

## **The Problems Of Uighur (Uygur) Kagan Family**

Saadettin GÖMEÇ\*  
Hamiyet SEZER\*\*

### **Abstract**

Uighurs, by following Kok Turks, who was the extention of Hun State, reigned the Turkish State and nation for a definite time, as it is known. As long as they reigned the Turkish State, Turks developed in cultural aspect considerably. They took an important part in Turkish history with their products and Works on the areas like literature, art of drawing, sculpture, architecture and writing. Although their importance is not being ignored on this subject; the uprightness or faultiness of some deeds they fulfilled are stil being discussed, one of which is their leaving the belief of Kok Tengri and joining the beliefs like Buddhism and Maniheism. They failed to protect the historical Turkish homeland, Otuken, so they caused Otuken tobe foreign people's possession and they have changed the progress of Turkish history.

**Key Words:** Uighur, Uighur Family, Uighur Kaghanate

### **Uygur Kağan Ailesinin Problemleri**

#### **Özet**

Uygur Kağanlığı, Tokuz-Uygur boyundan Yaglakar ailesi tarafından tesis edilmişse de, onların iktidarları ancak 779'a kadar, yani 30 yıl civarında sürmüştür. Ayrıca zaman zaman İl Ögesi Inançu Bilge örneğinde olduğu gibi Ediz boyundan birisinin de iktidara çıktığı iddiasında bulunuluyorsa da, Tokuz-Uygur aileleri içerisinde Ediz ismini göremiyoruz. Dolayısıyla bu fikre de tereddütle bakmalıyız.

**Anahtar Kelimeler :** Uygur, Uygur Ailesi, Uygur Kağanlığı

Before delving into the main content of this article, we reveal a short finding about Uighurs. Following Kok Turks as a part of Huns, Uighur Turks had ruled the Turkish nation and society for a certain time. During their rule, the Turks culturally

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\* Prof.. Dr. Ankara University, Faculty of Humanities, Department of History.

\*\* Assoc. Prof. Dr., Ankara University, Faculty of Humanities, Department of History.

improved. With the works they displayed in the fields of literature, drawing, sculpture, and architecture, and toolsthey gained a recognizable place in history. In this regard, while not neglectingtheir importance, historians has discussed the accuracy or fallacy of some of their works in regard to the belief of Kok Tengri. Uighurs accepted different beliefs like Buddhism and Manicheism. Because Uighurs were not governing the Turkish Homeland, Otuken, foreign societies took over Otuken and changed the motion of Turkish history.

When we look up the Turkish documents,we firstly see the ethnic name of Uighur on the Orkun Inscriptions, which were scraped on the stones in the eighth century or we called them as Kok Turk Inscriptions, In 716 the name of Uighur il-teber was not known. After the death of Kapgan Kagan, his sons Ini Il Kagan, Köl Tigin and Bilge, had a conflict. Taking advantage of the chaos, Uighur il-teber revolted and finally with suffering causalitiesescaped to China. About this matter Bilge Kagan says on the Kok Turk Inscriptions“*Walking down Selenge, at Kargan Kıtıl defeated his family-home,Uighur il-teber escaped and went to east with a hundred soldiers*”<sup>1</sup>. After that, as long as Kok Turks were powerful, the rebellion of Uighurs was not mentioned.

With this, we coincide the name of Uighur at another inscription<sup>2</sup>. We do not cover the meaning of Uighur name or its etymology. But we agree with the idea that it is useful to think the meaning of the surname of family, which was the founder of Uighur Khaganate. About this matter, especially Karabalsagun Inscription leads us. It was said that Uighurs consisted of nine families on Chinese part of mentioned epigraph and enumerated their names one by one. Therefore, in spite of not being deducted some of the discussed surnames’ Turkish compensations here, there are presumptions about some parts of it that according to some scholars who make research about this matter, Uighur families are these: 1- Yüe-lo-ko (Yaglakar), 2- Hu-to-ko (Uturkar), 3- To-lo-wu/ Hou (Tulku/ Kürebir), 4- Mo-ko-si-k’i (Bagasıkır), 5- A-wu-ti (Evirtı/ Ebirçeg), 6- Ko-sa (Kasar), 7- Hu-wu-su (Buguz), 8- Yüe-wu-ku (Yuvarkar/ Yagmurkar), 9- Hi-ye-wu (Aymur/ Eymür)<sup>3</sup>. And also their leadership belonged to the Yaglakar family<sup>4</sup>. To the

<sup>1</sup> See, **Bilge Kagan Inscription**, East side, 37th line.

