed as a result of the Mongol conquest. The pattern of further Mongol demands after every victory was also repeated with the Song. Möngke after the failure of his diplomatic attempts, sent his brother Qubilai in 1252 to open a new front from China's southwestern frontier. Qubilai passed through Sichuan reaching the Kingdom of Dali. The kingdom of Dali was situated strategically between Sichuan, Tibet, Burma and Guangxi. Qubilai asked for their submission and offered to leave the royal house on the throne as well as not taking any land. But the Dali King Duan Xingzhi refused and the Mongols attacked and defeated the Dali king in 1253. Despite refusing the Mongol suzerainty and resisting them militarily, the Dali capital was not sacked and the Dali king was not killed or dethroned. To the opposite, he was bestowed the title of Maharaja by Möngke.³²⁷ Möngke himself attacked from the North, and tried to overcome the Song defenses that had long withstood Jürchen attacks as well. While Qubilai returned to Mongolia as a victorious general in 1254, Uriyangqadai, the son of famous general Sübütei continued the campaign as his field general and he took the submission of the Annamese king in northern Vietnam in 1257. After the successful campaign on the Southwest China front, the main Mongol army was ready to attack from the north. But after the campaign against the Song started in 1257, Möngke died of his wounds at a siege in Sichuan in 1259.³²⁸ This halted the Mongol attack in China as well as the other campaigns elsewhere since the Mongol Empire fell into a civil war over the election of the Khan. This time, the

³²⁷ Sanping Chen, "Son of Heaven and Son of God: Interactions among Ancient Asiatic Cultures Regarding Sacral Kingship and Theophoric Names," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society (Third Series)* 12, no. 03 (2002): 289–325.

³²⁸ Sergei A. Shkolyar, *Китайская доогнестрельная артиллерия [Kitayskaya doognestrel'naya artilleriya]* (Moscow: Akademiya Nauk SSSR, 1980), 336-337

Toluids were the target of the other lineages. Berke, the younger brother of Batu Khan attacked Hülegü in Caucasia. Qubilai had to first defeat his brother Ariq Böke in Mongolia but Qaidu, the grandson of Ögödei also fought with him in East Turkistan and western Mongolia. Thus, the Mongol Empire broke down into four separate Khanates at the apex of its power. Qubilai Khan was the last Mongol ruler in China to rule in a Mongol fashion and to continue the claim to be the Great Qaghan in earnest. Although his successors also continued claiming to be the great Khans, neither did they fight for supremacy within the Mongol realm, nor did they strive to continue the conquests. Qubilai's reign was in terms of expansion as well as legitimacy and claim to universal rule was the end of the grand Mongol Empire. Qubilai was elected as Qaghan in the Qurultai shortly after Möngke's death. But the Qurultai that elected him was convened in Northern China instead of the Mongol homeland as was the custom. Also, the representatives of the Chinggisid lineages were not present in the Qurultai which added to the illegitimacy of the qurultai. His chief opponent was another Toluid, his brother Ariq Böke. Qubilai was still campaigning in the Song territory beyond the Yangzi river when Ariq Böke began preparations to march on him.³²⁹ In fact, at around the same time the Song chancellor Jia Sidao began diplomatic overtures for peace in return for yearly payments to the Mongols as they did to the Jurchens before. But Qubilai's Chinese advisors opposed this since the Mongols already had the upper hand after they crossed the Song defenses on the Yangzi and it was only a matter of time for the Mongols to reach the Song capital.³³⁰ But as Qubilai received the news of Ariq Böke's imminent march on his capital Kaiping in

³²⁹ Won, “논문(論文): 쿠빌라이시기 강남지역 색목인의 任官과 활약 -강절행성(江浙行省)지방관부 색목인(色目人)관원의 사례를 중심으로 [The Semu Officials and Their Active Role in the Southern China under the Reign of Khubilai Khan].”

³³⁰ Song, 元史 [Yuanshi: History of Yuan]., Volume 4, p:61

northern China, Qubilai returned to Northern China with his troops and he was elected as the qaghan in the Qurultai of 1260 in his capital Kaiping rather than Mongolia. Ariq Böke in return convened a qurultai in Mongolia. The two brothers represented an old dilemma among the nomads who conquered sedentary lands and ruled over a dual system. Qubilai was educated by Uighurs and Chinese and was in favor of a policy that compromised with the sedentary population as well as the nomads. Although he was portrayed as a ruler who was degenerated by the Chinese culture, in fact he was still a traditional Mongol. For instance, it was his wife Chabi who persuaded him from turning northern China into pastureland. But he also thought that by employing Turks, Uighurs, Chinese and Persians, the Mongol empire could achieve greater goals and alienating them would in the long run only bring about the end of the empire. Ariq Böke on the other hand was in favor of following policies that favored the nomads more and rejected the Chinese and Islamic ways altogether. He also had the support of the Chaghataids and Berke, the Khan of the Golden Horde. Qubilai on the other hand could not rely on his brother Hülegü who was embroiled in a lengthy war with the Mamluks as well as the Golden Horde in two fronts. Berke converted to Islam and secured the alliance of the Mamluks. Qubilai therefore had no choice but to rely on the Mongols and Turks under his command as well as the sources of Northern China. This conflict in a way would shape the creation of the Yuan dynasty as a semi-Mongol semi-Chinese dynasty rather than a fully Mongol dynasty. Although Ariq Böke surrendered shortly after their struggle began, this showed Qubilai that he could not depend on the other Mongols anymore, and he should depend on the Chinese and Turkic peoples as much as on Mongols. But the rebellion of one of his most trusted men in Shandong peninsula, Li Tan, who proclaimed himself emperor and allied with the Song made Qubilai suspicious of the Chinese throughout his reign. While he still sent envoys to the Song, he did not establish any diplomatic relations with the ones who were already Mongols subjects and rebelled throughout his reign. In 1271, Qubilai announced the establishment of

the Yuan dynasty nonetheless. Although the establishment of a Chinese style dynasty did not mean the end of Mongol style rule or refusal of the Mongol background, it was suggestive of Qubilai's policy direction. After he won against Ariq Böke and became a qaghan undisputed at least in China and Mongolia, he set out to conquer the Song dynasty. By proclaiming a new dynasty, Qubilai also would have to compete with the Song for the loyalty of his Chinese subjects as long as the Song dynasty existed in the south. The best example of this was Li Tan's rebellion in Shandong with the support of the Song. Thus, Qubilai's first campaign was against the Song dynasty. In addition to eliminating a dangerous enemy and gaining large, populous and quite wealthy land under his control, he would legitimize himself further in the eyes of his Mongol and Chinese subjects both of whose state traditions stipulated that conquest was a sign of having received the mandate of heaven.

Initially Qubilai was more inclined to diplomacy than war. During his campaigns in southwestern China under the command of Möngke qaghan, he had already initiated diplomatic relations with Jia Sidao, the chancellor of the Song court. But as Qubilai left for Mongolia after the death of Möngke, Jia Sidao attacked the small Mongol garrison left behind. He used this small victory to enhance his image and power in the Song court which was embroiled in the struggles of the eunuchs, bureaucrats and the palace ladies. Qubilai sent two missions to the Song demanding only that the Song court give up its claim to son of heaven and recognize Qubilai as the son of heaven, thus legitimizing him and in return to have self-rule without any Mongol intervention. This was in fact the softest terms ever offered to a foreign ruler who defied the Mongols. But the Song court in its chaotic inner struggles detained the first embassy and did not respond to the second. Although the Mongols have an image in historiography, of a people with whom there was no way of logical communication but war, in the case of East Asia, most of the courts that they contacted for diplomatic relations were at the

time in political turmoil and did respond in a way that they would normally not do. The Song court which was actually accustomed to acquiescing the “barbarians” at its gates by gifts and nice words was in this case acting aggressively against an adversary that was the strongest of its enemies it encountered before and had the capacity to end the dynast although not so easily. Qubilai appointed his best general Bayan for the conquest of the Song and after a series of wars and sieges he finally managed to take the submission of the Song royal house and seal in 1276. The Song Emperor and Empress dowager accepted to become Yuan subjects and gave up their post and any claim to sovereignty. Thus, the Song dynasty came to an end although as described in detail previously, the Song loyalist continued to fight in the south proclaiming a child emperor in a desperate cause.

The relations with Korea were another matter. As described above, Korea had a special place. Qubilai on the other hand became personal friends with the Korean crown prince Cheon during his hostage years in the court of Möngke. After Möngke and the Goryeo king died, Qubilai sent Cheon to be crowned as the new Goryeo king, and he supported his claim with Mongol troops. As Cheon was crowned under the name of Wonjong, he also sent regular tributes to Qubilai as well as his son. Qubilai had his daughter married to this son and from this moment onwards all the Goryeo kings had a Mongol mother and a Mongol wife and the destiny of the Goryeo kingdom became tied with the Mongol Yuan dynasty until its collapse alongside the Yuan.

By taking the Korean submission and loyalty for granted however, Qubilai actually planned to further expand his grip towards Japan. Although many scholars have so far argued that Qubilai aimed to conquer Japan, his initial letter had a soft wording and it came at a time that Qubilai was at the same time campaigning in China against the Song. This again might have been a move towards isolating the Song rather than waging war on Japan. This is also verified

by a passage in Goryeosa, in the biography of a certain Cho Li who entered the Yuan service after giving up the monastic life. According to his biography, he could speak many languages and he was the one who informed Qubilai that Japan was an ally of Goryeo and was a friendly country.³³¹ He was also informed that the Japanese had commercial ties with the Song and perhaps he wished to sever these ties by taking Japan on his side. In any case Qubilai was not acting or ignorantly in his diplomatic relations with Japan as has so far been suggested by some historians.³³² To the opposite, Qubilai seems to possess a multi-ethnic staff at his disposal who spoke different languages and who informed him well beyond his counterparts in Japan and Song China. The first letter by Qubilai Khan to the Japanese was as follows:

“上天眷命大蒙古國皇帝奉書日本國王朕惟自古小國之君境土相接尚務講信修睦況我祖宗受天明命奄有區夏遐方異域畏威懷德者不可悉數朕即位之初以高麗無辜之民久瘁鋒鏑即令罷兵還其疆域反其旄倪高麗君臣感戴來朝義雖君臣歡若父子計王之君臣亦已知之高麗朕之東藩也日本密邇高麗開國以來亦時通中國至於朕躬而無一乘之使以通和好尚恐王國知之未審故特遣使持書布告朕志冀自今以往通問結好以相親睦且聖人以四海為家不相通好豈一家之理哉以至用兵夫孰所好王其圖之不宣至”³³³

³³¹ Choi, *高麗史 [Goryeosa: Annals of Goryeo]*.130:27a

³³² Yamaguchi Osamu, *蒙古襲来・元寇の史実の解明 [Môko Shûrai-Genkôno Shijitsu no Kamei: Mongol Invasions- Explanation about the Historical Facts on Mongol Invaders]*, 47.

³³³ Song, *元史 [Yuanshi: History of Yuan]*., ch. 208, p:4625

“The Great Mongol Emperor who is blessed by the Mandate of Heaven sends [this] letter to the King of Japan. Since ancient times, the princes of the small countries who are in neighboring countries tried to contact each other and establish friendly relations. Many countries have challenged our reign and power since the reign of my ancestor who ruled with the command of the Heaven. The King of Goryeo is thankful for ceasing hostility and restoring peace upon his lands and people after I was enthroned. Our relationship is similar to that of a father and a son. We assume that this is already known to you. Goryeo is our Eastern vassal. Since the time of its founding, Japan has been allied with Goryeo and China; but since we have ascended the throne no envoys have ever been sent. We are concerned that your kingdom is yet to be informed of this matter. Therefore, we have sent an envoy to you with a letter announcing our goodwill that we wish to establish friendly relationships with each other. We think countries of the four seas belong to the same family. Would it be right not to comprehend this? We do not wish that it comes to using the armies.”

As can be seen from the wording of the letter, it is very soft compared to the letters sent to the other rulers.³³⁴ Although there is a mention of “not wishing to resort to arms” just at the end of the letter, there is no mention of submission to the Great Khan and sending tribute and becoming a loyal vassal. The only demand from the Japanese side is to establish a relationship with the Mongols and exchange of envoys henceforth. Of course, the nature of these relations is not mentioned and the Mongol side as well as the Japanese side must have guessed that the Mongols wished the Japanese to enter into the tributary system of the Mongols. But there was no mention of the submission and it is probable that Qubilai only wished a nominal tribute like the traditional Chinese model and did want to sever Japan from the Song orbit. For instance, Güyüg Khan’s letter to

³³⁴ Sugiyama, *クビライの挑戦: モンゴルによる世界史の大転回* [*Kubirai no Chôsen-Mongoru ni yoru Sekaishi no Daitenkai: Qubilai's Challenge- The Great Change of the World by the Mongols*], 42.

the Pope carried by Piano di Carpini demanded that Pope come in person to the Mongol court and submit.³³⁵ Also Möngke Khan's letter to the king of France openly threatened to wage war if the French king did not send his emissaries and submit to the Mongol suzerainty.³³⁶ In this respect, Qubilai Khan's letter to Japan seems to have been written in a calmer manner. His letter to the Song in 1266 on the other hand was more reminiscent of his predecessors. The reason for the difference of these letters lies with the timing and the importance of the letters to the Mongols. The letter to the Song Emperor which was written in 1260 following his enthronement as a Khan and just as the Song wars which had been going on for a while were going in favor of the Mongol side. He asked for the submission of the Song emperor openly in addition to sending of envoys. As mentioned earlier, the foreign envoys played an important part for the Mongols in their inner political legitimization. The western envoys such as Rubruck and Carpini were especially delayed until the Qurultai and were received during the qurultai festivities to show the Mongols that the new Khan was revered by the foreigners from all over the world as well. The letter to the Japanese on the other hand was written after the war with the Song had already begun and the Mongols were fully engaged. Therefore, probably Qubilai did not have an invasion in mind when he sent this letter to the Japanese. The style of the letter also shows a tendency to correspond with the Japanese more in Chinese style than in Mongol style of diplomacy. Although this can be attributed to the Chinese advisors who composed the letter in Chinese, the letter to the Song or to Goryeo at the beginning of his reign were also composed in Chinese. The Mongols had scribes who could write in many languages. The Mongol letters to the western rulers

³³⁵ Igor de Rachewiltz, *Papal Envoys to the Great Khans* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1971), 213-4

³³⁶ Ruysbroeckli Williem et al., *Mengü Han'ın Sarayına Yolculuk 1253- 1255*, Kitap Yayınevi ; Sahaftan Seçmeler Dizisi 229. 21 (İstanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2010), 251.

could be composed in Persian or Latin,³³⁷ letters in Mongolian or Turkic languages were also common. There were also many Uighurs in Mongol service who were proficient in Chinese. In short, the Mongols were not obliged to the Chinese Confucian scholars for writing their diplomatic letters due to the linguistic incapability. The choice of a Chinese style diplomatic letter seems to be a deliberate one on the side of Qubilai. This way perhaps he was trying to become an emperor in the eyes of his Chinese subjects rather than a barbarian conqueror.

