

An Account of the Qarlūq/Qarlūgh Turks in Hazāra

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Abstract

The Turkish race has a rich history. The legacy of their rule and dominance could be traced in many parts of Asia, including the Hazara regions, currently located in Pakistan. However, many people, including historians, lack clear knowledge of Turkish settlements in Hazara. This article attempts to shed light on the rich but forgotten history of Turks, particularly the Qarlūq/Qarlūgh who were a powerful Turkish tribe in the early medieval central Asia. The article traces how and when the Qarlūq/Qarlūgh settled and ruled over Hazara regions and how were they ultimately overpowered by other tribes.

Keywords: Turkish Race, Qarlūq/Qarlūgh, Hazara, Tatar, Mughals, Afghans, Dilazaks

Background

Early history of the Turkish race is buried in mystery. In the mythical accounts recorded by some Muslim writers, Turk was the name of the eldest of the eight sons of Yāfith, Son of Noah; the others being Chīn, Khurz, Saqlāb, Rūs, Mang or Manj, Tāraj (of whose fourth descendant was born Sikandar Zulqarnain (the two-horned Alexander), and Gūmāri. Some writers include the names of Khalj, Ghuzz and Sadasān in this list, which brings the total to eleven.

All of them took up their residence in the territory, which came to be known as Turkistan; and all of them became the progenitors of great tribes. Yāfith possessed a miraculous stone which had the potential of brining rain when required. This stone became the bone of contention among his sons. The enmity between the descendants of Turk and those of Ghuzz, called Turkmān, dates from this time.

Turk, also called Yāfith Oghlān (Small Yāfith) succeeded his father. He is said to have been a contemporary of Giyūmarth of Iran, and the first to take the title Khān. Turk was succeeded by Alminjah who was either a son or grandson of Turk. Alminjah was succeeded by his son Kīwak, and he by Alinjah, whose sons, Tātāra and Mughal, laid the foundation of two large divisions of the Turkish people, called Tātār Īmāq and mughal Īmāq. Of these the last mentioned had nine chiefs therefore, the figure nine is considered to be auspicious by the mughal Īmāq. Mughal was succeeded by Qarā Khān whose son, Āghūz, earned great celebrity and honour in both the Mughal and Tātār Īmāqs. He is also said to have given names to different tribes which have survived till today.

One of these newly named tribes was Qarlūq, also written as Qarlūgh or Qārlūgh, a Turkish word which literally means “Father of Snow,” but in the context this name was

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given, it means “people hindered by snow”. As the story goes Āghūz Khān, on his way back, after a plundering raid in eastern Irān, passed close to the frontiers of Ghūr and Gharjistān in an extremely cold winter. Āghūz Khān, in the capacity of being chief of the army, issued orders that the troops should keep going within the limits of road and in no case should go beyond it, as the weather was unfriendly and the road dangerous. But, despite this, some people who belonged to one and the same family, wandered off the road in search of provisions and somehow got stuck in snow, and, it was only in the next winter that they managed to catch up with the main force. They were punished for this act of indiscipline and nick named Qarlūq/Qarlūgh (people hindered by snow).

The Qarlūghs/Qarlūqs were a very powerful tribe in early medieval central Asia and consisted of several clans. They were at enmity with another tribe, equally powerful, called the Ghuzz, who during the reign of the Abassid Caliph Mehdi entered Māwara an-Nahr from the north and became converts to Islam. But it so happened that al-Muqanna, the false prophet, who was very active in that territory at the time reduced them under his sway (Raverty 1977: 374n). They were constantly engaged in hostilities with Qarlūghs who were generally victorious over them.

Muqannā is mentioned by several writers including Tabari (1939: vi, 374), Ibn-i Khaldūn (1970: iii, 250), Mīr Khwānd (1339: iii, 415-16) and Ibn Kathīr (1988: ix-x, 602) with slightly variant details. According to Ibn Khaldūn the original name of al-Muqanna was Atā who began his life as a fuller at Marw. Having acquired some knowledge of magic and incantations, he pretended to be animated by the divinity, which, as he claimed had passed to him by transmigration. He proclaimed: Almighty God entered into the figure of Ādam, and it was for that reason that he told the angels to adore Ādam, and they adored him, except Iblīs (satan), who proudly refused, and who thus justly merited the divine wrath. From the figure of Ādam, God passed into that of Noah, and from Noah to each of the prophets successively, and of the sages, till he appeared in the figure of Abū Muslim Khursāsāni from whom he passed on to me. His assertion having obtained belief with some people, they adored him and took up arms in his defence, notwithstanding the horrible extravagance of his pretensions and the deformity of his person. He was low in stature, ill made, blind of one eye, and a stutterer, he never let his face to be seen, but always veiled it with a mask of gold, and it was from this circumstance that he received his name.

