

## Turkmens' History

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**Abstract:** Getting acquaintance with background and history of different tribes is so attractive and can learn some lessons from it to achieve life aims. Turkmen tribe has one of the most attractive historical background that in this essay it is tried to investigate about this by reference to the books and works that describe Turkmen's history, generally Turkmen's history is divided to two parts. One is the mythical and fabulous period of Turkmen's that considered the pedigree of this tribe from Adam to Oghuz Khan, who is the common ancestor of all Turkmen's, and the second historical period is divided to three periods of nomadism, migration to Turkmenistan and Iran's Turkmen Sahara and the period after formal delimitation between Iran and Russia, Turkmen's condition in each of these periods is considered and turned into the today geographical condition. Generally Turkmen's don't have a very unsuitable condition during the history and they were migrating constantly.

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### 1. Introduction

Turkmens are a group of yellow-skinned people of Middle Asia that for some natural and social reasons rushed toward the south, this group was reside in Turkmenistan and Iran's Turkmen Sahara and also some of them lived in Afghanistan, China, Iraq and Turkey (Irons, 1982).

Undoubtedly each tribe or family has a pedigree and one of the most important aims of anthropology, is recognition of origin and pedigree of different tribes.

Turkmen tribe as one of the most attractive tribes in the world has a historical background that in this essay it is tried to consider and study the history of this tribe by reference to the existed documents in the libraries.

#### Turkmens' background

About nine centuries before the birth of Christ Turks lived in Turkistan, west of China, south of Mongolia, north of Caspian Sea, and the old Iran, they established a big empire that was named "Goug Turks" and its place was in "Arkhoon", their first ruler was named "Bomin". Later Turks were divided to two groups, the western Turks and eastern Turks (552 A.D.) then they united each other and create the greatest empire in the Asia's history and in some of the Islam's histories named them as Yäjün, Mäjün, Khezrs, Sakaes and etc, the western Turks were named as Huns, and Bejnaks and the eastern Turks were named Tafghaes, Bashgirds and thousands other named. The eastern Turks were divided to some groups such as Oguzes, Ghare Ghalbaghs, Quzes, Cossacks, Uzbeks, Kirghizia, and Tatars. The present Turkmen's are from eastern Oguzes and Azerbaijan's Turks are from western Turks, in the first Islamic

centuries some of these Turks came down from the south of Mongolia and west of China toward the south this immigrant group of Turks were Oguzes or Quzes that later were named "Turkmen" and because of rough and abnormal nature of Sin city and ruination of Amu Darya river and Syr Darya, Ghare Ghom, Ghezel Ghom, and Dast Ghobchagh region, they stayed near the Turkmenistan and current Turkmen Sahara in Iran. Nowadays they live in the north of Khorasan in Iran, in the plain of Turkmen Sahara, a wide area of Turkmenistan's land, a large part of Afghanistan and China's land (Ahmadi, 1996).

In the year 630 A.D. eastern Turks and in the year 659 the western Turks were governed by Chinese but after a short period, in 630 A.D. "Ghotlogh Khan" from Bomin's generation established Turks' government again. At last Goug Turk's governorship was overturned in 754 A.D. by Oyguz Khan (Kalteh, 1995).

Some historians believe that Oguzes are ancestors of all these Turks: Oguz, Oiguz, Onagh, Gharlogh (Ghaznavids are from this tribe), Ghotlogh, Gheimagh, Kirghizia, Khataiee, Tatar, Turkmen, Uzbek, Seljuk, Ghare Ghoyenlou, Safari, Afshar, and Qajar (Lokashva, 1978).

Oguzes resided in Tola (Toghla) coasts in the part of the river that was directly toward the North, in petrographs Oguzes is introduced a tribe that lived in the north. Their eastern neighbor was Tatars. Since they consisted of 4 tribes they were named Toghuz Oghuz (9 Oghuz), from these 9 tribes only the name of two tribes, with names of Ghuni and Tongra tribes, is available.

Oguzes were a tribe of 9 Toghuz tribes of area, and they form a main part of eastern Turk's

union and in Urkhon's inscription they were named oguzes, it is written in Hodood-ol-Alam book that "kings of all the old Turkistan were from Toguz Guz, and Toguz Guzes had close relationships with Oighuzes. Of course some historians believed that Toguz Oguz and ün Oiguz is one tribe and it is surprising that Oguz Khan's tribe that lived in Tola coasts and consists 9 groups and accepted allegiance of Khaghan, was distinguished from Oiguzes who lived in Silenka coasts and consisted of ten groups and were ruled by governors with the title of Ill Teber. Undoubtedly they were two distinct tribes (Sarly, 1998).