But after receiving the letter, the Japanese side did not send a reply, and instead ordered the strengthening of the defenses and reciting of Buddhist sutras for the protection of the realm in the temples throughout the country.³³⁸ The reason for the Japanese indecisiveness for giving an either positive or negative reply seems to stem from the Japanese political disunity. The emperor was the nominal head of the state but he had long delegated some of his powers to the Shoguns in Kamakura who acted as the supreme military generals. A more or less similar situation was also prevalent in Korea with the Choi regents at the time that the Mongols first wanted to contact the Koreans. But in Japan the situation was much more complex. The Minamoto clan lost its grip on the power to the Hôjô after the second shogun Yoritomo became the shogun as a child following the first shogun Yoritomo's death. The Hôjô clan did not replace the Minamoto shoguns who were ruling in the name of the emperors. Instead they became shikken/regents and began ruling in the name of the shoguns. So, the Japanese

³³⁷ Savma, *The Monks Of Kublai Khan Emperor Of China Or The History Of The Life And Travels Of Rabban Sawma, Envoy And Plenipotentiary Of The Mongol Khans To The Kings Of Europe, And Markos Who As Mar Yahbh-Allaha III Became Patriarch Of The Nestorian Church In Asia*, 5.

³³⁸ Aida Niro, *蒙古襲来の研究 [Môko Shûrai no Kenkyû: Research on the Mongol Invasions]*, 3–8.

emperor who should have been initially informed and in whose name a reply to the Mongols could be written was informed the last about the matter and his opinion seems to be the least important. But the Hôjô who were actually no more than a military clan in Eastern part of Japan in the southern tip of the Kantô region did not have the capacity to establish diplomatic relations at this level. The imperial house had relations with China for a long time but the military houses such as the Hôjô came from humble backgrounds compared to the imperial aristocracy or the Minamoto who had a profound education in the Chinese style. Therefore, the Hôjô decided to do what they knew the best, fight if there need be. In this respect the Japanese ruling class who held the real power in their hands were quite different in nature from their Mongolian counterparts. Thus, when Qubilai sent four more missions to Japan the letters of which are no more extant, the Hôjô regents opposed to reply them despite the imperial court's wish to reply.³³⁹ The Hôjô regents probably feared the Mongol affair would result in the reemergence of the imperial court as the determining factor in the Japanese inner politics if they proved to be successful. After all his envoys failed to receive a reply from the Japanese Qubilai sent a small army of around fifteen thousand soldiers to Japan in 1274-5 which could not succeed against well prepared Japanese defenses on the coast of Kyushu. After the failed attempt to subjugate Japan through the military means, Qubilai still continued to send envoys to Japan. But a second military attempt was undertaken after the Mongol envoys were killed and Qubilai's will was defied by the Japanese. However, after this larger attempt also failed, Mongols did not attempt a third although they made preparations. The reason for the cancellation of this third attempt is given as Japan's being a non-aggressive country unlike the Song, and never attempting to invade Mongol lands. According to some historians after two defeats at the hands

³³⁹ Arai, 蒙古襲来 [*Môko Shûrai: Mongol Invasions*], 97.

of the Japanese and the typhoons, the Mongols withdrew and Qubilai made an excuse for not commencing a third invasion.³⁴⁰ The Japanese had never attacked the Mongols or any Chinese dynasty in China. Therefore, although their warriors were good at defending their territory and had never attacked any Chinese dynasty even at their weakest time. This chapter of Qubilai's career has been widely studied both in the west³⁴¹ and especially in Japan.³⁴² For the Japanese, the Mongol invasions has been seen as a turning point especially in shaping their national identity in the modern times. This is apparent from the fact that the Mongol invasions were studied or mentioned by very few contemporaries in Japan³⁴³ whereas it became a center of interest after the Meiji restoration and the modernization of Japan. But from a historical point of view Qubilai's campaign towards Japan was a result of Japanese incompetent diplomacy and political turmoil. In fact, a comparison with his campaign in the islands of South East Asia reveal that the campaign in Japan was no more different than the campaigns in South East Asia. The number of the troops employed for these tasks were quite

³⁴⁰ Soo Koh Myung, "일반논문: 몽골의 일본인식과 몽여(蒙麗)관계 [Ilban Nonmun: Monggoleui Ilbon Insik Gwa Mongyeo Gwangye: Articles : Mongol's Recognition of Japan and the Mongol-Goryeo Relation]," *Sachong* 83, no. 0 (2014): 231.

³⁴¹ Delgado, *Khubilai Khan's Lost Fleet*, 27.

³⁴² Arai, 蒙古襲来[Môko Shûrai: Mongol Invasions]; Hattori, 蒙古襲来[Môko Shûrai: Mongol Invasions]; Aida Niro, 蒙古襲来の研究[Môko Shûrai no Kenkyû: Research on the Mongol Invasions]; Yamaguchi Osamu, 蒙古襲来・元寇の史実の解明[Môko Shûrai-Genkôno Shijitsu no Kamei: Mongol Invasions- Explanation about the Historical Facts on Mongol Invaders]; Kazazoe, 蒙古襲来研究史論[Môkoshûrai kenkyû shiron: Historical Theory on Research on Mongol Invasions]; Sato, 蒙古襲来絵詞と竹崎季長の研究[Môkoshûrai ekotoba to Takezaki Suenaga no kenkyû: Mongol Invasions Scroll and Research on Takezaki Suenaga].

³⁴³ Kazazoe, 蒙古襲来研究史論[Môkoshûrai kenkyû shiron: Historical Theory on Research on Mongol Invasions], 5 3 .

few and once the rulers of these countries accepted to return to good relations or to start relations with the Mongols, there were no punishments or larger expectations as in the case of the king of Annam who initially accepted a vassal status and then refused the Mongol demands and defeated them with guerilla tactics but eventually gave up to avoid fighting a futile war and spending necessary resources for mere political prestige in the political arena. The Hôjô regency and the Kamakura Shogunate on the other hand, though victorious in two invasions, collapsed due to the economic and political crisis that followed the Mongol invasions.³⁴⁴ Since the warriors and the clans who attended the defense of the country demanded rewards from their feudal lords, the Hôjô regency fell into an economic crisis and the ones who were not rewarded became alienated and dissatisfied adding a political dissatisfaction to the economic burden.³⁴⁵ But the states in South East Asia such as Annam or the small kingdoms in Sumatra and other islands realized that the Mongol policy of tribute was no different than the Song due to their distance, and that the Mongols would not demand from them what they demanded from Korea or other states, they simply accepted the vassal status after the initial military contacts³⁴⁶, or in some cases without any military contact.³⁴⁷ Although some historians claim that the Mongols under Qubilai Khan were intent on continuing the expansionist policy of the

³⁴⁴ Sugiyama, *遊牧民から見た世界史 [Yûbokumin kara mita Sekaishi: World History Seen From the Nomads]*, 34.

³⁴⁵ Yamaguchi Osamu, *蒙古襲来・元寇の史実の解明 [Môko Shûrai-Genkôno Shijitsu no Kamei: Mongol Invasions- Explanation about the Historical Facts on Mongol Invaders]*, 97.

³⁴⁶ James T. C. Liu, "How Did a Neo-Confucian School Become the State Orthodoxy?," *Philosophy East and West* 23, no. 4 (October 1, 1973): 483–505, doi:10.2307/1397719.

³⁴⁷ Robinson, *Empire's Twilight*, 68:97.

previous generations, Qubilai had more important problems in central Asia. Just as he was undertaking overseas campaigns in Japan and South East Asia, he was embroiled in a very lengthy and tiresome war with his cousin Qaidu in East Turkistan and Mongolia. His son Nomuqan was captured and sent to the Golden Horde as a hostage, and his best general Bayan also failed to win against Qaidu who fought and acted in the traditional nomad fashion and disrupted trade and economy on the silk road by hit and run tactics and managed to rule over the eastern half of central Asia and Mongolia. The number of soldiers and generals employed for subjugating the island states including Japan were quite insignificant compared to his struggle with Qaidu. Therefore, it is safe to assume that for Qubilai, relations with these “marginal” states were of political importance at a secondary level. Their role was mostly to provide income through trade and to recognize him as their suzerain enhancing his political standing in his own realm. Marco Polo and other westerners also served the same purpose for Qubilai. When he sent his own envoy Rabban Savma,³⁴⁸ a Merkid Turk of Nestorian belief, he was well aware that he no longer had the military power or political power of the united Mongol Empire and he was after political gain by corresponding with the Pope and king of France to demonstrate his cousins in the west that he still held political power on a wider scale. His interest with the Polos as well as other Christians from the west³⁴⁹ lay mainly with his interest to have the Latin west accept him as a Khan, though nominal would elevate his prestige with the Mongol realm greatly.

³⁴⁸ Savma, *The Monks Of Kublai Khan Emperor Of China Or The History Of The Life And Travels Of Rabban Sawma, Envoy And Plenipotentiary Of The Mongol Khans To The Kings Of Europe, And Markos Who As Mar Yahbh-Allaha III Became Patriarch Of The Nestorian Church In Asia*.

³⁴⁹ Rachewiltz, *Papal Envoys to the Great Khans*.

The civil war among the Mongols, first between Qubilai and Ariq Böke, then between Qubilai and Qaidu greatly limited the Mongol ambitions in East Asia. The campaigns directed towards Japan, Annam and the kingdoms in South East Asia should be taken under consideration in this regard. The envoys arriving to the Yuan court from faraway places such as Southern India were recorded carefully in the Yuan archives which survived in *Yuanshi*.³⁵⁰ There is an interesting anecdote in *Yuanshi* about these kingdoms in South India. A Mongol envoy arrived in the area near Calcutta, the prince of the kingdom was deposed according to *Yuanshi*, and as his ally the envoy tried to help him with the Mongol troops accompanying him as a guard. In the end this prince was brought back with the Mongol mission and he was married to a Korean princess in the Goryeo court and died there. India was important for the Yuan because since the wars with Qaidu and the Chaghataids closed the way for communication between the Yuan and the Il Khanid courts in Iran, India became an intermediary. This role continued until the end of the Yuan dynasty, and thus, Ibn Battuta, a famous Muslim traveler, though not an Ilkhanid ambassador, did travel through India to China.³⁵¹ In this respect, beginning from the reign of Qubilai, the relations of the Yuan dynasty continued on a wide scale with states in Asia and Europe. But the Mongols of the Yuan dynasty no more possessed the military backing that the previous qaghans had under their command to back up their claims of superiority and in this respect the Yuan diplomacy gradually returned to the Chinese norms. Qubilai himself was the only Yuan ruler who used military force to back up his diplomacy and claim to being the son of heaven. Thus, the beginning of the Yuan dynasty in 1271 also signaled the beginning of a gradual return to Chinese style

³⁵⁰ Song, 元史 [*Yuanshi: History of Yuan*].

³⁵¹ Batuta did not set out from Morocco as an envoy, nor did he become an ambassador after arrival in Iran. But the Delhi Sultan sent him as an envoy to China.

diplomacy since the Yuan was restricted to China and Mongolia. This was not because the Mongols were incapable of undertaking diplomacy, but mainly because the states that they dealt with in East Asia were mainly familiar with the Chinese style diplomacy. When Qubilai sent envoys to Rome, he was careful to select a Nestorian Christian rather than a Chinese, and he was sending Mongols or Turks to the Il Khanids, India and the Golden Horde. Thus, the reason for reverting to the Chinese norms after Qubilai was not because Mongol incapacity to raise personnel as envoys. It was because after the death of Qubilai, the Yuan emperors gradually gave up their ambitions to unite the Mongols again and expand the Mongol realm. The same was also valid for the other Mongol Khanates and the age of the nomads was at its dawn.

CONCLUSION

During the Tang dynasty, China reached its zenith by conquering vast areas and reuniting China after centuries.³⁵² The Tang Dynasty came to be seen as a golden age by historians and philosophers alongside the Zhou. While the Qin and Han Dynasties had to resort to military power for having their states accepted as the “central” kingdom in compliance with Confucian theory in which the surrounding peoples and states came willingly to submit their allegiance and tribute to the Middle Kingdom so that they could also benefit the wisdom and the benevolence of the son of heaven and the greatness of the middle kingdom. Unlike the Zhou period which was seen by the Confucians as the golden age of Chinese history, the Tang period saw the realization of this Confucian dream that the neighbors of China would accept China as their father within the fictive family of societies, and to become Chinese vassals. But the founders of the Tang Dynasty were ethnically a mixture of the Tabgach from Manchuria who established the previous Wei dynasty and other Northern dynasties thereafter and the Turks. They were not only ethnically non-Chinese either. They were culturally aliens to China, as far as the Confucian values and Confucian modeled way of life were concerned as well. On the political sphere, as well, the Tang dynasty was far from being an exemplary Confucian dynasty. Tang Taizong, after defeating the Türks, declared himself great Qaghan of the nomads in a qurultai. The Türk Qaghanate which was followed by the more stable but less powerful Uighur Qaghanate were, contrary to the general historiography and contemporary interpretations, not the enemies of the Tang. Although they frequently fought against the Tang for plunder, economic gain or to protect themselves, they always

³⁵² Although it was the Sui dynasty which initially united China, their dynasty was short-lived and followed by Tang which proved to be longer lasting. In fact, the royal houses of th Sui and Tang were related to each other.

preferred peaceful relations as long as the Tang court permitted them to trade and sent them “gifts” which helped greatly to sustain these states on the steppe. Since it was difficult to raise taxes from the pastoral nomads and the steppe was not an economically very productive area, the nomadic states mostly depended on trade and tribute from their sedentary neighbors to sustain their bureaucracy and standing armies. But the later Tang policies to pursue the destruction of the nomadic states in order to end their raids resulted in chaos on the steppe and the royal Tang armies became bereft of their most important source of military, the nomads from the steppe who served in the Tang army. The An Lushan rebellion which shook the foundations of the Empire was the last case that the nomadic rulers on the north came to the aid of the Chinese emperors. The Uighur Qaghan sent his soldiers to help him which became a determining factor. The Uighurs are described as plundering the cities like bandits who ravished the Chinese lands taking advantage of the situation. But actually, it was the Chinese officials who permitted them to plunder the cities taken from the rebels as a form of payment, since the imperial coffers were empty. The Tang dynasty was more like the nomads in terms of its dealings with the non-Chinese states of the steppe and the Tibetan plateau. They would accept equality when they realized that their adversary was militarily as strong as them. After the consequent collapses of the Türk Qaghanate, Uighur Khanate and the Tang Empire, there was a vacuum in China and on the steppe. While China disintegrated into small kingdoms in the south and five short-lived dynasties in the north, on the steppe the disintegration was even more profound. The Kyrgyz tribes who defeated the Uighur Qaghanate and caused it to collapse simply left back to their home in southern Siberia content with the plunder, and no single group could reunite the steppe again. This political chaos created border states that established hybrid states on the borders of China and the steppe with both Chinese style and steppe style administrations and features. The Khitans and the Tanguts, originally pastoral nomads from Manchuria and Tibet established the first examples of these states as mentioned

in the previous chapter. The Khitans after conquering first Balhae and then the Chinese prefectures on the border, and the Tanguts after becoming independent in the Ordos region and as a result taking control of Ningxia and other Chinese cities were faced with the problem of administering these areas which had larger population and generated greater tax income than the rest of the pastoral areas. At around the same time that these two groups were conquering areas on the North of China and in non-Chinese sedentary areas in Gansu, Eastern Turkistan and Manchuria, Shatuo Turks were establishing dynasties in war-torn Northern China.