<sup>2</sup> See, S.Gömeç, **Uygur Türkleri Tarihi ve Kültürü**, 2nd Edition, Ankara 2000, p.11-12.

<sup>3</sup> J.R.Hamilton, “Toquz-Oguz et On Uygur”, **Journal Asiatique**, Tom. 250, Paris 1962, p.41-43; M.T.Liu, **Die Chinesischen Nachrichten zur Geschichte der Ost-Türken (T’u-Küe)**, Buch 2, Wiesbaden 1958, p.593; B.Ögel, “Şine Usu Yazıtının Tarihi Önemi”, **Belleten**, Vol. 15, Ankara 1951, p.361; E.G.Pulleyblank, “Some Remarks on the Toquzoghuz Problem”, **Ural-Altische Jahrbücher**, 28/1-2, Wiesbaden 1956, p.39-40.

For example, T.Senga, does not adopt that Kasars are a minor group of Uighurs (See, T.Senga, “The Toquz Oghuz Problem and the Origin of the Khazars”, **Journal of Asian History**, Wiesbaden 1990, p.61-62).

opinions of some researchers, some of these nine Uighur societies' names are not Turkish. But for us, all of these are Turkish. The discussion is that the transcriptions in Chinese and Hotan writings, which mention about nine Uighur societies, cannot be understood. This is very normal because these foreign sources, which open up Turks, change Turkish names into their own sound structure and it causes some intricate problems . If it is investigated carefully, some of the families which are mentioned here are very known clans. For example, sometimes Kasars built their own city and after that Eymürs took place in twenty-four Oguz branches.

Also, it is said that the builder of Uighur Khaganate, Yalgakar family is related with Kök Turk Börülü family<sup>5</sup> but we do not know its degree. The name of this family, Yaglakar is a name related with the verb 'rain' or 'yagi' which means enemy, or it is a term related to the verb 'flatter' (flatter something), which finds place in the belief of Ancient Turks that it is not possible to imply a certain thing. But to explain this matter a little bit, we can make an explanation about ancient Turkish belief. In ancient Turkish belief, there were bloodless sacrifices besides bloody sacrifices. Ceremonies like saci, yalma (rags which are tied to the trees or cam's drum), to cast oil to the fire, flattering the edges of roots and aspersing kırmız are these bloodless sacrifices. Accordingly, they could make this flattering act in religious ceremonies. We know that in the Turkish name giving tradition, , the occupation of the family could become their surnames and appellations after that.

After some historic events, there was a chaos in the Uighur Khanagate in 779. At that time, some people and advisors from Sogd origin confused the mind of leader Bögü Kagan and put pressure on him to conquer China. . But by the way, Tonga (Tun) Baga Tarkan, one of the ministers and delegates from the national power in the country, said him to advise: Tang is a great country. In addition, he does not damage us now. Last year, we entered in T'ai-yüan, captured thousands of horses and sheeps. But when we came to our country, we suffered from our injuries. If we could not get back with our full power after assaulting China, how will we return this time? Accordingly, he and people like him

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Eymürs which seem to be the last one of nine Uighur branches, come up among Oghuz branches. In Reşideddin's Oguz-nâme and Yazıcıoğlu's Selçuk-nâmesi from Uç Ok stems, Tag Han is his son.

<sup>4</sup> Being the family which Uighur family connected, they are relatives Kök Türk Börülü (Aşina) family. Yaglakar name is mentioned in Mani and Tibet's writings, too. In the writings which are called it, Yaglakar was transcribed as *yahedaka'r ve yagleker* .See, Ö.İzgi, **Kutluk Bilge Kül Kagan-Bögü Kagan ve Uygurlar**, Ankara 1986, p.16; Ögel, **the article above**, p.362; J.Bacot, "Reconnaissance en Haute Asie Septentrionale par Cinq Envoyes Ouigours au VIII e Siecle", **Journal Asiatique**, Tom. CCXLIV, Paris 1956, p.141; H.W.Bailey, "The Stael-Holstein Miscellany", **Asia Major**, Vol. 2, London 1951-52, p.3.

<sup>5</sup> See, İzgi, **i.b.**, p.16.

did not want to waste the opportunity to attack China. But Kagan did not lead them. Because his proposal was rejected Tonga (Tun) Baga Tarkan, killed Böğü Kagan with a beat. Besides he slaughtered Kagan's relatives, servants, Sodgs, who excited against China and 2000 people with him<sup>6</sup>.