In the second century A.H. the Oguzes union migrated from the centre of eastern Turks, Urkhon area, to the west till the Aral and Syr Darya and in their way reach to Jeihoon, Ghare Ghom and Dehestan plains (in Caspian shores), in later half of 4th century A.D. the phrase of Turkmen was used in Islamic sources. Moghdas talked about two places in Transoxiana as the defensive matters against Turkmen. As it is written by Turkmen's history compiler; in one inscription of Yeni Seie that belongs to the seventh century A.D. we see the word "Quz" (Guz) for the first time. It is indicated from this inscription that Quzes at first lived in the coast of "Balk River" and consisted of six tribes. Then in the second half of that century they migrated to the coast of Tola River, in that area they consisted of nine tribes or families. The leader of "Toguz Guz" was "Alp Tooran" that died when he was 23 years old, then Guzes were divided to two "Ouj ugh" and "Bozavegh" tribes and 24 family, and Oguz Khan was their leader. Oguz Khan has 24 son and they are all the today Turkmen. Each family has a special title and Oguz Khan conquered the west areas, Turkestan, Damascus and Egypt and after adding these areas to his country came back to "Yourt", his main domain in "urtagh" and "Kertagh" and divided his bow and arrow between them, the sons of his generation who took bow from him titled "Bouzagh" that means tear and the right side of army entrusted to them and the children that were born from the generation who had taken arrow were named "uch ough" or (three arrows) and took the left side of the army. After the death of Oguz Khan one of his boys by the name of "Gun Khan" became ruler and he had a wise minister who was named "Ikit Erghil Khoje" and one day this minister said to Gun Khan, in order to avoid taking place hostility among your children for your properties, give each of them a "Tamgha" and appoint a "animal" for each of them that be their "Onghoun", that is derived from the word of "Inagh" or blessed and they must not persecute the "Onghun" (Iry, 2005).

Oguzes were very hospitable as Ebn e Fazlan said; "if a person come to a Turk man that doesn't know him and said to him I'm your guest and I want something like camel and beasts and your money, he gives it to him".

Each of these 24 Oguz families had one "Totam" that all of them were a kind of a bird of prey: Royal falcon, eagle, Tavshanjil (a kind of eagle), Senghur (a kind of hawk), each of these 24 family has a "Tamghay" (a particular sign and mark for themselves) and also families know an "Onghun" for themselves, that was respectable for all the families the meat of these Onghuns wasn't eaten and they were known as the sign of consecration and good luck (Barthold, 1996).

## 2. Tribal history of Turkmen

Renovation of Turkmen's history is very difficult, "Abolfazl Bahador Khan, 1097" the Khan of Khiveh in 11th century wrote a book about Turkmen's pedigree. According to the verbal and genealogical sources, Turkmen lived in the north of "Ishligh Gol" lake about six thousand years ago (Boogoliopf, 1979).

The sources show that Turkmen belonged to the north of Mongolia. Most of historians believed that Turkmen migrated from east. They lived near Syr Darya in six century A.D. and later migrated to the southern parts of Amu Darya and Marv. Generally Turkmen's history can be divided to two periods: 1- mythical or fabulous, 2- historical, that here is pointed to them briefly.

The mythical and fabulous period of Turkmen  
According to the verbal and genealogical sources, it is possible to describe Turkmen's history from the beginning of their creation till now (Kamali, 1984): His holiness Adam was the first human being in the earth. After him "Sheith" his oldest son, was his successor. He lived about 912 years old. After him his child "Anoush" became ruler and prophet. Then "Ghinan" who lived about 840 years old and was Anoush's child undertook the leadership and prophethood. "Mahlaieel" the child of "Ghinan" became his father's successor. He lived about 920 years old and at his time Adam's children were increased and were scattered in a wide area. He lived in "soor" in Babylon, at that time people lived in mountains and forests. "Mahlaieel" asked them to construct villages and cities and do agriculture. Then people started to plant wheat and barley. After him his boy "Edris" undertook leadership and prophethood, and after him his boy "Akhnoush", who lived for 980 years old, became prophet. He knew the medical science and invite people to worship of God and theism. Then "Motoshlekh" his child become his successor. After him "Lamegh" his son and after him