In southern China, which became an important economic and agricultural center during the Tang after the conquest of the aboriginal lands and their partial sinification since the Han times, the local power holders turned into kings establishing nine kingdoms all of which depended either on trade or, agriculture and manufacturing of local goods such as porcelains or silk. These kingdoms became important cultural and commercial centers. They did not only copy and maintain the Tang culture and political structure, they also created a new local culture in their areas with a distinct verbal language and distinct customs. But more importantly, all these kingdoms claimed to take the mandate of heaven for ruling their own kingdoms. In a situation that all local kingdoms claimed the mandate of heaven, it was inevitable that they would try to make each other either submit or get into a stalemate which would result in a multi-state political system based on the equality of the parties involved in the diplomatic affairs. The situation was like the Warring states era with the difference that they did not recognize the Emperor in the northern China plain as their superior and they included countries like Korean Goryeo Kingdom, Vietnamese Annam Kingdom and Japan into this system. For the first time in their history, these kingdoms made contact with a Chinese policy based on equality of the parties involved. This period called as the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms Era in historiography

has not been studied widely and is often ignored as an anomaly and an interregnum of roughly more than half a century between the collapse of Tang and the reunification of China by the Song. But as far as the diplomatic relations and the multistate system were concerned, this period had a longer lasting effect on East Asia. As both the Shatuo Turk regimes and the subsequent Chinese regimes failed to check the Khitan power on Manchuria, Goryeo and Japan felt ever more reliant on themselves than China and submitting to the regime in Northern China did not seem to be as beneficial as it used to be during the Tang times. Although the Song court also bestowed titles on the Goryeo kings, the relations with the Khitans seem to have gained ever more importance.

While the Turks and Chinese warlords were busy fighting with each other in China in the aftermath of the An Lushan rebellion and the collapse of the Tang dynasty, the Khitans in Manchuria were building up their power base in Manchuria and the steppe. They mostly avoided confrontation with the regimes in Northern China until they felt strong enough to challenge them. The Khitans had been either Türk or Chinese vassals throughout their history, and whenever they tried to break free and establish their own state, Tang and the Türks united to crush the Khitans. The same was valid for any group who tried to establish a state on the border area because they would in the long run pose a threat to both the regime in China and the regime on the steppe. The Khitans were originally a part of the Xianbei, but after the collapse of the Xianbei and the consequent dynasties, they came to be dominated first by the Türks and later by the Uighurs. They borrowed from both of the groups quite many institutions and the Khitan Yelü Royal house established a constant marriage relation with the Uighur Xiao clan which can also be seen later in the relationship between the Chinggisids and the Önggüts. The Khitans themselves did not have any experience of founding a state modeled either on the steppe or Chinese examples. Therefore, their relation with the Uighur Xiao clan provided them with the necessary know-how

to administer a state based on the steppe models of the previous Türk and Uighur Qaghanates. But after the conquest of the Korean Balhae kingdom and the Chinese sixteen prefectures as well as the sedentary Chinese areas of the Liaodong peninsula, this model did not suffice for the administration of the Khitan state. As a result, they began employing the Chinese and the Koreans for administering the sedentary section of their kingdom and created a dual administrative system. However, this does not necessarily mean that the Khitans totally adopted a Chinese system as some historians suggest, and embraced the Chinese concepts as barbarians bereft of any knowledge about statecraft and notions of diplomacy and legitimacy. To the contrary, although the Yelü clan itself was of humble origins, their Uighur allies were well versed in both the steppe and the Chinese concepts. In addition to this, their Balhae subjects also provided them with the necessary knowledge of the Chinese concepts. Although the Khitans accepted many of the Chinese and Balhae administrative systems and ideas, in their relations with the steppe they still acted like the steppe nomads as far as their diplomacy was concerned. But even in their relations with the Chinese and the Koreans the Khitans applied a Chinese style nomenclature yet the way they approached to legitimacy and the status of the parties involved in their diplomacy was more compliant with the steppe approach. Abaoji, the founder of the Khitan state did not oppose the existence of a second son of heaven in the south, despite declaring himself an Emperor in the Chinese model. Also, they did create a fictive family in their relations with the Chinese and their other neighbors more en par with the Türk models than the Chinese models. The Tang emperors did also accept being involved in such fictive family relations with the Türks and Tibetans but only after they were forced to do so by the latter. Their initial addressees in China were the Shatuo Turks who also applied steppe concepts with a Chinese nomenclature. Therefore, until the reunification of China by the Song, the Türk concepts of interstate relations and legitimacy were dominant both on the steppe and in China proper.

The Song dynasty had actually finished what the Zhou dynasty before them had started. China had been divided among the warlords for over half a century and the “alien” regimes had been using their military power and fictive family relations with the Tang royal house for legitimizing their rule in China. Therefore, in order to distinguish themselves from these “alien barbarians”, the Song royal house embraced Confucian notions in order to wipe out the remaining sympathy or questions regarding the Shatuo Turks before them. A thorn in the middle of Northern China was the last remaining kingdom of Later Han in Taiyuan. This was the last Shatuo stronghold, and though it was not strong enough to defeat the Song, it still posed a military and legitimacy threat to the Song. After a successful campaign the Song dynasty managed to unite all of China, but it still did not have possession of the previous Tang areas in the north. The Ordos region and Ningxia was in the hands of Tanguts, and the sixteen prefectures on the northeast became Khitan possessions. The Song attempts to retake these areas ended in military failures and eventually the Song had to sign a treaty with the Liao recognizing the Liao dynasty not only as an equal, but sharing the claim of being the son of heaven with the Liao emperor. With the Tanguts, there was a stalemate, but the Liao emperor managed to become “the elder” of the Song emperor which carried a significance both on the steppe culture and in Chinese politics. The Song also lost the Goryeo kingdom of Korea as a vassal to the Khitans and as a result, the Song political hegemony on the diplomatic sphere was much reduced. However, the Chanyuan treaty which was signed between the Song and the Liao became a model for the multi-state system in East Asia until the arrival of the Mongols. In this model, the “alien” dynasties received the legitimization of their dynasty in the eyes of their sedentary subjects whose population and wealth now overpassed the nomadic subjects of these dynasties. The Song side on the other hand, bought peace through paying tribute and giving political concessions. While the Chinese side accepted being inferior to the Northern dynasties in terms of protocol and accepted that they were also sons of heaven, the dynasties on the North did not

raid into Chinese territory or help the Chinese rebel generals as the Türks and Uighurs did during the Tang times. While the Song side and the Liao side both applied a Chinese Confucian nomenclature in their relations with each other and with their vassals, the norms and concepts seemed to be a continuation of the steppe traditions. Thus, with the establishment of the Liao and the Xi Xia states, the triple system during the Tang times between the Türk Qaghanate, Tibetan Empire and the Tang Empire was reestablished, though on a smaller scale and some minor differences. The main difference was that the Khitans and later the Jürchens who inherited the role of the Türks came to a superior position and ruled over a sedentary area as well as the steppe. The Song on the other hand could never reach the military power of the Tang to enforce its will on its northern and western neighbors even when they were at the stage of collapsing. The difference lay in the army structures of these states. While the Khitan and Tangut armies were heavily composed of horse riders who could shoot arrows on horseback backed with the Chinese soldiers recruited from the provinces under their control, the Song dynasty unlike the previous Tang dynasty, was lacking in horsemen and unlike the Tang they also hesitated to employ the steppe peoples as mercenaries since they feared that these mercenaries could make a coup d'état. As a result, the Song dynasty, though economically much more superior to its neighbors, lacked the military strength to enforce its will, and yet it could not be conquered due to the rivers and mountains protecting it from invasions from the north. The Khitan and Tangut cases were however, different. The Tanguts could establish a more stable state that survived until the rise of the Mongols, and perhaps could have survived the Mongols too, were it not for the political turmoil within the court. They had the Ordos region which provided them with the horses for the army, the Chinese Ningxia prefecture which provided the food supplies and the necessary crafts and the Uighur and Tibetan areas on the Gansu corridor which created wealth through trade on the silk road and provided access to the Central Asian markets. While the Khitans as previous Türk and Uighur vassals, did

follow the Türk models on diplomacy and its legitimacy, the Tanguts had Turkic and Tibetan models together and they did not only use Chinese and Turkic concepts of legitimacy in their inner politics as well as foreign affairs, but they also employed Tibetan Buddhism and Tibetan concepts. The Tangut leaders was title The Son of Blue Sky Burkhan.³⁵³ Their economic as well as political and cultural diversity provided the Tanguts with more options than their Chinese or Khitan neighbors. But like the Song dynasty, their military was not strong enough to impose their ideas and concepts on the Liao and the Song in their diplomacy.

The Khitan Liao however faced the Mongols, Tatars and Jürchens on the steppe areas and occasionally also fought with the Tanguts over the steppe areas. In this respect, the Khitans and their successors the Jürchens had to adapt a more flexible strategy taking both the Chinese and the nomads into account. As Barfield has clearly suggested³⁵⁴, Manchuria based Khitans and Jürchens along with the previous Wei dynasty were more intrusive towards the steppe peoples than the dynasties founded by the Han Chinese. Although their strategy was different from those of the Turks and Mongols, as shall be seen, the Mongols, though based in Mongolia instead of Manchuria and did not have any sedentary base of any importance, they too were very intrusive towards the steppe and they also held onto the sedentary areas that they conquered. But despite the difference between the Turkic peoples and the Khitans in terms of administrative structure, the Khitans and the Jürchens followed the Turkic pattern in terms of their diplomatic affairs. The Chanyuan treaty of the Khitans and the Shaoxing treaty between the Jürchens and the Song were in many ways identical as far as the relations between the states and their status quo were concerned. While the Song

³⁵³ Burkhan was a Turkic name combined of Bur meaning Buddha and Khan meaning a ruler in the steppe way.

³⁵⁴ Barfield, *The Perilous Frontier.*, 35-47

side upheld the imaginary Confucian order which could no longer be contained when faced with a militarily stronger and more stable enemy, the Khitans, Jürchens and the Tanguts were more realistic in their policies and they could accept to be the inferior party if they felt they were not as strong as the other party, but demanded to be treated as equals or superiors whenever they were victorious on the battlefield. While the nomadic policy was more based on fact than fiction, they were also well aware of the Chinese norms and nomenclature, and they adopted Chinese titles, terminology and ceremonies as much as they suited them since this was the lingua franca of diplomacy in East Asia since the Han times. Therefore, while the Song sources draw us a picture where the Song was the protector of civilization and victim of barbarian attacks to which the Song side resisted and did not yield, Khitan and Jürchen sources as much as they survived the selection process of the later generations, draw us a different picture. Even the Chanyuan and Shaoxing treaties were recovered from personal diaries of generals and bureaucrats and were kept from the public eye by the Song intellectuals and later the Ming intellectuals, lest it puts a stain on the self-image of China who culturally and intellectually was one of the most advanced representative was the Song dynasty.