When thinking logically, it is not a useful act to capture a country like China. Turks had seized this opportunity lots of times since the age of Huns but China is a country which corresponded their several needs, it was thought that their existence was essential. Considering the intrigues of Sodgs in the Turkish State, we can state that, although they strenghtened the Turkish State politically, the act was not rational. Both before and after the Uighurs, the Turkish States often used Sodgs and societies alike them, maybe because of their commercial talent and being multilingual especially in foreign affairs. When they attempted to interfere in state affairs as did in the example above, they were excluded.

In Böğü Kagan's time, with the arising of a lot of political events, there were some important changes in the lifestyle, traditions and customs for Uighurs. Since they carried on a business with Chinese, they got used to be pageantry. Kagan started to live in palaces by placing himself above the society. The emperor whom source of power was society's itself scorned them. The woman who had made war on horses when it was necessary, had gone to herds, wanted to imitiate to make up and worn fashionably. When all these changes were happening, Tonga (Tun) Baga Tarkan came from outside of Yaglakar family and acceded to the throne of Uighur. Maybe this event is A-shih-te (Aslanlar) family's taking head for the first time in history<sup>7</sup>.

Once Tonga (Tun) Baga Tarkan died in 789, his son Külüg Baga replaced him for nearly a year but he had been killed by his brother in 790. At those years both in Chinese resources and Turkish documents, we came across an important personality. It was province administer Inançu Bilge, the chief-commander. While all those events were happening, province administor Inançu Bilge was on an expedition to put down the Tibet revolt. Before he came back to his country, his commanders – agitating to people- killing the one who seized the throne, gave the crown to Külüg Bilge's son<sup>8</sup>. During that ruler's

<sup>6</sup> Gömeç, *i.b.*, p.47-48.

<sup>7</sup> In Turkish culture, in our culture, two animals have great importance. One of these is wolf (kurt or börü), the other is lion (arслан or bars=tonga) and everybody adopts Aşina's connect with wolf. The lion must, most probably, be the symbol of A-shih-te family. See, S.Gömeç, "Kök Börüler ve Arslanlar", **Göktürk Devleti'nin 1450. Kuruluş Yıldönümü**, Sempozyum Bildirileri, Ankara 2001.

<sup>8</sup> See, Gömeç, *i.b.*, p.51; S.Gömeç, "Türk Tarihinin Kahramanları: 24- Tun Baga Tarkan", **Orkun**, Number 82, İstanbul 2004.

time, who was mentioned as “Kutlug Bilge” in Karabalgasun Inscription, and also known as A-çor Kagan, province administer Inançu Bilge was the most powerful person. Although he had such a power, he never tried to seize the throne like some other Turkish viziers, taking part of the Turkish history occasionally. He always showed his loyalty to his country and supported his kagan. Moreover, according to the resources, he shared all his wealth with his commanders. According to our determinations, A-çor Inscription found in 1857 was written in the name of the province administer Inançu Bilge and it was told that he had countless properties and worked for his country without boredom; and his commanders’ virtuousness was placed in the inscription, too<sup>9</sup>.

Kutlug Bilge died in 795 when he was very old. He had not named his successor. Hence even for a short while there was commotion for the throne. It was told that Kutlug was from the Ediz clan, one of his ministers, had stand for him. Besides not being from Yaglakar family, he was believed to be Tonga (Tun) Baga Kagan’s grandson and also former Uighur Kagan’s adoptee<sup>10</sup>. Consequently Kutlug Kagan is probably from A-Shis is very strong. We think “Hsieh-tieh”, which is remembered to be Kutlug’s clan in Chinese papers, translated as Ediz, but there is not any clue that Hsieh-tieh<sup>11</sup> means Ediz. Contrary to Chinese resources, in Karabalgasun Inscription it was written he was a “tigin” that he was the oldest of all tigin before Alp Bilge Kagan ascended the throne. Governors, viziers –inner and outer- warlords and all officials present and ask like this: When Gök Kagan was on a high position, there were lots of viziers. Now Alp Kagan has the power to govern. He has a heart as deep as a sea, as high as a mountain. State is a great complete. Consequently, rules and laws must be clear<sup>12</sup>. According to the inference we get from these sentences, although the kagan is the authority, he has to obey the

<sup>9</sup> See, **A-çor Yazıtı**.

Also see, L.N.Gumilev, **Drevniye Tyurki**, Moskva 1967, p.425.

<sup>10</sup> B.Ögel, **Türk Kültürünün Gelişme Çağları**, 3rd edition, İstanbul 1988, p.186; E.Baytur, **Şincan’daki Milletlerin Tarihi**, Ürimçi 1991, p.489; Ögel, **the article above**, p.363.