his holiness “Nooh” the son of Lamegh undertook people’s leadership. As it is mentioned in “Jame-ol-Tavarikh”, his holiness Nooh became prophet when he was 250 years old but most of his people didn’t believe him and the unique god. During 700 years only 80 peoples believed him. He asked the God to annihilate his people. The God agreed him and annihilate them through a violent storm and flood, Nooh and his followers and a couple of each animal were saved by a very big ship. His holiness Nooh had three boys by the names of “Yafeth”, “Sam” and “Ham”. Yafeth is the common ancestor of Turks and Yellow-skinned who lived in the north. “Sam” who lived in Middle East is the ancestor of Iranian a Arabs and “Ham” who lived in India, is the ancestor of Negroes. Therefore, these three brothers are the common ancestors of all of the today peoples. Probably “Yafeth” was prophet and lived in nomadic manner. He spent summers in “Ortagh” and “Kertagh” which are high mountains and also in “Inanj” city (in Mongolia) and winters went to “Orsough”, “Ghaighan” and “Ghare Ghom” in Mongolia. He has seven boys that one of them was named “Turk” and he is the ancestor of all the Turks. “Turk” had four boys. “Totak” one of his boys had a child by the name of “Ilje Khan”. Also “Dib Baghoy Khan”, his son, was the father of “Goog Khan”. He has a boy who was named “Alinje Khan” who had two boys with the names of “Mongol” and “Tatar” that are the ancestors of Mongols (yellow-skinned) and Tatars respectively. “Mongol” had four boys with the names of “Ghara Khan”, “Avor Khan”, “Gor Khan” and “Guz Khan”. “Ghara Khan” owned a boy by the name of “Oguz Khan” who became the common ancestor of Turkmen. Turkmen’s pedigree from the beginning of their creation till Oguz Khan is in this order.

Oguz had six boys with the names of “Gun”, “Aye”, “Yilduz”, “Gog”, “Dagh” and “Dangar”. He came back to his main land, “Ortagh” and “Kertagh”, after conquering Iran, Turkestan, Damascus, Egypt, Rome and Europe. After death of Oguz, his old boy became his successor. The Gooklan families are from his, and “Aye Khan” and “Yilduz Khan”, two other boys of Oguz generation.

It is necessary to mention that just pedigree of “Gun Khan” is available among Turkmen, which of course it is incomplete and defective. Turkmen believed that two groups of Turkmen who reach to kingdom and monarchy place, it means Seljukian and Ghaznavid, were from “Gun Khan” generation.

Gun Khan started to renew the nickname and seal and sign of each of his and his brothers’ children. Each of the Oguzed children had four boys that totally their number reached to twenty four persons. Turkmen believe that the basis of Turkmen tribes is from these

24 nephews. In any case, “Gun Khan” determined an animal for each of these 24 persons to be their Onghon. Also he determined that in the ceremonies the meat of which part is the share of which of these twenty four persons and their children in order to prevent their Quarrel at the time of eating pottage.

Other tribes of Turkmen are from the other children of Oguz Khan. “Dagh Khan”, one of the young boys of Oguz, is the common ancestor of the majority of Turkmen tribes such as: “Teke”, “Sarigh”, “Yamoot”, “Salour”, “Ersay” “Yemerli”, “Imer” and “Ale Younli”.

### 3. The historical period of Turkmen (Taghavi, 2009)

Turkmen’s historical period is divided to three periods:

- a) Nomadic period
- b) The period of migration to Turkmenistan and Turkmen Sahara
- c) The period after formal delimitation between Iran and Russia

The nomadic period:

This period is started from the beginning of Turkmen’s migration and lasted to their entering to Turkmenistan and Turkmen Sahara of Iran. There isn’t exact information about this period. Also they were forced to migrate and change their living place like Mongols and other groups who were resident in Mongolia’s Sahara and Middle East. The life of all these tribes in this period depended on herbivorous animals. In this type life two factors were very important. One is the weather and another is pastures, and each group that had the better posture exposed to the attacks of other groups. In this period Turkmen attack to other groups and possessed their postures, and took their wives and children to captivity and sent the men captives to the slave selling bazaars in Bokhara and Khiveh. The competition for postures caused Turkmen gradually went to the west and in the sixth century A.D. moved to the neighbor of Syr Darya and in tenth and eleventh centuries to the neighbor of Amu Darya and Marv.

The period of migration to Turkmenistan and Turkmen Sahara:

Barthold, 1962, says; the primary historical application of Turkmen phrase that existed in geography books is related to the second half of the tenth century A.D. It is written in this book that Turkmen lived in border of the lands that Islam had in Middle Asia, near a city by the title of “Isfijab” that probably is located near the Siram city in 125 kilometers distance to Tashkand.

Turkmen of besides the Caspian Sea, Khanat of Bokhara and Afghanistan have common ancestors. They consist about 70 percent of the

people in this area. Turkmens are divided to some main groups that each group is consisted of several subgroups. According to Bahador Khan's opinion, Salors leaved their living place after a long time war with "Bejne" Turkmens. Later they went to Amu Darya and Marve regions with their leader "Enkhesh". Later the grandchildren's of "Enkhesh" established the tribal life of "Yamout" and "sarigh" Turkmens in eleventh century A.D. Turkmens never resided in one place but always fought with their neighbors and extended their lands. When Salors resided in the east north of Khorasan, "Oghurjik" was their leader. He was the common ancestor of Yamouts. Oghurjik was forced to go to the "Shamakhi" with 1000 tents and from there go to "Krime" and "Oral", meanwhile he transferred some of his tents to "Mengheshlagh" and "Abolkhan". The region that today Turkmens lived there belonged to the Iranian tribes before Islam and Abbassides and Arabs before the eleventh century A.D.