But by the time of the Mongols, this Song indulgence on a fictive diplomatic status quo could not be maintained, mainly due to the Mongol power, but also due to the Song policies which proved to be fatal for the dynasty. While the Mongols were ready to settle for a realistic treaty with the Song at every turn, the Song side clinged to the idea that they could resist and beat the “barbarians” and it was their duty to hold on to the Confucian ideals such as not bowing to the barbarians. As a result, the Song dynasty eventually collapsed in front of the unceasing Mongol assaults and for the first time in its history, China was conquered and united from without by a foreign dynasty as a whole. While the Mongols did not have a very glorious history, in many ways they inherited the

Türk tradition. Chinggis Khan, who united the Mongols and created a world Empire acted on Turkic traditions at nearly every move. The Mongol capital was on the Orkhon area sacred to the Türks, instead of the Burkhan Khaldun area which was sacred to the Mongols. Their sacred animal was changed from dog to a grey wolf, and a substantial number of Turkic peoples were employed in the Mongol army and administration. Despite being linguistically and ethnically different from the Turks, the Mongols were intentionally assimilating themselves into the Türk traditions of the previous Türk Qaghanates. This did not change after they conquered the Jin dynasty and Northern China and later the Song dynasty and southern China. To the opposite, the Mongols put the Semuren, the colored eyed people, of the steppe to the center of their administration and Semuren came just after the Mongols, and in fact, the most important posts as much as government was concerned, were filled by the Turkic peoples such as the Uighurs. While the Mongols applied the Khitan and Jürchen models which were well suited to the Mongol case since half of their empire was sedentary and yet another half was nomadic, they employed the steppe concepts in their diplomacy and legitimization with the other states on a larger scale. The Khitans and the Jürchens employed these concepts before the Mongols and were actually a continuation of the Turkic tradition in this area, but the Mongols after conquering all of China, did replace the Chinese concept of “middle” kingdom, and applied their own ideas of qut and legitimacy to all of East Asia which resulted in Mongol campaigns in Korea, Japan, Vietnam, Burma and South East Asian islands to which these concepts had been completely alien until then. These countries also were undergoing political turmoil by the time the Mongols arrived and this also explains why they either refused or ignored the Mongol overtures for establishing relations based on steppe notions of hegemony and legitimacy rather than the Chinese style approach with which they were better acquainted. But with the exception of Japan, the Mongols managed to impose the new order on all of east Asia as has been explained in the previous chapter. The

Goryeo kingdom not only submitted, but also became son in laws to the Mongol Khans in China, the Burmese, Vietnamese and other South East Asian kings also accepted Mongol suzerainty and legitimacy as long as the Mongol demands were nominal like in the Chinese model. Since the Mongols also soon broke into civil war, the Yuan dynasty of the Mongols in China and Manchuria did not possess the military means to enforce any demands on these countries with the exception of Korea as well. As a result, until the fall of the Yuan dynasty, Liao, Xi Xia, Jin and Yuan not only inherited and became the continuations of the steppe traditions and norms in the area of interstate relations and politics, they also hybridized these concepts with a Chinese nomenclature (although the spirit remained nomadic). Therefore, as has been suggested by this study, the idea that the Khitans, and Jürchens differed from the Turks and Uighurs and the Mongols can be taken as correct when their administrative structures are taken into account. but on the diplomatic arena where the states sought to legitimize their status in a multistate system, they along with the Mongols remained to be the inheritors of the Türk tradition. The Türks did not have the stable state structure and economic base that they had, and as a result, was dependent on raid and tribute from China, and therefore could never impose their will on the diplomatic arena as much as these three dynasties did. Their victories and treaties with the Tang were always short-lived. In this respect, these three alien dynasties created a new interstate system in East Asia based on the steppe concepts of legitimacy and steppe norms of diplomacy rather than copying the Chinese norms. The Liao and the Jin, though more similar to the Wei dynasty in terms of the strategy they followed towards the steppe which necessitated an active intervention into the inner politics of the steppe tribes and confederations in order to prevent them from uniting as Barfield suggests, still followed the Türk tradition in their approach to the interstate system as well. The Mongols in the same way, despite breaking away from the Ashina lineage's claim to qut, created the Chinggisid lineage as the sole legitimate lineage on the steppe, and still followed the Ashina Türks'

steps in their actions for legitimacy and in their affairs with the other states and political entities.

Taking all of this into account, it can be concluded that the 11th to the 14th centuries in East Asia not only saw a revival of the nomadic power as in elsewhere on the Eurasian steppe and its bordering sedentary areas, but also witnessed that their concepts regarding legitimacy, norms of diplomacy and ideas of world order between the states and their states in accordance with this order became prevalent in East Asia. Despite being applied under the disguise of a Chinese nomenclature which was the mutual language of diplomacy and statecraft in East Asia, these dynasties still applied the concepts of the steppe to the East Asian political scene. As the discussions above suggest, there was actually a continuity following the demise of each dynasty on the steppe, and each state or qaghanate that followed their enemies were actually legitimizing itself on the same tools with the previous dynasty. In this respect, the nomadic states and dynasties were actually no more different than the Chinese, or other sedentary dynasties. The Khitans, Jürchens and the Mongols were simply overthrowing the previous dynasty to establish a new dynasty in the same fashion as the previous one. Despite the change in character of the administrative structures as a result of partly settling in the sedentary areas of China, these dynasties never did give up their claims of sovereignty based on the legitimacy concepts of the nomadic dynasties before them. They simply embraced two concepts together alongside the Chinese concepts just as the Seljuks and later the Ottomans would do in the west. Therefore, the observation of the nomadic dynasties under such a light will help to approach these people and dynasties under a more objective light as has been the purpose of this study.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: TRANSLITERATIONS

CHINESE

For the names of the Chinese places and personal names, the Standard Mandarin has been used unless that place or personal name is used in another Sinitic language such as Cantonese in the English language (Hong Kong instead of Xiang Gang etc.). For the transliteration of Mandarin Chinese names, the pinyin transliteration has been used since this is the most common transliteration in the world both among the academic circles and the formal use as People's Republic of China, Taiwan and Singapore all use pinyin as the formal transliteration method for the Chinese characters, this transliteration has been deemed more appropriate and methodic compared to the Wade Giles system.

Table 1. Pinyin

Pinyin	IPA	Pinyin	IPA	Pinyin	IPA	Pinyin	IPA
b	[p]	l	[l]	zh	[tʂ]	w	[w]
p	[p ^h]	g	[k]	ch	[tʂ ^h]	y	[j]
m	[m]	k	[k ^h]	sh	[ʃ]	a	[a]
f	[f]	h	[x]	r	[ʀ]~[ʐ]	e	[ɤ]
d	[t]	j	[tɕ]	z	[ts]	i	[i]
t	[t ^h]	q	[tɕ ^h]	c	[ts ^h]	o	[ɔ]
n	[n]	x	[ɕ]	s	[s]	u	[u]

JAPANESE

The Hepburn Transliteration system has been used for the transliteration of the Japanese names since it is the most common transliteration method both in Japan and abroad.

Table 2. Kana Table

	–	k	s	t	n	h	m	y	r	w
a	あア	かカ	さサ	たタ	なナ	はハ	まマ	やヤ	らラ	わワ

i	いイ	きキ	しシ	ちチ	にニ	ひヒ	みミ	※	りリ	るル
u	うウ	くク	すス	つツ	ぬヌ	ふフ	むム	ゆユ	るル	※
e	えエ	けケ	せセ	てテ	ねネ	へヘ	めメ	※	れレ	ゑエ
o	おオ	こコ	そソ	とト	のノ	ほホ	もモ	よヨ	ろロ	をヲ
んン										
(n)										

KOREAN

For the Korean names, with the exception of commonly used names such as 김/Kim instead of Gim which are now in common use in English, the Revised Romanization of Korean which has been in formal use in South Korea since 2000 has been used.

Table 3. Hangeul Transliterations

Hangeul	Romaj	Hangeul	Romaj	Hangeul	Romaj	Hangeul	Romaj
l	a	l	a	l	a	l	a
ㅏ	a	ㅑ	o	ㅓ	wi	ㅕ	dd
ㅓ	ae	ㅗ	wa	ㅛ	yu	ㅜ	r-l
ㅕ	ya	ㅛ	wae	ㅡ	eu	ㅜ	m
ㅛ	yae	ㅗ	oe	ㅣ	ui	ㅞ	b
ㅗ	eo	ㅜ	yo	ㅣ	i	ㅞ	bb
ㅜ	e	ㅓ	u	ㅓ	g	ㅓ	s
ㅓ	yeo	ㅓ	wo	ㅓ	kk-k	ㅓ	ss
ㅓ	ye	ㅓ	we	ㅓ	d	ㅇ	-ng
ㄴ	n	ㄴ	j	ㅓ	jj	ㅓ	ch
ㅋ	k	ㅓ	t	ㅓ	p	ㅓ	h

MONGOLIAN

The names in Mongolian have been used as are in Onon urunge's translation of The Secret History of the Mongols without modification. The transliteration table of Mongolian Cyrillic is below.

Table 4. Mongolian Cyrillic

Pos.	Cyrillic	Braille Name	IPA[3]	ISO 9	Standard romanization
(MNS 5217:2012)[4] Library of Congress					
1	Аа	⠠	а	a	a
2	Бб	⠠	бэ	p, p ^j	b
3	Вв	⠠	вэ	ʋ, ʋ ^j	v
4	Гг	⠠	гэ	g, g ^j , ɣ	g
5	Дд	⠠	дэ	t, t ^j	d
6	Ее	⠠	е	ji~jə	e ye e
7	Ёё	⠠	ё	jɔ	ë yo ë
8	Жж	⠠	жэ	tʃ	ž j zh
9	Зз	⠠	зэ	ts	z
10	Ии	⠠	и	i	i
11	Йй	⠠	хагас и	i	j i й
12	Кк	⠠	ка	k ^h , k ^{jh} , x, x ^j	k
13	Лл	⠠	эл	ɮ, ɮ ^j	l
14	Мм	⠠	эм	m, m ^j	m

15	Нн	∴	эн	n, n ^j , ŋ	n
16	Оо	∴	о	ɔ	o
17	Өө	∴	ө	ө~o	ô ö
18	Пп	∴	пэ	p ^h , p ^{hj}	p
19	Рр	∴	эр	r, r ^j	r
20	Сс	∴	эс	s	s
21	Тт	∴	тэ	t ^h , t ^{hj}	t
22	Уу	∴	у	ʊ	u
23	Үү	∴	ү	u	ü
24	Фф	∴	фэ, фа, эф	f, p ^h	f
25	Хх	∴	хэ, ха	x, x ^j	h kh
26	Цц	∴	цэ	ts ^h	c ts
27	Чч	∴	чэ	tʃ ^h	č ch
28	Шш	∴	ша, эшʃ	ʃ	sh
29	Щщ	∴	ща, эшчэ	(ʃʃ)[5]	š sh shch
30	Ъъ	∴	хатуугийн тэмдэг	none	" i ı
31	Ыы	∴	эр үгийн ы	i	y
32	Ьь	∴	зөөлний тэмдэг	j	' i
33	Ээ	∴	э	e~i	è e ê
34	Юю	∴	ю	jʊ, ju	û yu iu
35	Яя	∴	я	ja	â ya ia

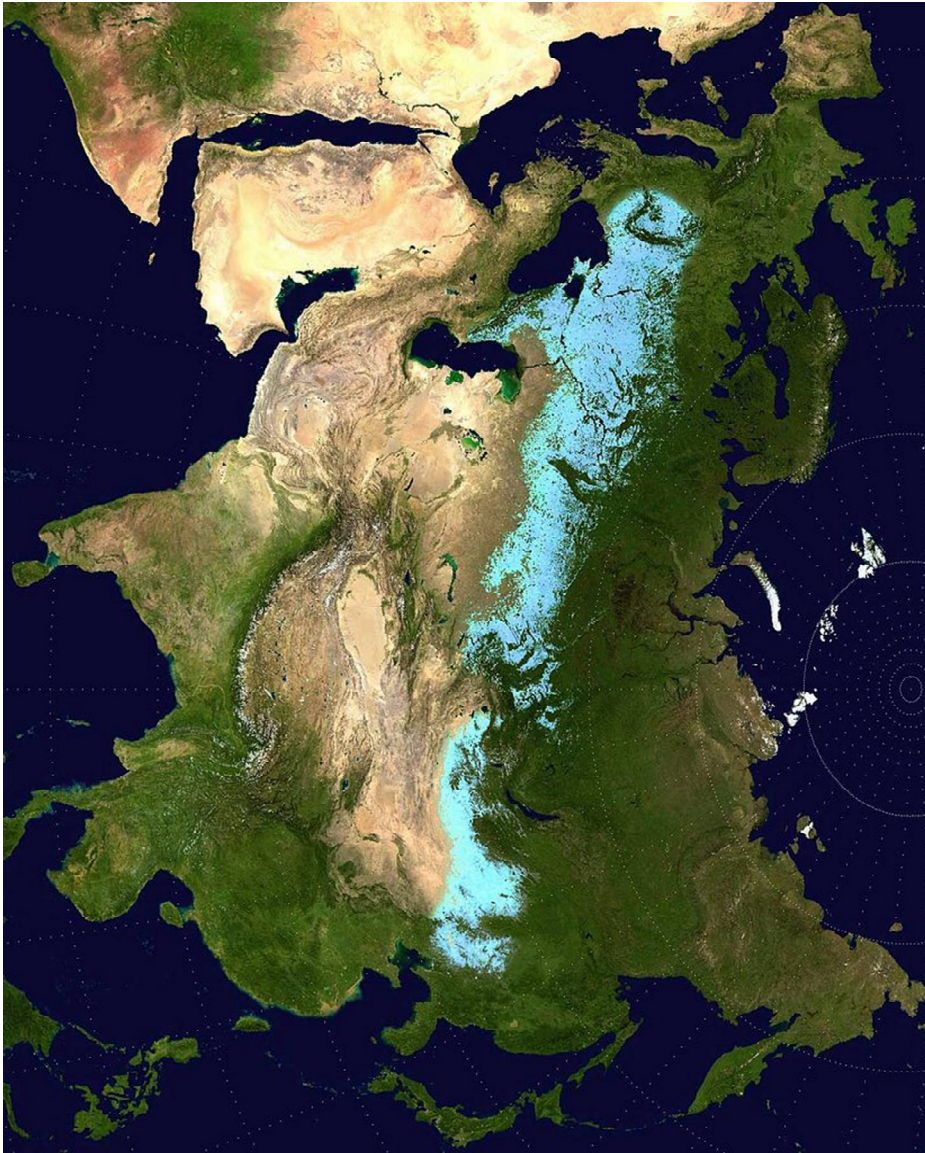
TIBETAN

For Tibetan names the Wylie transliteration has been used although there are other transliteration methods such as Tibetan pinyin do exist. The reason for the choice of the Wylie transliteration method has been that it is the most commonly used transliteration method in the academic works and would make it easier for the reader to follow the names throughout the text in comparison with other relevant texts in English language. The Wylie transliteration table of Tibetan language can be found below.