According to Mackerras, this kagan’s who is from Ediz branch, province administer must be Inançu Bilge. New Kagan is a person who is talkative in state affairs and a great fighter. From the time of Tonga (Tun) Baga Tarkan he had a structure which remains in possession of army and powerful. All great rulers and administrators had fears about him (C.Mackerras, “The Uighurs”, **Early Inner Asia**, Edited by D.Sinor, Cambridge 1990, p.318-319; S.G.Klyashorniy–T.İ.Sultanov, **Türkün Üçbin Yılı**, Trans. A.Batur, İstanbul 2003, p.120). But for us, as we explained above, his Province administer Inançu Bilge could not have advanced a claim about being khan (for this also see, S.Gömeç, “Türk Tarihinin Kahramanları: 26- İl Ögesi Inançu Bilge”, **Orkun**, Number 85, İstanbul 2005).

<sup>11</sup> G.Çandarlıoğlu, **Ötüken Bölgesindeki Büyük Uygur Kaganlığı (744-840)**, Associate professorship thesis, İstanbul 1972, p.132.

Great intellectual B.Ögel specifies that Hsieh family is the elders of Tunyukuk. See, B.Ögel, **Sino-Turcica**, Taipei 1964, p.30.

<sup>12</sup> See, **Karabalgasun Inscription**, Line 12.

morals and customs in order to have a good management. But what is important to us is calling him as “tigin” and that shows dead kagan or the ones before him were closely relatives. As a result, it is impossible for us to say that province administer was the ruler. However, there is just a fact that after Tonga (Tun) Baga, Yaglakars did not probably have a voice in the administration anymore.

After Uighur kagan Kutlug’s death in 805, Alp Külüg Kagan ascended the throne. Remaining in power till 808, this ruler left the throne to Alp Külüg Bilge Kagan. After his death in 821, Küçlüg Bilge Kagan became the ruler of the Uighur people and as his son probably deviated from orders, his brother stood for him. Küçlüg Bilge –Uighur kagan-died in 824. After Küçlüg Bilge, his brother Kasar (Hazar) Tigin headed the Uighur state. The name of Kasar Tigin attracted our attention. Plainly beginning from Tonga (Tun) Boga Tarkan, Uighur Yaglakar clan lost his ground and could not have a kagan in power anymore. We can get two points from the name Kasar Tigin: the first one is both Kasar Tigin and his brother are from Tokuz Uighur clan of Hazars. The second one is because of Küçlüg Bilge’s sending one of his brothers onto Kasars, his brother may have taken this name, too. However, as the probability of that Hu Tigin, who would get the throne after Kasar Tigin, was probably from Hun (Kürebir) was very strong, the accuracy of the first idea is nearly certain<sup>13</sup>.

In 832 Kasar Kagan was murdered by his own men and Hu Tigin stood for him. He was probably from Kürebir family of Tokuz Uighur clan. Hu Kagan committed suicide when he was betrayed by his own senior brothers. After Hu Khan, Kasar Tigin II. assumed the kagan title. For this reason, his name cannot be seen in the Chinese annuals. When he ascended the throne, An-yün ho and Ch’ai-ts’ao – Uighur ministers-plotted against him to over throw her from his throne. Kasar Kagan had them killed as he learned their plans. In retaliation Kürebir Urungu Sangun, another Uighur minister, killed Kasar Khan in 839. A famous Uighur commander Külüg Baga Sagun did not approve of that act. He escaped to Kyrgyzstan and marched back to the Uighur capital with a 100,000 Kirghiz cavalry<sup>14</sup>, defeated Uighur ministers in 840 and he killed Kürebir Urungu Sangun with Lu-chi Tigin. After these events Uighurs dispersed to different parts of Asia. They established their authority in two main areas; in Kansu and Turfan.

In conclusion, we can say that if Uighur Khaganate was founded by Yaglakars, from Tokuz Uighur clan, their power had banished in 30 years, by 779. Furthermore, it is claimed that someone from Ediz clan was in power as it was the case in the province administer Inançu Bilge example; we cannot see Ediz name in Tokuz Uighur families. So we consider the idea above questionable. In summary, after Bögü’s administration, it is

<sup>13</sup> Gömeç, *i.b.*, p.58-59.

<sup>14</sup> Gömeç, *i.b.*, s.59-60.

obvious that Uighur Khanagate changed hands among different families, accordingly they did not maintain the authority, which was established by Kok Turks in Asia, and they disappeared within the chaos.

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