When the reputation of al-Muqanna became public, maāz bin Muslim and some other chiefs brought out an army against him. On the vanguard of this army was Saīd al-Harashi, who defeated his “White clad” (Sufaid Jamagān) supporters. The vanquished “white clad” fled to Sanām-sometimes confused with Kish- their headquarters, and strengthened its defences by digging a ditch all around. This place al-Harashi besieged relentlessly and as the siege prolonged al-Muqanna driven to despair and losing all hope of escape, poisoned himself and his wives to death. His head was cut off and dispatched to Mehdi. This happened in the year 163H/ AD 779-80.

As soon as the Ghuzz came to know that an Abbasid force was on its way to suppress al-Muqanna, they Ghuzz deserted him and retired to the more southern parts of Māwarā an-Nahr where they were worsted by the Qarlūghs (Raverty 1977: i; 374n).

Being a powerful tribe the Qarlūghs continued to play important role in the political conflicts in the land beyond the river Oxus. We find them not only in the army of the Khwārazm shah but also in the army of his inveterate enemy Tamur-Chei, better known as Chingīz Khān (the great Khān).

Political upheavals in Central Asia twice created opportunities for the Qarlūghs to enter the Indian borderland (present Pakistan). We see them first during the Mongol invasions of the territories on the Indus between the years 618 H/1121-22 and 658 H/1260, and then after a long interval during Amīr Tīmūr's invasion of India in AD 1398-99. These two phases are explicitly mentioned in our historical records as separate events, but some writers tend to confuse them with each other.

Phase-I

In phase-I we read the names of Malik Saif ad-Dīn, Hassan, the Qarlūgh and of his son Malik Nāsir ad-Dīn, Muhammad. The territories of the father consisted of Ghazni, Karmān and Baniān. He is known to have struck coins (in 633 H) of the well-known "Bull and Horseman" type with the Nāgari legend "Sri Hasana Karluka". This shows that he was a king in his own right and ruled the above mentioned territories independently. Sultān Shams ad-Dīn Iltutmish/Iyaltimish, much exercised by the turbulence of the tribes of the upper Sindh- Sāgar Doābah, brought out a powerful army to put them down, but he fell seriously ill on the way and had to return to Delhi where he soon afterwards died in 633 H/1236.

That the Qarlūgh's were Turks and were not connected in any way with the Indo-Scythians, Awāns, or Janjūāhs of the Salt Range, as it was believed by some writers in the past, goes without saying and needs no proof whatsoever in the light of what we have written above. But the more important question regarding the ancestry of Malik Saif ad-Dīn Hassan still remains to be addressed. Although no explicit evidence regarding the parentage of Hasan exists, yet Raverty (1977: 1131n) is of the view that Qamr ad-Dīn Karmān, who held Nandana before Jalal ad-Dīn Mang-barni, the Khwārazm Shah's Amīrs evicted him from that stronghold just after the latter suffered defeat at the hands of Chingīz Khān on the right bank of the river Indus in 618 H/1221 and fled across the river into the Salt Range territory, may have been the father of Hassan. This view is based upon the circumstance that both the Karmāni and Hasan hailed from Karmān – a very important Darah to the south of the Spin Ghar (White Mountain), the others being Shaluzān, Zerān, and Īri – Āb. The former's connection with Karmān is suggested by the appellation Karmāni, while the latter was dispelled from Ghazni and Karmān by the Mongol forces (Tab. Nās. 1977: 1129), suggesting a similar connection.