T	W	IPA	T	W	IPA	T	W	IPA	T	W
ཀ	ka nga	[ká] [ŋà]	ཁ	kha	[k ^h á]	ག	ga	[gà/k ^h à]	ང	
ཅ	ca nya	[te ^á] [nà]	ཆ	cha	[te ^h á]	ཇ	ja	[dzà/te ^h à]	ཉ	
ཏ	ta [nà]	[tá]	ཐ	tha	[t ^h á]	ད	da	[dà/t ^h à]	ན	na
པ	pa ma	[pá] [mà]	ཕ	pha	[p ^h á]	བ	ba	[bà/p ^h à]	མ	
ཅ	tsha wa	[tsá] [wà]	ཆ	tsha	[ts ^h á]	ཇ	dza	[dzà/ts ^h à]	ཉ	
ཞ	zha [jà]	[zà/ɕà]	ཟ	za	[zà/sà]	ང	'a	[hà/?à]	ཙ	ya
ར	ra [sá]	[rà]	ལ	la	[là]	ཤ	sha	[éá]	ས	sa
ཧ	ha	[há]	མ	a	[?á]					

APPENDIX B: MAPS

Map 1 The Eurasian Steppe



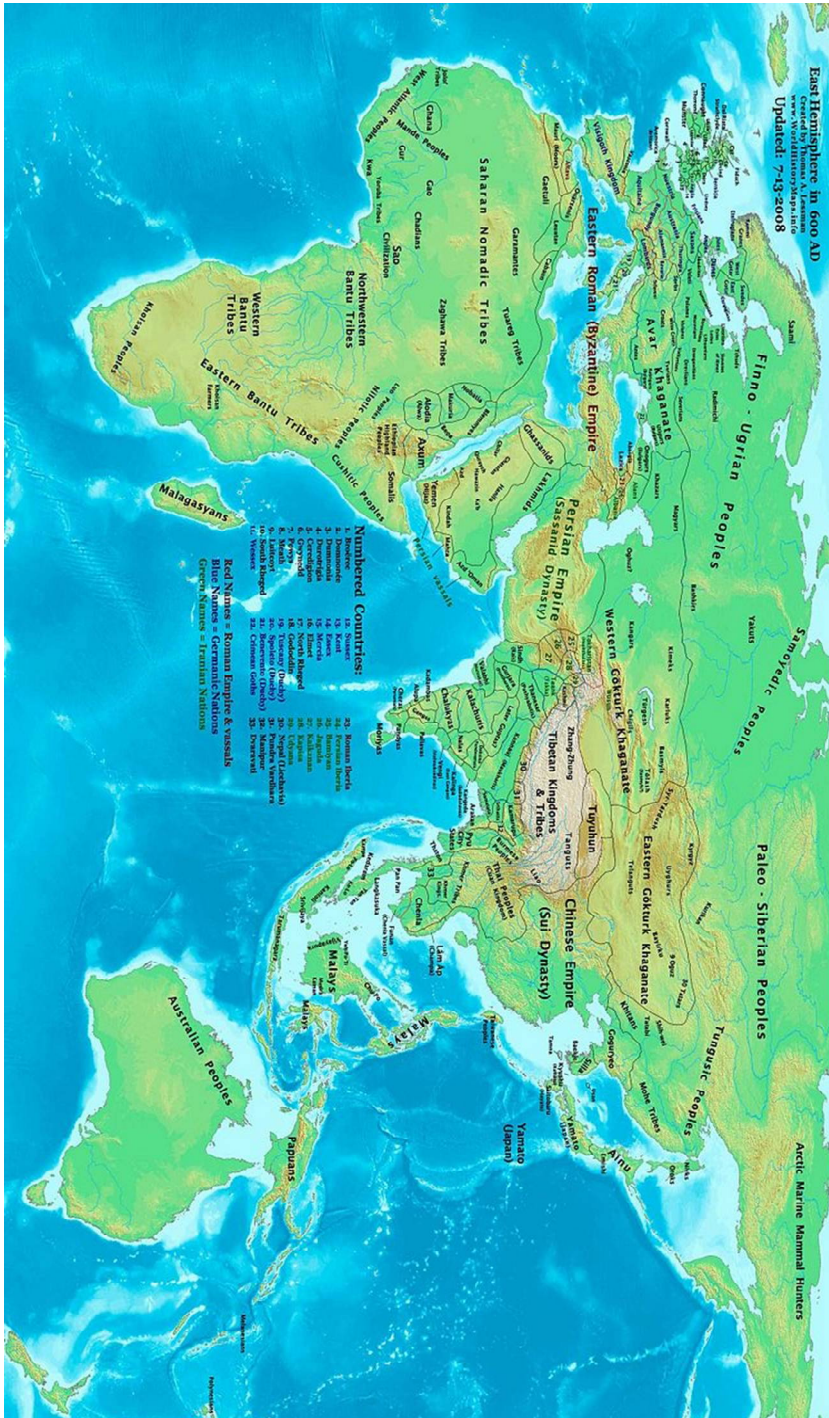
By Two-point-equidistant-asia.jpg: Mdfderivative work: Shattered Gnome (talk)earlier version: Cp6 - Two-point-equidistant-asia.jpg, Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=6871871>

Map 2. The Tang Dynasty



https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/1/1c/Tang_Dynasty_circa_700_CE.png

Map 3. The Türk Qaghanate



http://www.thomaslessman.com/History/images/East-Hem_600ad.jpg

Map 4. The Tibetan Empire³⁵⁵



³⁵⁵ By Javierfv1212 - Own work, CC BY 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=14732068>

Map 5. Five Dynastie Ten Kingdoms³⁵⁶



³⁵⁶ By Ian Kiu - Own work, CC BY 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=3048730>

Map 6. Northern Song, Liao, Xi Xia³⁵⁷



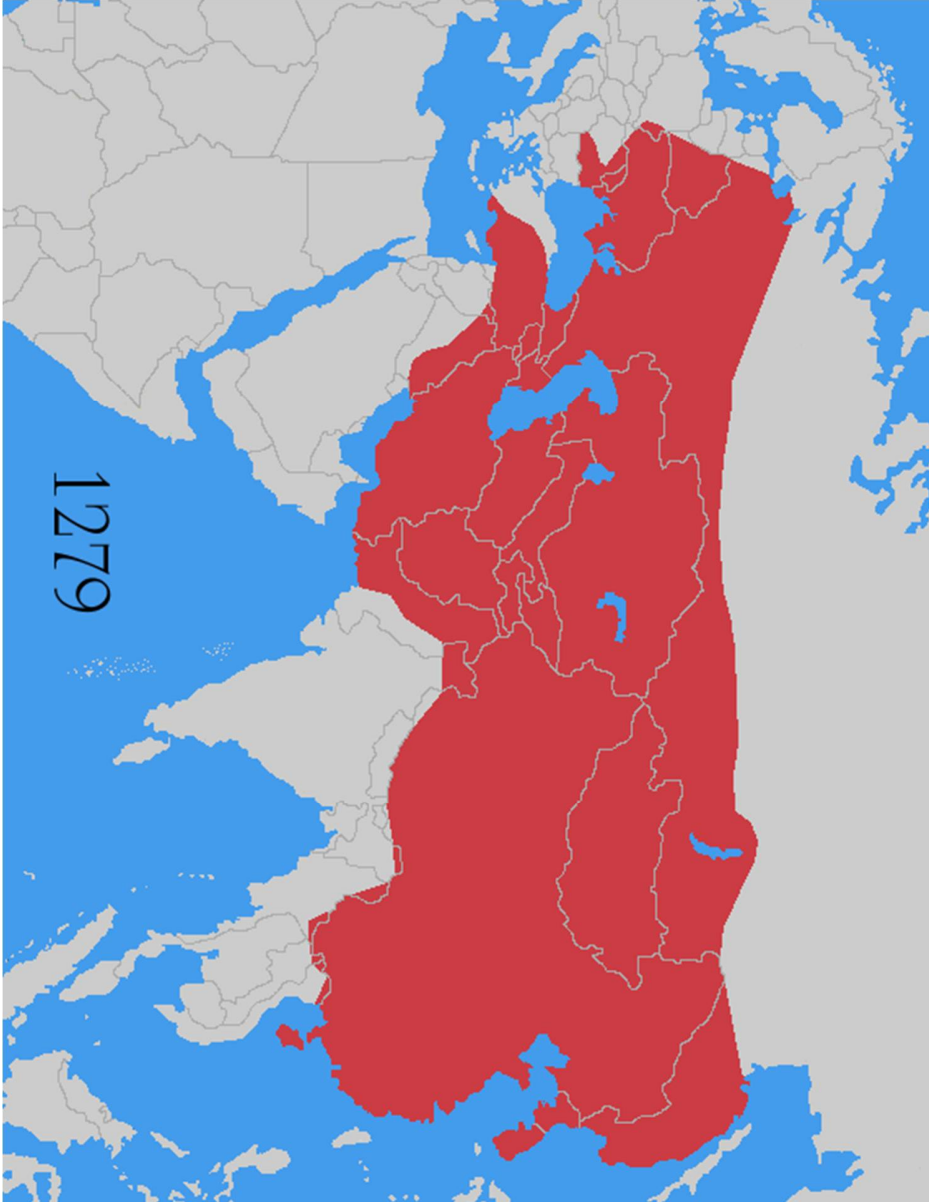
³⁵⁷ https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:China_-_Song_Dynasty-fr.svg

Map7. Southern Song, Jin and Xi Xia³⁵⁸



³⁵⁸ https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File%3ASung_Dynasty_1141.png

Map 9. Mongol Empire at Its Apex³⁶⁰



³⁶⁰ By User:Astrokey44 - Based on the freely licenced Image:Genghis khan empire at his death.png using information from maps of the Mongol Empire in atlases and on the web such as [1], [2], [3], [4], [5]. Made in Photoshop and Painter., CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=885439>

Map 10. Yuan Dynasty³⁶¹



³⁶¹ By Ian Kiu - Own work, CC BY 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=3082897>

APPENDIX C: CURRICULUM VITAE

EDUCATION

- Middle East Technical University, Department of History, PhD, 2010-2017 Ankara, TURKEY (Major History, Minor Medieval East Asia)

Dissertation Title: Dynastic Relations in East Asia Between the 10th-14th Centuries

- Hacettepe University, Department of History M:A Degree, 2006-2009 Ankara, TURKEY (Major History)

Master Thesis Title: Feudal Institutions in Plantagenet England and Tokugawa Japan

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PUBLICATIONS

- “Japonya, Kapalı Ülke, İdeoloji ve Din” *Doğu-Batı. Cilt.60*, May 2012: Ankara (“Japan, Closed Country, Ideology, and Religion” East-West. Vol.60, May 2012: Ankara)
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APPENDIX D: TURKISH SUMMARY /TÜRKÇE ÖZET

Bu çalışma 10-14. yüzyıllar arasında Doğu Asya'da özellikle Gök Türk ve Uygur Kağanlıkları ile Tibet İmparatorluğunun çökmesi sonrasında onları Tang Hanedanının da çökmesi izleyince ortaya çıkan güç boşluğunda gerek bozkır sahasında gerekse Çin, Kore ve Vietnam gibi yerleşik kültürün egemen olduğu sahalarda göçebe ve yarı göçebe grupların giderek daha fazla egemen duruma gelmeleri ve bozkır kültür çevresine ait gelenek ve uygulamaları Çin ve Kore'de de kabul ettirmeleri ile birlikte göçebe kökenli hanedanlar egemenliğinde geçen bu dönemde göçebe ve yerleşik kültür çevresi kökenli hanedanların birbirleri ile olan ilişkilerini incelemektedir. Bu konu ile ilgili kaynakların çoğu Çinliler tarafından yazılmış olup genellikle olaylara ve kişilere Konfüçyüsçü bir bakış açısı ile taraflı yaklaşılmaktadır. Bu bağlamda eldeki kaynakların eleştirel bir okumadan geçirilmesi gerekliliğini de göz önüne alarak bu dönemde göçebe toplulukların ve göçebe kökenli hanedanların rollerine yeni bir bakış açısıyla yaklaşmak hedeflenmektedir. Bahsi geçen Göktürk ve Uygur Kağanlıkları üzerine çok sayıda çalışma yapılmış olmakla birlikte, bu çalışmanın konusunu oluşturan Kitan, Tangut ve Jürçenler ile Moğollar üzerine yapılan çalışmalara göre daha azdır. Bu gruplardan en büyük alana yayılarak tarihsel süreçte en büyük etkiyi bırakan Moğollar hakkında yapılan çalışmalar bile daha çok Rusya, Çin ve Japonya'da yoğunlaşmış olup son zamanlara kadar ön yargılı bir yaklaşımın ve kaynakların eleştirel ve karşılaştırmalı okumadan geçirilmemesinin kurbanı olmuştur. Gök Türkler ve Uygurlar kendi dillerinde ve yazılarında geride pek çok yazıt ve belge bırakmışlardır ve bunlar dilbilimciler tarafından büyük bir özenle çalışılmaktadır. Ancak artık dilleri ölmüş olan Kitan, Tangut ve Jürçenlerden pek çok eser kalmış olmasına rağmen hem bu grupların yazısının deşifresi uzun süre yapılamamış hem de Türkçe yazıtlar kadar ilgi çekmemişlerdir. Dilbilimsel

olarak zorlukların yanı sıra bu dört gruptan Moğollar haricindekilerin devletlerinin kısa süreli olması ve daha önceki Göktürk ya da Uygur Kağanlıkları kadar geniş bir alana yayılamamış olmaları da bu üç hanedana gereken önemin verilmemesine neden olmuştur. Ayrıca özellikle Kitanların kurmuş olduğu Liao ve Jürçenlerin kurmuş olduğu Jin hanedanlarından gerek etnik Han gerekse Kitan ve Jürçen asıllı aydın kesimin kaleme aldığı Çince eserler de mevcut olmakla birlikte bu eserler daha sonraki nesiller tarafından Song hanedanı aydınlarının eserleri kadar önemli bulunmamış ve pek çoğu günümüze kadar ulaşamamıştır. Bu çalışma Kitanlar'dan başlatarak bu üç hanedanın ve onları kendi bünyesine katan Moğolların kendi aralarındaki ve komşuları olan yerleşik hanedanlar ile olan ilişkileri inceleyerek bu alandaki bir boşluğu doldurmada katkıda bulunmayı hedeflemektedir. Bu çalışma kapsam itibarıyla boyların ve diğer grupların ya da şahısların etnik kökenlerini saptamayı amaçlamamaktadır, ayrıca coğrafi alan olarak da Avrasya bozkırının doğuda kalan Pasifik Okyanusu ile Altay dağları arasında olan kısmı ile kısıtlanmıştır. Bu sebeple Altı Orda ve İlhanlı ya da Kara Kitay gibi bu çalışma da ele alınan hanedanların Çağdaşı olan ve aynı etnik kökenden gelen devlet ve hanedanlar bu çalışmanın konusu dışında bırakılmıştır. Bu çalışmada hedeflenen göçebe kültüründeki ortak bir meşruiyet zemini olduğunu ve bu zeminin ve diğer düşüncelerin bir süreklilik gösterdiği ve etnik kökenden bağısız olarak varlığını sürdürdüğünü göstermektir.