According to Logoshva (1959) Turkmen tribes were created with their particular specifications in fourteen and fifteenth centuries A.D., from the union of Turkmen Tribes that migrated in the north of Turkmenistan, "Uset yourt" and "Mengheshlagh". These tribes mixed each other in thirteenth and fourteenth centuries A.D. and caused to disappearance of tribal disputes. They attracted some of the other immigrants to each other Seljukian who were Turkmen, resides in Marv in eleventh century A.D., at that time this city had so many progresses and attained a universal fame but Mongols conquered and destroyed it. This city conquered by Safavids later in sixteenth and eighteenth centuries A.D.

Turkmen tribes scattered in a wide area in sixteenth century A.D. Khorasan's Salors lived in Balkans. Most of Yamouts, Salors, Tekehs and Sarighs lived in the coastal regions of "Sari Ghemish" in the southern part of "Oset Yourth", coasts of "Ghare Boghaz" and "Caspian Sea" until "Mengheshlagh". Chodours, Ighdirs, and Ibdals lived in the northern parts in Uzbek's neighborhood. Also they lived in "Uzboy" coasts in the east north of Khorasan and "Kopet Dag" slopes. Turkmens gradually scattered in Iran in sixteenth century. At this time "Tekes" lived in the north of Khorasan and Turkmen Sahara. Turkmens' migration to the north of Khorasan and "Kopet Dag" slopes increased because of torments by Khans of Khive and Ghalmigh's feudalists.

Consequently, Yamouts of "Mengheshlagh" migrated to Kharazm and desert coasts of Caspian Sea and the coasts of Atrak river in Iran. Also Salors went to the "Bolton" in the south of Marv and some of the Turkmen tribes went to Afghanistan.

Turkmens' migration is continued in seventeenth and early eighteenth century, at this time Turkmens of "Alghe Oily", "Imer", "Teke", and "Yamout" were resident in "Akhal" and "Niki Ghalee" in Khorasan. Also some groups of Teke family lived in "Zaghchekend". "Bayat" Turkmens lived in Neyshabour and "Imagh" Turkmens lived in "Marv Chekend" and Sarakhs. "Yamout" Turkmens also migrated to the north of Khorasan and they were supported by Tatars (Rabeë, 1979).

Turkmens resided also in "Tajan", "Bateni" and the coasts of Atrak River. Nader Shah Afshar attacked to Khive and occupied it in Eighteenth century A.D., he banished "Tekeh" and "Yamout" Turkmens to Khorasan. Other Turkmens stayed in the north and scattered among "Mengheshkagh" and "Amu Darya". Also Nader Shah forced Yamout Turkmens to migrate to the coastal region of "Ester Abad" (Gorgan). He conquered the Khanan of Bokhara and Khiveh so a big group of Yamout Turkmens were forced to migrate to the coastal region of Caspian Sea and Gorgan Gulf and started to remonstration and revolt there, and was crushed again. Consequently a group of them were banished and another group ran away to the out of reach areas. At this time another groups of Yamout Turkmens who lived in Khiveh were forced to migrate to Gorgan.

After the death of Nader Shah, Khans of Bokhara conquered Marv, and ruined it and transferred its people to Bokhara. So the Marv City destructed completely and turned to a place for criminals in nineteenth century.

Therefore Turkmens searched for suitable land that has widespread and abundant postures and water, they fight other groups to find such a land and changed their living place for whole the nineteenth century. This condition is continued till Russia government suppressed and crushed them and finally in 1881 the Russia army, with leadership of General Eskoilof, crushed the resistance of Teke Turkmens and in 1885 all of the Turkmenistan region conquered with Russia and Turkmens were forced to live under their rule and control.

The period after formal delimitation between Iran and Russia:

Political progresses caused formal delimitation and border determining between two countries of Iran and Russia. In this way, the Turkmens' movement between Iran and Russia is prevented. Consequently, most of the Turkmens resided in Turkmenistan of Russia and the remaining resided in Turkmen Sahara of Iran and Afghanistan and some in Iraq and Turkey and China. The formal contract of delimitation between Iran and Russia was signed between two countries in December of 1881

and Turkmens' going back and forth and migration from Turkmenistan to Iran and vice versa was forbidden, and at last the Turkmens, from life condition and geographical viewpoint, resided in Turkmenistan, Turkmen Sahara of Iran and some of them in Afghanistan, Iraq and China, and this condition is also kept at this time.

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