When Mongol armies were nominated (in about 628 H/1230-31) to March from the side of Turkistān into the territories of Kābul, Ghazni and Zābulistān, Malik Saif ad-Dīn

Hasan, the Qarlūgh, realizing that he was no match for them, decided to submit and receive, like the Maliks of Ghūr and Khurāsān, Mongol Shahnah (Intendant) (Tab. Nās. 1977: 1119). Consequently he entered into an agreement with them to pay annual tribute. Despite this, the Mongol armies marched towards Ghazni. In fact they wanted to get Malik Hasan into their hands but they never succeeded in achieving their objective (Tab. Nās. 1977: 1129). In the year 636/1238 suddenly and unexpectedly attacked Malik Hasan who fled discomfited from Ghazni and Karmān and retired to Baniān, when obliged temporarily to abandon that likewise, he retired towards Multān and Sindh (Ibid).

Previous to this, but after the death of Iltutmish (Iyaltimish) in 633H/1236, Malik Hasan, the Qarlūgh, desired to take possession of Uchch and the Panjāb territory (Tab. Nās. 1977:ii, 730). With this object in view, he arrived before the gate of Uchch, from the direction of Baniān with a large army. But Malik Saif ad-Dīn Ībak, the fief-holder of Uchch, routed the Qarlūgh army. Hasan was obliged to beat a hasty retreat to his own territory. This, the author of the *Tabaqāt-i Nāsirī* says, was a very important victory for the court of Delhi and put a stop to further adventurism at the expense of the Delhi court.

In 647H/1249 Malik Saif ad-Dīn Hasan, who was able to hold his territory of Baniān, notwithstanding the Mongol invaders, advanced to attack Multān, which fief Malik Balban-i Kashlū Khān then held, together with Uchch. Balban advanced from Uchch to drive away the Qarlūgh army. An engagement ensued near Multan, while emissaries passed to and fro between the two armies and discussed terms of peace, and the surrender of Multān to the Qarlūghs. The peace was concluded and Malik Balban delivered up Multān to the Qarlūghs, and returned to Uchch, and the Qarlūghs took possession of it.

Malik Saif ad-Dīn had actually been killed in the fighting, but the Qarlūghs kept the death of their leader a guarded secret until their occupation of Multān. When Balban came to known about it, he repented of having given up Multān, but it was too late. Malik Hasan was apparently succeeded by his son Malik Nāsir ad-Dīn, Muhammad, who took control of the army. It was to him that Malik Balban had unknowingly surrendered Multān (see Tab. Nās. 1977: ii, 782).

Shortly after this Malik Nusrat ad-Dīn, Sher Khāni Sunqar, wrested Multān from the Qarlūghs and installed there his own retainer – Ikhtiār ad-Dīn Kurez (Ibid). Malik Nāsir ad-Dīn, Muhammad, must have retired to Baniān (Paniān) where he continued rule, though he seems to have succumbed to the pressure of the Mongol armies, and obliged to receive Mongol Shahnagān (Intendants). He was still ruling at the time of the arrival of the ambassadors of Hulākū Khān in 658 H/1259-60. Just before the arrival of these ambassadors, Malik Nāsir ad-Dīn thought of strengthening his position by giving his daughter in marriage to the son of Ulugh Khān-i A'zam, named Shāh (Tab Nās. 1977: 859). In pursuance of this idea, he secretly contacted one of the servants of the household of Ulugh Khāni A'zam to explore the possibility of such a marriage. Malik Nāsir ad-Dīn was one of the illustrious of Maliks of his day; it therefore became necessary on the part of Ulugh Khān to send a reply. He accordingly directed Hājib 'Ali Khaj, one of his own men, to bear the answer to this request.

When Hājib ‘Ali reached Baniān (Paniān) he was despatched by Malik Nāsir ad-Dīn, along with some confidential persons of his own and a son of the Shahna posted in Baniān. This embassy reached Hulākū Khān’s presence in the city of Tabriz in Āzarbāijān. The embassy was warmly received and, in return, Hulākū Khān despatched his own ambassadors to Delhi. But, what happened to the marriage proposal, the author of the *Tabaqāt-i Nāsiri* appears to have forgotten to record.

Phase-II

How long did the rule of Baniān (Paniān) remain in the hands of the descendants of Malik Saif ad-Dīn Hasan, the Qarlūgh, is nowhere recorded. The only reliable date in this context is that of Amīr Tīmūr who “invaded India in AD 1398-99 and, besides other territories, brought Nangrahār (present Jalālābād in Afghānistān) and Pakhalae (not far from Baniān (Paniān) under his control. Prior to this, the Akhūnd, Darweza (1960:107-09) tells us that these territories were held by the Gībari Sultāns of Pīch. Of these, Sultān Pakhal, he writes, occupied the entire hilly belt from Bajaur to Kashmīr, including Swāt, and his brother Sultān Bahrām conquered Nagrahār and Lamghān and shifted his capital to Pāpīn in the territory of Nangrahār.