Bu konu ile ilgili kaynakların büyük bir çoğunluğu Çince olmakla birlikte özellikle Moğol dönemine dair Arapça, Farsça, Latince gibi diğer dillerde de kaynaklar bulmak mümkündür. Ancak yine de kaynakların büyük bir kısmını Çinliler tarafından yazılan Çince kaynaklar oluşturmaktadır. Çince kaynaklar arasında belki de en önemlileri bir önceki hanedanı yıkan yeni hanedan tarafından hazırlanan ve bir önceki hanedana ait arşiv kayıtları ve belgelerden yararlanılarak yazılan resmi tarihlerdir. Bu tarihlerden ilki olan *Shiji* daha sonraki yazılan yirmi üç tarihe de örnek teşkil etmiştir ve bu tarihler belirli bir düzene

göre yazılmaktadır. Sima Qian tarafından yazılan bu tarih benji adı verilen ve hükümdarların saltanat devirlerinde meydana gelen olayları anlatan bölümler ile başlayıp daha sonrasında ise zhuan adı verilen monografilerle devam eden, olayların kronolojik bir sıra ile anlatıldığı, her bölümün sonuna yazarlar tarafından olaylarla ilgili olarak okuyan kişiye ders vermek ve tarihten çıkarılan dersleri göstermek amaçlı makaleler eklenmekteydi. Ayrıca monografi bölümlerinde de bu çalışma için oldukça önemli olan bilgiler mevcuttu. Çin'in iç yapısı, ekonomisi, hukuku, toplumsal yapısı gibi konularda bilgi veren monografilerin yanısıra bu hanedanların komşusu olan ülkeler ve boylar hakkında da bilgiler verilmekteydi. Bu monografiler bu ülke ve boyların başkentler, başkentlerinin Çin'in başkentine uzaklığı ve konumları, bu bölgelerde yetiştirilen ürünler, bu bölge ve boyların toplumsal yapıları, ekonomik ve siyasi durumları, gelenekleri, Çin ile olan ilişkileri, tarihleri, etnik kökenleri, konuştukları diller gibi konularda bilgiler vermekteydiler. Özellikle Hunlar ve Göktürkler gibi kendileri Çin'de hanedan kurmamış olan gruplar hakkındaki bilgilerimizin büyük bir kısmı resmi tarihlerdeki bu monografilerden gelmektedir. Ancak Liao hanedanından itibaren bu bozkır göçebesi gruplar Kuzey Çin'de de egemenlik kurarak kendi hanedanlarını kurdukları için bu çalışmanın ana konusunu oluşturan Liao, Jin ve Yuan hanedanları için yazılmış resmi tarihler de mevcuttur ve oldukça değerli bilgiler sağlarlar. Bununla birlikte resmi bir hanedan statüsü kendisine çağdaşlarınca verilmeyen Tangut Xi Xia devletine ait bir resmi tarih mevcut değildir ve bu devlete ait olan bilgilerin büyük kısmı diğer hanedanların resmi tarihleri ve resmi tarihler dışında kalan kaynaklardan elde edilebilmektedir. Resmi tarihler haricinde bireyler tarafından devletin emri olmaksızın yazılan "gayriresmi" tarihler de mevcuttur. Bunlara en güzel örnekler olarak Kitanlar hakkında yazılan *Qidan Guozhi* ve Jürçenler hakkında yazılan *Dajin Guozhi* verilebilir. Guozhi adı verilen bu eserlerde bir hanedanın tüm tarihi ya da tarihinin bir kısmı resmi tarihlerde olduğu gibi bu veri ve belgelere ulaşma imkânı olan Çinli aydınlar tarafından kaleme alınmaktaydı. Hem resmi tarihlerin

hem de bu gibi bireysel tarihlerin yazılma amacı tarih bilimine yardım etmekten çok Konfüçyusçu ahlakı yaymaktı. Tarihten dersler çıkararak konfüçyusçu ahlaka uymayan liderlerin başına gelenler ile konfüçyusçu ahlaka uygun yaşamaları sonucunda başarılı olan liderler gelecek nesillere ibret hikayeleri olarak gösterilmek istenmekteydi. İşte tam da bu sebepten ötürü Çin kaynakları ele alınırken son derece dikkatli olunmalıdır ve tüm metinler son derece dikkatli bir şekilde eleştirel bir okumadan geçirilmelidir. Buna ek olarak bugüne kalan Çince eserler de çoğunlukla konfüçyusçu bir eğitimden geçen ve konfüçyusçu bir ahlakı benimsemiş bir aydın kesim tarafından seçilime tabi tutularak gelecek nesillere aktarılan eserlerdir. Bugün elimizde olmayan ancak bu tarihleri yalanlayan yada tersini iddia eden belgeler de tıpkı Dunhuang mağaralarında bulunan belgelerde olduğu gibi zaman zaman ortaya çıkmaktadır. Çin kaynaklarına ek olarak göçebelerin kendileri tarafından geriye bırakılan kaynaklar ne yazıkki sayıca az olmakla birlikte bu çalışmanın ana konusunu oluşturan göçebelerin meşruiyet zeminleri ve diğer devletler ve gruplarla ilişkilerine bu meşruiyet algısının etkisi konusunda son derece değerli bilgiler vermektedirler. Bu tip kaynakların eldeki en eskisi olan Orhun anıtları ve diğer taş anıtların yanısıra bu konuda en değerli kaynaklardan birisi de Moğolla tarafından yazılan ve Moğolların o dönemdeki iç dünyalarına dair son derece değerli ve tarafsız bilgiler sunan *Moğolların Gizli Tarihi* 'dir. Bu eserin tam olarak kim tarafından ve ne zaman yazıldığı bilinmemekle birlikte anlattığı olayların üzerinden çok uzun bir zaman geçmeden ve artık elde mevcut olmayan kaynaklardan da yararlanarak yazıldığı anlaşılmaktadır. Ayrıca adından da anlaşılacağı üzere gizli kalmak ve Moğol Hanedan üyelerine kendi geçmişlerini tüm yönleriyle anlatmak üzere yazılan bu gizli tarih, Çin resmi tarihlerinden farklı olarak okurlarına bir resmî ideoloji aşılama amacı gütmemekteydi. Bunlara ek olarak özellikle Moğol döneminden itibaren İran, Rusya ve Avrupa'dan Doğu Asya'ya seyahat eden seyyahlar ve İran'daki Moğol Sarayındaki bilgiler tarafından hem tarih kitapları hem de seyahatnameler kaleme alınmıştır.

Bunlardan en ünlüleri Reşidüdin'in İlhanlı sarayında kaleme aldığı *Cami-üt Tevarih* ile Marco Polo tarafından yazılan *Il Millione*'dir. Ancak bunlara ek olarak daha az bilinen Cihangûşa, Carpini ve Rubruck seyahatnameleri gibi farklı dillerde kaynaklar da son derece önemli bilgiler sağlamaktadır. Ayrıca Çinliler tarafından yazılmamış Goryeosa gibi Kore ve Japon kaynakları da bu döneme ait eldeki Çin kaynakları ile karşılaştırma ve sağlama yapma olanağı vermektedirler. Her ne kadar bu kaynaklar da çoğunlukla konfüçyüsçü bir ideolojiyi yansıtmaktaysalar da Çinli yazarlara göre göçebe bu gruplara karşı daha tarafsız olan Koreli ve Japonlar tarafından yazılmış olmaları bu eserleri önemli kılmaktadır.

Çin tarihindeki en önemli ve güçlü hanedanlar arasında sayılan Tang hanedanı, kendisinden önce gelen ve Çin'i uzun bir aradan sonra birleştiren Sui hanedanını yıkarak başa geçmiştir. Tang hanedanının ikinci imparatoru olan Tang Taizong Çin'deki Konfüçyüsçü geleneğe hiç de uymayan bir şekilde öz kardeşlerini öldürmüş ve babasını da tahtı kendisine bırakmaya zorlamıştır. Daha sonrasında ise hem kuzeyindeki Türk Kağanlığını hem de Batısındaki Tibet imparatorluğunu yenmişse de Kore ve Mançurya'daki Goguryeo devletine karşı düzenlediği sefer başarısız olmuşsa da Tang Taizong Çin tarihinde kendisinden sonra gelenlerce örnek alınan bir imparator olarak tarihe geçmiştir. Türkleri yendikten sonra kendisini yalnızca imparator değil aynı zamanda gök kağan ilan etmesi yönüyle de Tang Taizong Çin tarihinde bir istisnadır. Her ne kadar bu dönemde bazı Türk adetleri ve giyim tarzı ile müzik ve yemek gibi kültürel öğeleri Çin'e nüfuz etmişse de Çin'de Tang hanedanı döneminde Konfüçyüsçü bir ideoloji ve sınav sistemi ile gelen ve eski aristokrasinin gücünü kırarak imparatorluk nüfuzunu arttırması için desteklenen bir bürokrat sınıfının ortaya çıkması bozkır kökenli general ve diğer kişilerin siyaseten önemli roller oynamasını uzun vadede engellemiştir. Nitekim sonunda An Lushan, Li Keyong gibi Çinli kökenli olmayan generaller de siyasi nüfuzlarından çok askeri güçlerine dayanarak

yükselmeyi denemiş ve imparatorluğun sonunu getiren isyanlar da bu nedenle başlamıştır. Özellikle yedi yıl süren An Lushan isyanının kahramanı olan An Lushan Soğd bir baba ve Türk bir anneden doğmuş, sınır bölgesinde orduda giderek yükselerek askeri vali olmayı başarmıştır. Ancak daha sonra saray içerisindeki yüksek bürokrasiden himaye alamayarak saray içerisinde yükselmeyi başaramamış, bir başka Türk kökenli general olan Li Keyong ile olan kavgası sonucunda da isyan ederek başarısız olmasına rağmen imparatorluğun gücünü geri dönülmez şekilde sarsmıştır. Türk kökenli hanedanların doğu bozkırındaki egemenliklerinin sona ermesinden Moğol egemenliğine kadar geçen dönem Moğollar da dahil olmak üzere tarihçiler tarafından etnik ve dilsel köken temelinde ele alınarak birbirlerinden temelde çok farklı gruplar oldukları ve birbirlerine düşman etnik grupları temsil eden hanedanlar oldukları görüşü özellikle modern tarih yazımında baskın bir görüştür. Bu çalışmada ele alınan Liao, Xi Xia, Jin ve Yuan hanedanları genellikle birbirlerinden çok farklı gruplar tarafından kurulmuş ve birbiri ile ilişkisi olmayan bağımsız yapılar gibi ele alınmasının temelinde belki de bu hanedanlara modern bakış açısıyla etnik temelli yaklaşımın etkisi vardır. Oysa Doğu Asya'da önce bozkırda daha sonrasında ise Tang hanedanının çökmesini izleyen dönemde Çin'de ve Kore'de etkin olmaya başladığı görülmektedir.

Göktürk Kağanlığı ve Uygur Kağanlığı dönemlerinde bu iki devletin ve zaman zaman da Tang hanedanının vasalı durumunda olan Kitanlar hem Çin'de hem de Doğu Bozkırında ortaya çıkan güç boşluğundan yararlanarak güçlerini arttırmayı başarmışlar ve Mançurya'daki diğer kabileler ile Kore kökenli olup Goguryeo (高句麗) devletinin devamı niteliğindeki Balhae (渤海) devletini de fethederek kabile federasyonundan devlet olma yoluna doğru evrilmeye başlamışlardır. Özellikle fethettikleri Balhae devletinin elit sınıfı ile kız alma yoluyla ittifak kurdukları Uygur kökenli Xiao klanının desteği sayesinde eski Türk ve Çin devlet geleneklerini öğrenen Kitanlar tarihlerinde ilk kez kabile federasyonundan

organize bir devlet seviyesine gelmişlerdir. Çin yazısını örnek alarak yarattıkları büyük Kitan yazısı ile Uygur yazısını örnek alarak yarattıkları küçük Kitan yazısını kullanarak Kitan dilinde eserler yazıp Çince pek çok eseri de tercüme eden Kitanlar daha önceki Wei hanedanı döneminde kendilerini Çinlileştirme yoluna giden Tabgaçlardan farklı bir yol izlemişlerdir. Sınır bölgesinde kurulan bir devlet olarak Kitanlar hem Çin hem de göçebe etkilere açıktı ve Han Çinlileri ve Balhae etnik grubu gibi yerleşik yaşayan grubun yanı sıra Kitan, Jürçen, Türkî, Moğol ve Tangut gibi çok farklı etnik ve dilsel kökenlere sahip göçebe bir nüfusu bir arada barındırmakta idi. Bu durumda arazisinin çok büyük kısmı bozkırda olan Gök Türk ve Uygurlardan farklı olarak Kitanlar melez bir idari yapı kurma yoluna gitmek durumunda kalmışlardır. Güney ve Kuzey hükümetleri adıyla ikili bir yapı kurulup eski Kore devlet yapısından da beşli başkent örnek alınmış ve kendine has bir devlet yapısı ortaya çıkmıştır. Bu durum tarihçiler arasında genellikle Kitanların hem göçebe hem de Çinli gibi davrandıkları sonucunun çıkmasına sebep olmuşsa da Kitanlar komşuları ile ilişkilerinde daha iyi bildikleri bozkır modellerini kendilerine örnek almış görünmektedirler. Kuzey Çin’de Shatuo Türkleri tarafından kurulan hanedanlar ile aralarındaki süzeren vasal ilişkisi incelendiğinde Kitanların ve Shatuo Türklerinin kendilerine Çin modelini değil bozkır modellerini örnek alarak hareket ettikleri görülmektedir. Bu durum Tangut Xi Xia devleti ve daha sonra Shatuo Türklerini yıkıp Çin’i birleştiren Song hanedanı ile ilişkilerinde de aynı şekilde görülmektedir. Eski bir Gök Türk ve Uygur vasalı olup evlilik bağı ile ittifak kurduğu ve hükümetin en üst kademelerinde tuttuğu Uygur Xiao klanının varlığı göz önüne alındığında bu durum normaldir. Ancak Kitanların Çinli vakanüvislerin aktardığı gibi Çin kültüründen ve medeniyetten bihaber barbarlar olduğu ve yalnızca bozkırda yaşayarak bu kültür çevresi dışına çıkamadıkları da düşünülmemeli. Deguang’ın kuzey Çin’i istila etmesi sonrasında Çin usulüne göre ünvanlar vermesi ve her ne kadar bu ünvanları veriş şekli göçebe bir liderin durumunda görüldüğü üzere taraftarlarına ganimet dağıtmaya benzemektedir. Yine de kullanılan dil ve

ünvanlar göz önüne alındığında Kitanların Çin kültürüne belli bir aşinalıkları olduğu anlaşılmaktadır. Ancak Kitanlar Song hanedanının Çin'i birleştirmesi sonrasında güneye doğru daha fazla genişleyemeyerek bozkır yönünde Gobi Çölünün güney hattında batıya doğru genişleme politikasına girmiş ve bu genişleme de en batıda Tangut Xi Xia devleti tarafından engellenince sınırlı bir alana sıkışmış, her ne kadar askeri olarak üstün olsa da ekonomik açıdan Song hanedanından aldığı haraca bağımlı hale gelmiştir. Bu bakımdan Kitan Liao hanedanı göçebeler tarafından kurularak yerleşik bölgeleri idare eden hanedanlarda bir geçiş evresidir diyebiliriz. Kendi boyundurukları altındaki Jürçenler tarafından devrilerek yeni bir hanedan kurulmasına kadar Kitanlar bir sınır devleti olarak kalmanın sıkıntılarını yaşamışlardır.

Öte yandan Kitanlar ile aynı dönemde doğu bozkırının güneybatı ucunda Tibet ile bozkırın sınır bölgesinde buradaki bazı Uygur ve Çin şehirlerini de alarak Ordos bölgesini yönetimi altında tutan Tangutlar Tang hanedanının yıkılmasından sonra giderek bu bölgedeki egemenliklerini pekiştirmişler ve Kitanlar ve Song hanedanı ile aşağı yukarı aynı zamanda kendilerini imparatorluk ilan etmişlerdir. Ancak Song hanedanı ve Kitanlara kendisini denk kabul ettirecek kadar güçlü olmayan Tangutlar iki devlet arasında bir nevi denge kurucu rolü oynamışlardır. Aslen Tuoba kökenli olan Tangutlar, Wei döneminde Tibet'e yerleştirilmiş, Tang döneminde ise Tibet İmparatorluğuna yenilerek baskılardan Tang hanedanına sığınmışlardır. Tang hanedanı Ordos bölgesindeki Türk egemenliğini kırmak üzere bu bölgeye yerleştirilmişler ve zaman içerisinde buradaki Türk ve diğer grupları da kontrolleri altına alarak başat güç haline gelmişlerdi. Tang hanedanının yıkılması izleyen yıllarda tarafsız bir politika izlemeye çalışan Tangutlar, zaman zaman Shatuo Türkleri ile çatışmaya girseler de Beş Hanedan döneminin iç savaşına dahil olmamışlar, bunun yerine kuzey ve batı yönünde genişlemeye çaba göstermişlerdir. Song Hanedanının Çin'i birleştirmesi ve Kitanların Liao hanedanını ilan etmesi takiben Li Yuanhao da

1038 yılında kendisini imparator ilan etmiş ayrıca Çin yazısını örnek olarak bir Tangut yazısı oluşturulmasını emretmiş ve Tangutlar pek çok Çince eseri Tangutçaya çevirerek kendi dillerinde eğitime başlamışlardır. Yeni kurulan hanedan kendisine Büyük Xia imparatorluğu demişse de komşuları olan Song ve Liao hanedanları Xi Xia (Batı Xia) olarak adlandırmış ve resmi yazışmalarda bu şekilde hitap etmişlerdir. Xi Xia Devleti Jin hanedanının kurularak Kuzey Çin'in tamamını istila edip Song hanedanı ile sınırını kesmesine kadar Liao ile Song hanedanları arasında Göktürk ile Tang hanedanları ile Tibetlilerin oynadığı bir üçlü denge rolünü üstlenmiştir. Her ne kadar tek başına iki hanedandan birisine karşı üstünlük kazanamasa da, Song yada Liao ile diğerine karşı ittifak kurması durumunda belirleyici rol oynayacak bir konumda olması Xi Xia'ya büyük önem kazandırmıştır. Ancak Jürçenler'in Liao hanedanını ve Kuzey Çin'i istilası sırasında da tıpkı beş hanedan döneminde yaptığı gibi tarafsız kalan Xi Xia devleti daha sonraki Moğol istilaları sırasında önce tarafsız kalmış daha sonrasında ise saflarına katıldığı Moğolları Song'a karşı savaş sırasında yüzüstü bırakmıştır. Tangutların bu istikrarsız politikasının arkasında o sırada içinde buldukları siyasi istikrarsızlığın ve saray içi mücadelelerin rolü var gibi görünmektedir. Özellikle Moğolların Jin ve Song hanedanlarını istilaları sırasında saray nazırı Asha Gambu'nun gücü ele geçirerek Moğol karşıtı bir politika izlemek istediği görülmektedir. Bu durumdan yararlanan Moğollar Tangutların parçalı yapısından yararlanarak Xi Xia devletine son vererek Tangutları egemenlikleri altına almışlardır.

Bugünkü Mançurya'nın kuzeyinde yaşayan ve Mançuların atası olduğu düşünülen Tunguz kökenli bir topluluk olan Jürçenler uzun tarihleri boyunca Goguryeo ve Balhae gibi Kore kökenli hanedanlar ile daha sonra Kitanların egemenliği altına girmişlerdir. Güneyde yaşayan ve doğrudan daha güneydeki Goguryeo, Balhae, Liao gibi devletlerin yönetimine giren Jürçenlere Liao hanedanı tarafından medeni Jürçen adı verilirken daha Kuzeyde yaşayan ve

güneyindeki devletlere yalnızca haraç verenlere yabancı Jürçen adı verilmiştir. Zaman içerisinde güçlenen kuzeydeki yabancı Jürçen topluluklarını birleştirmeyi başaran Aguda adlı klan lideri Liao hanedanına karşı bir isyan başlatarak kısa sürede Liao yönetiminden hoşnut olmayan diğer grupların da kendisine katılmasıyla Liao hanedanını yıkmayı başarmıştır. Bu süreçte Song Hanedanı da ittifak yapmak ve Liao hanedanının elindeki Çin yerleşimlerini almak amacıyla Jürçenler ile anlaşmışsa da savaş alanında Kitanlara karşı hiçbir varlık gösterememiştir. Ancak buna rağmen bu vilayetleri alabilmek için anlaşmaya uymayan Song hanedanı Jürçenlere saldırmış ve sonunda büyük bir yenilgiye uğrayarak başkenti Kaifeng'in yanı sıra Kuzey Çin'in tamamını kaybetmiştir. Ayrıca Liao hanedanına ödediği haraçtan daha yüksek bir meblağı da Jürçenlere ödemeyi kabul etmiş ve Liao ile eşit olduğunu kabul ettiği anlaşmanın tersine Jürçenlerin kurduğu Jin hanedanına vasal olduğunu da kabul etmek zorunda kalan Song hanedanı bu yenilgiden sonra giderek daha fazla içine kapanmaya başlamış neokonfüçyüsçülüğün de etkisine girerek yabancı kültürlerle ve yabancılarla ilişkilere daha kapalı bir hanedan halini almıştır. Jin hanedanı ise Mançurya ve Kuzey Çin ile yetinerek Kitanlar gibi doğu bozkırını doğrudan yönetmeye çalışmamış, bunun yerine buraları süzeren vasal ilişkisi ile dolaylı yoldan yönetmeye çalışmış ve buradaki kabileleri ve kabile federasyonlarını güçlenen bir grubun üzerine diğerlerini saldırtarak kontrol altında tutmaya çalışmıştır. Bu yöntem ise Cengiz Han önce Moğolları daha sonra tüm bozkır birleştirene kadar işe yaramışsa da Moğollar birleşik bir güç oldukları sırada kendisi hem ekonomik hem de siyasi bir bunalım içerisinde olan Jürçenler Moğollara karşı zamanında doğru tepkileri veremeyerek Moğollarla anlaşma yerine savaşa girmişler ve sonuçta uzun süren savaşlar sonunda Moğollar tarafından sona erdirilmişlerdir. Kitan ve Tangutlardan farklı olarak Jürçenler çok daha geniş bir yerleşik nüfusu kontrolleri altında tutmuşlar ve idari yapıyı tıpkı Kitanlar gibi ikili bir sistem altında tutmakla birlikte özellikle başkentin Kaifeng'a taşınması ve nüfusun çok büyük bir çoğunluğunun Çinli olması sonucu

giderek daha melez bir devlet haline gelmişlerdir. Daha sonradan Moğollarda daha detaylı olarak görülecek olan etnik ve yaşam tarzı temeline göre toplumu sınıflara ayırma uygulaması Jürçenler ile başlamıştır. Daha önce kendilerinin bir devlet kurma ve yönetme deneyimi olmayan Jürçenler ise bu konuda Çinlilere de güvenmekle birlikte daha çok Kitanları kendilerine örnek almışlardır ve Kitanlarla daha yakın olan geleneklerini Kitan meşruiyet araçları ile birleştirmişler bununla birlikte Çinli tebalarının gözünde de resmiyet kazanabilmek için Çinlilere ait unvan ve terimler kullanmışlarsa da Jin hanedanı devlet yapısı ve diğer hanedanlar ile ilişkilerdeki meşruiyet ve kendini konumlandırma duruşu daha çok bir Kitanlara benzemektedir. Kitan ve Jürçenlerin etnik kökenlerinin birbirlerinden farklı olduğu düşünülmektedir. Ayrıca Jürçenlerin bir orman halkı olmaları nedeni ile Kitanlar'dan ve kendilerini takip eden Moğollardan daha farklı bir devlet yapısı ve gelenekleri olduğu da varsayılmaktadır. Buna ek olarak modern tarih yazımında etnisite ön plana alarak birbirlerine komşu ancak farklı iklim ve yaşam koşulları ile farklı ekonomik üretim modelleri olan bu halkların temelde meşruiyet algılarının ve inanç sistemlerinin de birbirinden farklı olduğu varsayıp, ayrıca bu halkların kendilerinden “daha gelişmiş” Çin medeniyeti ile karşılaştıklarında Çin kültür havzası içerisinde asimile olarak erimelerinin ve Çin’e ait düşünce kalıpları, devlet yapısı ve meşruiyet modellerini kopya ettikleri varsayılmaktadır. Özellikle Çin tarihindeki kültürel ve düşünsel alandaki en gelişmiş hanedanlardan birisi olan Song hanedanının başkentini işgal ederek yerleşen ve göçebe Kitan komşuları için bile “geri kalmış” sayılabilecek Jürçenlerin Çin’e ait kültürü ve düşünce sistemlerini, idari yapı ve diğer pek çok karmaşık yapıyı birebir kopya ettiği varsayılmaktadır.

Oysa Jürçenler her ne kadar Jin hanedanını daha isyanlarının ilk aşamalarında ilan etmişler ve daha sonrasında da Çin tarzında hareket ediyor gibi görünmüşlerse de detaylı bir inceleme gösterecektir ki aslında kopya edilen Song

değil Kitan sistemidir. Hanedan siminin seçiminde dahi tıpkı Liao örneğinde olduğu gibi Jürçen halkının merkezine yakın olan nehrin adından hareketle Altın anlamına gele Jin seçilmesi tesadüfi değildir. Ayrıca Song hanedanı gibi tek bir başkent seçilmeyip Koreli devletlerden Kitanların devraldığı beş başkentli sistem devam ettirilmiştir ki bu da devlet yapısının Song hanedanındaki gibi merkezi bir yapıdan çok göçebe ve yerli nüfusları farklı idareler altında yöneten parçalı bir idari yapıya işaret etmektedir.

Buna ek olarak Jürçenler devirdikleri Kitan yönetimine imparatorun çekirdek ailesi dışında büyük ölçüde dokunmamışlar, hatta Kitan hanedan üyelerinin dahil olduğu Yelü ailesinden kişiler Jin hanedanının sona ermesine kadar devlet kademelerinde hizmet etmişlerdir. Bu durum ise tıpkı kendi içlerindeki Türkî ve Uygur unsurlardan yararlanarak devlet yapılarının yanı sıra meşruiyet temellerini de daha önceki Türk ve Uygur Kağanlıklarına dayandırması gibi Jürçenler de Kitanlar içerisindeki Kitan, Türk, Koreli ve Uygur unsurlardan yararlanarak devletlerinin temellerini ve meşruiyet zeminini Kitan modeline uygun olarak oturtmuşlardır. Karar alma mekanizmalarında daha sonra Moğollarda da görülen ancak daha öncesindeki göçebe hanedanlarda sıklıkla görülen kurultay toplama geleneği Jürçen hanedanının daha ilk kuruluş aşamasından itibaren uygulanmıştır. Her ne kadar zaman içerisinde yönetimde Çin tarzı bir idari bürokrasi özellikle Çinlilerin yoğun nüfuslu olduğu bölgelerde giderek daha hakim olmuş ve Jürçen yöneticileri bozkır geleneğinin yanı sıra Çin geleneklerini de benimsemeye başlamışlardır. Özellikle Song hanedanının başkenti olan Kaifeng'in Jin hanedanının merkezi başkenti yapılmasının sonucu olarak siyasi ağırlık giderek Çin yönüne kaymış devlet yapısı ve devlet yönetimindeki Jürçenler ve Kitanlar giderek daha fazla Çin kültürünü benimsemiştir. Ancak bu durum Jin hanedanın bozkırdaki göçebelerle ve diğer yerleşik komşularıyla olan ilişkilerini çok fazla değiştirmemiştir. Jin hanedanı Song hanedanı ile olan ilişkilerini tıpkı daha önceki Liao hanedanının yaptığı gibi hayali bir aile ilişkisi içerisine girmiş ve