Unfortunately, the Akhūnd does not tell us the precise date of these events, but the fact that the Gibaries of Nangrahār were reduced to the status of Maliks, and the Gibaris of Pakhlāe were completely pushed out, shows that these events must have taken place before the arrival of Amīr Tīmūr. The genealogical tree of Sultān Bahrām recorded by the Akhūnd shows that Malik Bālo, the fourth descendant of Sultān Bahrām, was the first to take the title Malik. Malik Bālo may therefore be taken as the contemporary of Amīr Tīmūr. If this is so, Sultān Bahrām, the fifth in ascent from Malik Bālo, may have been on the throne of Nangrahār in about the middle of the fourteenth century AD. This, then, was the time when Sultān Pakhal brought Pakhlāe under his control. Thus, the Qarlūgh rule in Baniān (Paniān) may have at the latest ended about this time. With Sultān Pakhal’s conquest the territory previously called Baniān Khitta came to be known as Pakhlāe Khitta, or Sarkār (Province).

“Paklae” (Pakhli), Abū al-Fazl, the (n.d.: i-ii; 1096-97) the famous historian of Akbar, tells us, is 35 Kuroh in length and 25 in breadth. It is bounded east by Kashmīr, west by Atak Banāras, north by Kator, and South by the tract of country in which the Gakhar tribe dwells. The Sāhib Qirān, Amīr Tīmūr Gurgān, left a number of his soldiery therein (when he retired from hind), to hold possession of it, and their descendants still dwell in this territory.

The emperor Nūr ad-Dīn Jahangīr in his *Memoirs* (Rogers 1978: ii, 126) remarks: “The Sarkār or province of Pakhlāe is 35 Kos long, and 25 broad. It has the mountains of Kashmīr on the east, Atak Banāras on the west, the mountain range of Kator on the north (north-west) and the country of the Gakhars on the south (South-east) . When Amīr Tīmūr , Sāhib Qirān, had conquered Hindustan, and was on his way back into Tūrān Zamīn, he left this people (that is, the Qārlūgh Turks), who were in his army, here, and assigned them this territory as their Yūrat, or dwelling place. They themselves say that

they are of the race of Qārlūgh, but do not know for certain, what names their chief men then bore, or who they were”.

The above statements clearly show that one of the mings of Amīr Tīmūr’s army was composed of Qarlūghs, and that they, or a large portion of them, were left behind by him to settle in and hold the territory of Pakhlāe. The Turkish word ming, meaning one thousand soldiers, is equivalent to Hazār in Persian. This Hazār gave its name to the land which came to be known as Hazārah, or Qarlūgh Hazarā to distinguish it from Chchach Hazāra.

If Baniān, as reported in the Tabaqāt Nāsiri, is really Paniān, five and a half miles south west of modern Haripur, it can be easily seen that the Qarlūghs of Amīr Tīmūr’s army were posted in Pakhlāe/ Pakhli to enhance the power and capability of the Qarlūghs, their brethren, who were already there but had become much weakened with the passage of time.

The forcible eviction of the Dilazāks who guarded the eastern bank of the Indus and also carried out raids on the Afghān occupied western bank, by a command of the Emperor Jahāngīrs, opened the way for Afghān encroachment into Hazāra. As the Afghāns increased in numbers east of the Indus, the Qarlūghs declined. Long after this when Tīmūr Shāh Durrani visited Hazāra in 1201 H/1786-87, the Turk Chiefs and headmen, namely, Mulūl Khān and Muhammad Khān, complained to him that they had been ousted from their hereditary rights by rivals and that the Ghūrghast Afghāns had dispossessed them from their lands in the Turki patti and Mānakrāe. The Ghurghashts were speedily ousted from Mānakrae, which was restored to the Turkish chiefs, as well as the villages of the Turki patti. At the time of the annexation of Hazāra by the British, a mere handful of these Turkish people were there in Mānakrāe and a few in Agror and now, they do not even remember that they ever had been a ruling race in Hazāra.

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