Jürçen imparatorları Song imparatorları ile olan ilişkilerinde baba, abi ya da amca gibi görece daha üstün olan rolü üstlenmişlerdir. Buna karşılık Song hanedanından tıpkı Kitanların yaptığı gibi maddi bir getiri sağlayan ve devletin bürokrasi ve diğer alanlardaki para ihtiyacını karşılamaya yardımcı olan haraç talep etmekteydiler. Bu yönüyle Liao ve Jin hanedanlarının kendilerine bağlı olan devletlerden olan haraç talepleri Tang hanedanı ve diğer Çin kökenli hanedanlardan farklılık göstermektedir. Tang hanedanı komşusu olan ve kendisiyle ticari ve siyasi ilişkide bulunmak isteyen devletlerden kendi üstünlüğünün göstergesi olarak sembolik bir haraç almaktaydı ve karşılığında ise verilen haraçtan çok daha fazlasını karşı tarafa hediye olarak vermekteydi. Bu bağlamda Tang dönemindeki haraç ilişkisi bir nevi ticaret niteliği taşımaktaydı. Ancak Liao, Jin ve daha sonra kurulan Yuan hanedanlarında durum farklılık göstermekteydi. Kitanların başlattığı geleneği sürdüren Jürçenler komşularından gerçek anlamda maddi getiren haraç istemekteydiler. Bununla birlikte bozkır ile olan ilişkilerde ise bu bölgedeki göçebe kabileleri birleştirmekten alıkoymak temel Jürçen politikası olmuştur. Daha önce Tang hanedanının yaptığı gibi bir Jimi sistemi kurarak bu bölgedeki boyları para ve ipek gibi ihtiyaç duydukları şeyler karşılığında kendisine bağlamak ve bu bağlılığı satın almak yerine bu boyları birbirine karşı savaştırmayı ve böylelikle bir liderin sancağı altında birleşmelerini önlemeye çalışan bir politika izlemişlerdir. Ayrıca bu boylardan düzenli olarak vergi toplamak çok mümkün olmadığı için yerleşik devletlerden farklı olarak bu boylardan maddi değil manevi değeri olan ve bağlılık ve boyun eğme göstergesi olan haraçlar istenmiştir. Nitekim Moğollar ile Tatarlar arasında Cengiz Han dönemine kadar süren savaşların ve kan davasının temelinde de bu Jürçen politikaları yatmaktaydı. Ancak 13. yüzyıla gelindiğinde gerek Song hanedanı ile savaşlar gerekse diğer iç sorunlar sonucunda bozkırdaki Jürçen etkisi eskisi kadar başarılı değildi. Temel politika olarak güçlenen bir boya ya da boy birliğine karşı diğer boylara destek olarak onun gücünü kırıp daha sonra ise bu sistemi dönüşümlü olarak güçlenen her gruba karşı uygulamayı güden Jürçenler Cengiz

Han'ı da manevi babası Onghan Tuğrul ile birlikte güçlenen Tatarlara karşı desteklemişse de daha sonrasında Timuçin adını taşıyan ancak daha sonra toplanan büyük Kurultay'da Cengiz adını alacak olan Moğol liderinin güçlenmesi aşamasında onu durdurmaya engel olmamış görünmektedir. Cengiz Han kendisi tüm boyları birleştirerek sonunda Jin hanedanına saldırana kadar kendisine karşı Jin hanedanı diğer boylarla bir ittifak kurmamış görünmektedir. Nitekim bunun sonucu olarak da birleşik bir cephe oluşturabilen bozkır göçebeleri önce Jin sonra da Harzemşah devletlerinin sonunu getirip son olarak Kubilay Han döneminde ise Song hanedanını fethederek Balkanlardan Pasifik okyanusu kıyılarına kadar uzanan bir imparatorluk kurmuşlardır.

Çin kaynaklarında daha önceki kısa süreli Xianbei hanlığının bir parçası olarak görülen Moğollar Cengiz Han dönemine kadar çok önemli olmayan bir grup olarak bozkırda hâkim güçlerin egemenliği altında yaşamaktaydılar. Buldukları bölge bozkırın bitimi ile Sibirya'daki ormanlık alanın başladığı sınır bölgesine yakın görece merkezden uzak bir sınır bölgesiydi. Uygurların Moğolistan'ı boşaltmasından itibaren bölgedeki Uygur Hanlığının yıkılması ve Kitanlarla kurulan ittifak neticesinde giderek güçlenen Moğollar Kabul Han ve Abagai Han dönemlerinde giderek daha önemli bir güç haline gelmeye başlamışlarsa da hem Kitan Liao Hanedanının Jürçenler tarafından yıkılması hem de Tatarlar ile süregelen mücadelede Jürçenlerin Tatarlara destek vermesi sonucunda birliklerini koruyamamışlar ve boylara bölünerek önemlerini yitirmişlerdir. Ancak Cengiz Han'ın babası olan Yesügei Moğolları yeniden birleştirme yolunda adımlar atmış, Cengiz'i küçüklüğünde başka bir boyun beyinin kızıyla nişanlayarak evlilik ittifakları kurmuş ve diğer boylarla da ittifaklar kurmuşsa da Tatarlar tarafından zehirlenmiş ve ölümünden sonra başta Taiyciutlar olmak üzere çevrelerindeki boylar Yesügei'yin ailesini terk etmişlerdir. Moğollar Tayciut kabilesi etrafında gevşek bir grup olarak varlıklarını sürdürürken Cengiz babasının yaşadığı dönemde kurduğu

ittifaklardan yararlanarak yeniden etrafında bir grup toplamayı başararak uzun süren savaşlar ve ittifaklar neticesinde önce Moğolları daha sonra da bu bölgedeki diğer boyları birleştirmeyi başarmıştır. İlk iş olarak bozkırdaki birliği bozma politikasını hayata geçirmeden Jin hanedanına saldıran Cengiz Han, Harzemşah Devleti ile de ittifak kurmuşsa da Harzemşahların Moğol Elçisini öldürmesi ve ittifakı bozması üzerine Harzemşahlar üzerine yürüyüp Jin Hanedanı ile olan savaşı devam ettirmesi için de en tecrübeli komutanlarını görece daha küçük bir birlikle geride bırakmıştır. Bu arada daha önce Moğollara boyun eğen Tangut Xi Xia devletinin içerideki iç karışıklıklar neticesinde politikasını değiştirerek Moğollara saldırması sonucu Harezmi seferi sonrasında Tangutlar üzerine yürüyen Cengiz Han bu sefer sırasında yaralanarak ölmüştür. Çok kısa süre içerisinde çok geniş bir alana yayılmayı başaran Cengiz Han'ın bu başarıları genellikle onun askeri dehasına ve Moğolların Askeri gücüne dayandırılmaktadır. Oysa Cengiz Han daha babasının ölümünden başlayarak çevresine insanları toplayabilmek için eski bozkır geleneklerine uygun meşruiyet iddialarını kullanmak zorundaydı. Nitekim gençlik yıllarında askeri alanda yenilgiler almasına rağmen örneğin andası Jamuka'ya yenilmesinden sonra olduğu gibi bir Handan geleneksel bozkır söyleminde beklenen davranışları gösterip kut aldığını belirterek yenilmesine rağmen kazanan tarafın adamlarını kendi tarafına çekmeyi başarmıştır. Daha sonrasında ise yendiği boyları kendi tarafında tutmaya ikna etmek ve Harezmi gibi Türki kökenli bölgelerin de kontrolünü sağlamak için yalnızca askeri güce dayanması Moğolların sayıca çok az olmasından ötürü son derece zordu. Bugün Tarihçiler Moğol İmparatorluğunu genellikle bir Türk-Moğol ortak girişimi olarak görmektedirler. Bunda Moğol ordusu, idaresi ve devlet kademelerinde Türklerin sayıca çoğunluğu oluşturmalarının yanı sıra Moğolların da meşruiyet zeminlerini ve ideolojilerini eski Türk geleneklerine ve iddialarına dayandırmalarının rolü oldukça büyüktür. Böylelikle kendi içlerindeki Türki boylara da meşruiyetlerini kabul ettirmek için ortak bir zemin de bulmuş olmaktadır. Bu dönemde Türki kavimlerin bir kısmı

Müslüman bir kısmı da Budist oldukları için dil ve etnik birliği de olmayan Moğollar açısından kut fikri ve bunun çevresindeki meşruiyet sembolleri daha birleştirici bir unsur olarak ortaya çıkmaktadır. Bununla birlikte Moğolların Türk Kağanlığının ve Uygur Kağanlığının yıkılmasından birkaç yüz yıl sonra arada hiçbir bağlantı olmadan bu gelenekleri hatırlayarak öne sürmüş olmaları da tarihsel açıdan çok mümkün görünmemektedir. Daha önceki bölümlerde de belirtildiği gibi hem Kitanlar hem de Jürçenler ve Moğollara doğrudan komşu olan Tangutlar bu gelenekleri hali hazırda bir süreklilik içerisinde devam ettirmektedirler. Nitekim Moğolların Kitanlar ve Jürçenlerden bunun dışında da pek çok idari ve yasal uygulamayı da devralmışlardır. Örneğin bir Moğol icadı gibi görülen darugacı sistemi aslen Kitanlardan miras kalmış ve Moğollar tarafından da devam ettirilmiştir. Bunun yanı sıra Moğollar kut alma iddiasını da tıpkı Jin hanedanı gibi yalnızca göçebe bozkır kavimlere değil yerleşik dünyaya da yaymışlardır. Daha önceki Türk Kağanlığında kut alan lider yalnızca bozkırda egemenlik iddia eder Çin'i fethetme ya da egemenlik altına alma iddiasında olmazken Jin Hanedanında ve Moğollarda bu durum farklılık göstermektedir. Bunda ise özellikle Moğolların Jin Hanedanını fethetmesinin etkili olduğu görülmektedir. Cengiz döneminde henüz yalnızca göçebe boylar üzerinde egemenlik kurup Jin ve Xi Xia gibi yerleşik devletlerden yalnızca haraç alma politikası güdülmekteydi ki bu durum Türklere daha yakındı. Oysa daha sonra Jin Hanedanının tamamen fethedilmesi sonucunda bu bölgelerin de yönetici sınıfı Moğollara katılmış ve ünlü komutanların yanı sıra Yelü Chucai gibi yöneticiler de Moğol hizmetine gerek Jin Hanedanının idari sisteminin yanı sıra yönetim felsefesini de Moğollara öğretmişlerdir. Bu bağlamda bakıldığında Moğol devleti yönetici durumundaki Moğol, Türk, Jürçen ve Kitanların yönetim felsefelerinin bir birleşimi ile yönetilmekte ve meşruiyetini değişik kaynaklardan almaktaydı denilebilir. Bu durum Kubilay Han döneminin sonuna kadar devam etmiş ve Kubilay Han'dan sonraki Yuan imparatorlarının büyük Han'dan çok Çin İmparatoru gibi hareket etmeleri sonucunda değişmiştir. Ancak Kubilay

döneminin incelenmesi gösterecektir ki Kubilay Han bir Çin imparatorundan daha çok bir Moğol Hanı, bir bozkır yöneticisi gibi davranmaktadır. Devletin idari yapısında her ne kadar Çin modelleri de ele alınmaya başlanmışsa da yönetim kademesine kişilerin etnik kökeni ve yaşam tarzı temel alınarak yapılan sınıflandırmaya göre kişiler yerleştirilmiş. En üstte Moğollar, onların altında Kitan, Jürçen, Türk ve diğer orta Asyalılar onların altında Kuzey Çinliler ve en altta ise Güney Çinliler yer almıştır. Bu sistem Jürçen sisteminin devamıdır ve sanıldığı gibi bir Moğol icadı değildir. Kubilay Han hem bu sistemi devam ettirerek meşruiyetini de daha çok Konfüçyüsçü değil bozkır geleneklerine dayandırmış, hem de dış politikasında gerek Kore ile kurduğu evlilik ilişkisi, gerekse Japonya, Vietnam, Burma gibi ülkelerin hükümdarlarının kendisinin kut ve yönetici vasıflarını tanımamaları durumunda askeri müdahaleden çekinmemesi ile Doğu Asya’da bozkır geleneklerinin meşruiyet ve kabulünü yaymaya çalışmıştır. Her ne kadar Çinli tebaasına da hoşnut edebilmek için tıpkı Kitan ve Jürçenlerin yaptığı gibi bir hanedan adı alarak Yuan hanedanını ilan etmişse de Çin unvanları kullanmak ve zaman zaman Çin sembollerine atıfta bulunmak dışında düşünce yapısının temeli itibariyle bir bozkır göçebesi olarak kalmış, hatta Kuzey Çin’i talan ederek Moğol atları için otlığa çevirmekten kendisini karısı alıkoymuştur.

Tüm bunlar göz önüne alındığında Doğu Asya’da Türk ve Uygur Kağanlıkları sonrasında 10.yüzyıldan başlayarak 14. yüzyıla kadar süregelen dönemde art arda kurulan hanedanların kaotik bir şekilde ve tamamen bir barbar istilası şeklinde gerçekleşmeyip düzenli ve bilinçli bir sürecin ürünü olduğu görülmektedir. Her ne kadar farklı etnik gruplara dahil hanedanların kurulması etnik gruplar arasında etnisite ve dil temelli bir savaş varmış görüntüsü çizmekteyse de daha önceki hanedanların yöneticilerinin yeni hanedanın da yönetim kademelerinde oldukları ve farklı etnik gruplara ait boyların da varlıklarını sürdürdükleri görülmektedir. Bu bağlamda bakıldığında, Kuzey’de

bozkırda meydana gelen deęişiklikler de tıpkı Güney'deki Çin sahasında meydana gelenler gibi belli bir düzen içerisinde olduęu ve düzenin bozularak kaosun hüküm sürmeye başladığı dönemlerde buradaki boylar arasında yeniden birlięi ve düzeni sağlayabilecek liderlerin yalnız askeri güç deęil meşruiyet koşullarını da sağlayarak bozkırı birleştirdiğı görülmektedir. Bu boyların tıpkı aynı dönemde Anadolu, İran ve Doęu Avrupa'da olduęu gibi yerleşik bölgelere yayılarak yönetim kurmaları da her ne kadar idari sistemde deęişikliklere yol açsa da meşruiyet ve devlet geleneklerini deęiştirmedeği görülmektedir. Bunun sonucu olarak modern tarihçilikte klasik Çin tarihyazımının etkisi ile gelişen barbar göçebe imajının o kadar da doęru olmadığı görülmektedir. Bu göçebe hanedanlar Çin içerisine yerleştikleri dönemde sanılanın aksine tek taraflı olarak Çin kültürüne asimile olmamaktaydılar. Bu çalışmada da görüldüğü üzere kendi gelenek ve düşüncelerini de gerek Çinlilere gerekse komşularına aktarmak yoluyla bir karışım elde etmekteydiler ve ortaya yeni bir düzen çıkarmışlardı. Nitekim bugün Çin'deki vilayet sisteminden bazı dięer hukuk ve idari uygulamalara, modern edebiyatın doğuşundan modern Çince'nin doğuşuna kadar pek çok gelişmenin temeli bu dönemde atılmıştır.

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